

# STONY CORAL TISSUE LOSS DISEASE

## Mitigating the Spread by Ballast Water Management

### ✓ Exchange of Ballast Water in the Open Ocean

Ballast water exchange in the open ocean (i.e., > 200 nautical miles from shore) **replaces potentially contaminated ballast water with safer open ocean water.**

### ✓ Use a Ballast Water Management System

- The use of an **approved ballast water management system**, such as chemical treatment or UV radiation, can reduce the number of microorganisms in ballast water.
- While simulated ballast water experiments indicate that **UV-treatment alone is ineffective at preventing SCTLD transmission**, more research is needed to determine whether other systems can help prevent disease transmission.

### ✗ Avoid Uptake in Affected Areas

- Ballast water is **seawater held in tanks and cargo holds** of ships that provides stability and maneuverability during a voyage.
- When ships uptake seawater in their ballast tanks, they also take on microorganisms, such as **bacteria and viruses**, present in that water.
- Scientists don't know what causes SCTLD, but currently believe **microorganisms** are involved.
- Ballast water sourced in regions impacted by SCTLD could **potentially spread SCTLD** to new regions.

### What is Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease?

- Stony coral tissue loss disease (SCTLD) is a highly destructive disease that impacts important reef building coral species.
- Once disease signs appear, corals can die quickly in just weeks to months.
- SCTLD has only been observed in the Atlantic/Caribbean, where outbreaks have occurred sporadically and often near commercial ports, suggesting ships may play a role in transporting the disease.
- Susceptibility of corals to SCTLD in other regions is not yet known.

### ✗ Do Not Discharge Ballast Water Near Coral Reefs

SCTLD is known to **spread to healthy corals** through contaminated seawater and sediment.

For more information on SCTLD please visit:

- [https://www.coris.noaa.gov/activities/stony\\_coral\\_tissue\\_loss\\_disease/](https://www.coris.noaa.gov/activities/stony_coral_tissue_loss_disease/)
- <https://www.agrra.org/coral-disease-outbreak/>

