



Annual Review of VSP Inspections

Assessing Cruise Ship Sanitation:
Key Industry Trends & Compliance Insights

A large cruise ship, the 'Carnival Glory', is docked at a port. The ship is white with multiple decks and a distinctive funnel. In the background, a city skyline with numerous skyscrapers is visible across a body of water. The overall image has a blue-tinted, slightly grainy texture.

2024

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study examines the characteristics and outcomes of Vessel Sanitation Program (VSP) inspections conducted on cruise ships operating in U.S. waters in 2024. It assesses public health trends and areas for improvement by analyzing the risk categories applied during inspections, cited deficiencies, points deducted, and awarded scores.

A total of 197 inspections were conducted across 150 cruise ships between January 1 and December 31, 2024. Inspection scores ranged from a high of 100 to a low of 62, with a mean of 96.1 out of 100.

Inspectors identified 5,929 violations, averaging 30.1 per inspection. Notably, 71% (n=4,232) of all violations were concentrated in just 10 item categories. Violations of critical item standards—those posing the highest risk to public health—accounted for 21% (n=1,267) of all citations and 40% (n=318) of total point deductions. Only three vessels passed inspection without a single citation of a VSP-designated critical standard.

This study highlights that while inspection scores offer a broad measure of sanitation performance, they do not fully reflect public health standards aboard cruise ships. A detailed analysis of cited deficiencies provides a more accurate assessment of compliance, helping to identify trends and prioritize areas for corrective action.

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OUR STORY, YOUR SUCCESS

At **Maritime Health Services**, we're committed to helping cruise operators exceed public health standards. With expertise in food safety, water safety, disease prevention, and outbreak response, we turn regulatory compliance into a continuous journey of improvement to build and sustain a culture of public health excellence.

Our in-depth understanding of the challenges faced by the industry enables us to deliver practical, effective solutions that address health risks proactively and efficiently, blending the professionalism of larger firms with a personalized, hands-on approach tailored to each client's unique needs and operational goals.

One Small Step Can Make a Big Difference

We believe that effective maritime public health goes beyond ticking boxes; it's about embedding best practices into everyday operations.

By making public health integral to your company's culture, we drive sustainable improvements that ensure long-term success.

Through close collaboration and ongoing support, Maritime Health Services transforms how the industry approaches public health.

“
Our mission — To provide cost-effective, client-tailored solutions that empower maritime companies of all sizes to create successful and sustainable public health cultures.



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Introduction

A Guide to Vessel Sanitation Program Cruise Ship Inspections



VSP INSPECTIONS EXPLAINED

Assessing Public Health Compliance

The Vessel Sanitation Program (VSP) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conducts unannounced inspections of cruise ships arriving at U.S. ports to assess compliance with its public health standards outlined in the **VSP Operations Manual**.

These inspections typically last six to eight hours, with the duration influenced by factors such as ship size, the number of inspectors, time in port, and the issues identified.

Cruise ships under VSP jurisdiction are generally inspected twice a year. However, if a vessel remains outside the U.S. for an extended period, it may undergo fewer inspections but will be evaluated upon its return.

Inspectors Evaluate Eight Key Areas:



Disease Surveillance



Outbreak Prevention



Food Safety



HVAC*



Potable Water Safety



Recreational Water Facilities



Pest Management



Child Activity Centers

UNDERSTANDING THE SCORES

The **VSP Operations Manual** establishes the health standards for its cruise ship inspections, organizing over 1,000 individual requirements into 44 compliance categories known as **Item Numbers**. Each category is assigned a point value based on the risk its associated standards pose to food or water contamination, environmental health hazards, or illness.

During inspections, **points are deducted per category**—not per individual violation. This means that whether a ship has one or multiple violations within the same category, the total deduction is limited to the category’s assigned value.



Noncritical items—those with a lower impact on public health—are weighted **1 to 2 points**

Critical items—those posing the highest risk to public health—are weighted **3 to 5 points**



How Points Are Deducted



VSP inspections use a weighted scoring system based on a descending 100-point scale. Each vessel begins with 100 points, with deductions made based on the violations observed.

Ships scoring 85 or below fail the inspection and are subject to an additional follow-up assessment.

Crucially, inspectors have the autonomy to use their discretion. Not every deficiency results in a point reduction—their context and severity is assessed before making a determination.



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Methods

Data Collection and Analysis Methodology

METHODOLOGY

The analysis in this study was based on a comprehensive review of cruise ship inspection records published on the VSP's website. Data was collected using the site's 'Advanced Cruise Ship Inspection Search' function, applying the following specified search criteria:

- **'Cruise Ships'** - All Vessel Inspection Scores
- **'Inspection Date Criteria'** - From January 1 to December 31, 2024
- **'Score Criteria'** - All

How Violations Were Categorized

The evaluation phase of the study took place in February 2025, at which time 197 inspection reports met the inclusion criteria and were incorporated into the analysis. Violations were categorized according to the standards outlined in the Vessel Sanitation Program 2018 Operations Manual (see [Appendices](#)).

To ensure consistency, any citations listed with a '*' rather than a specific item number were reassigned to the appropriate item category based on the manual's classification system.

One observation from an inspection of Oceania Vista (December 17, 2024) was excluded, as the finding did not represent a clear violation of an operational standard.

— Crew members at the entrance to the buffet were encouraging guests to 'wash their hands or sanitize their hands.' It is important that handwashing be the primary method for reducing the spread of diseases onboard. Hand sanitizing should not take the place of hand washing.

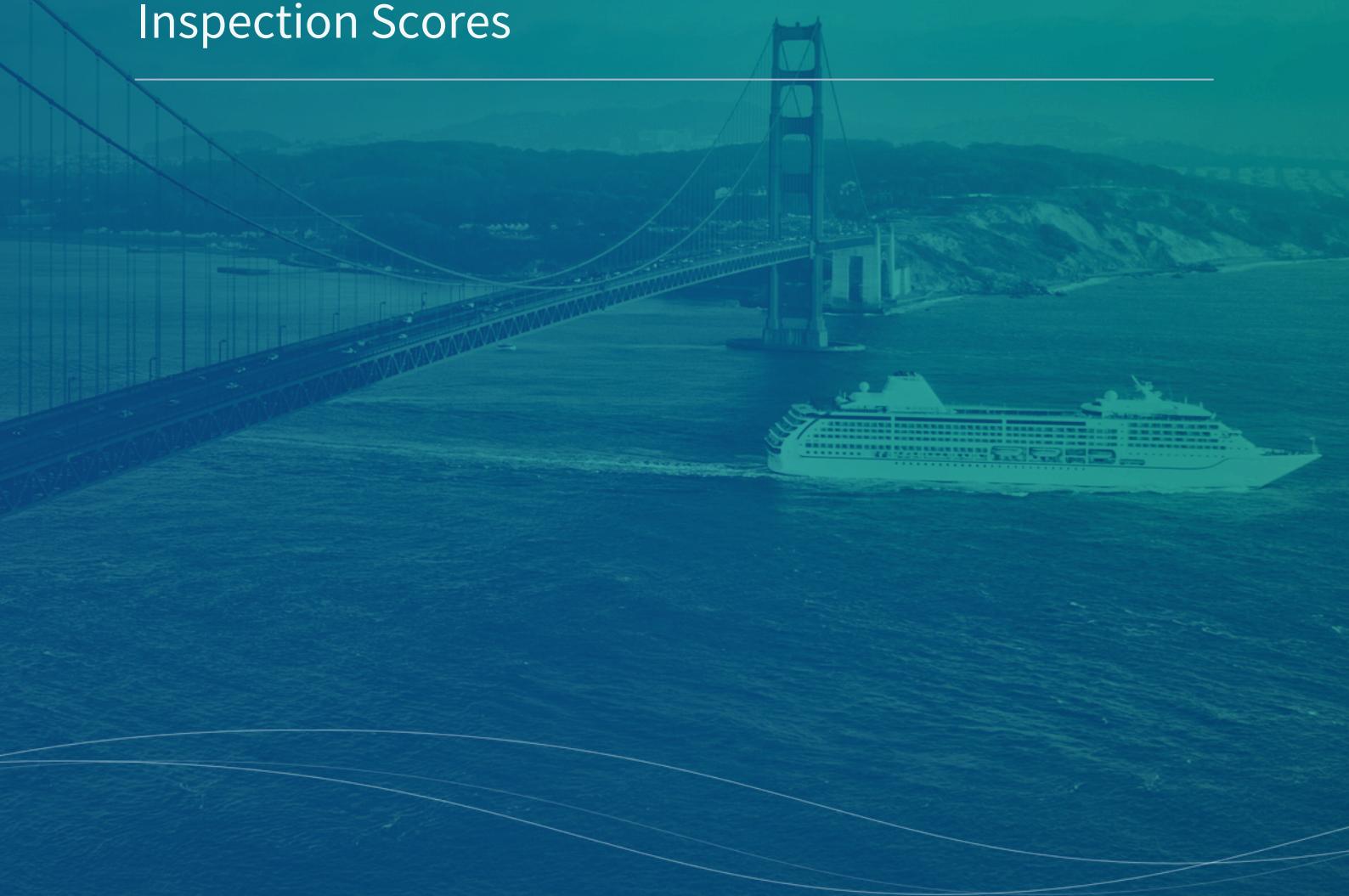
Oceania Vista VSP Inspection Report (December 17, 2024)



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Scores

Evaluating Vessel Sanitation Program 2024
Inspection Scores



KEY INSPECTION METRICS



VSP conducted

197
INSPECTIONS



on

150
SHIPS



from

27
CRUISE LINES



34
SHIPS SCORED 100

Norwegian Breakaway was the only ship to achieve a perfect 100 on two consecutive inspections in 2024

2

SHIPS FAILED AN INSPECTION

Margaritaville at Sea Paradise and **Hanseatic Inspiration** were the two vessels to score less than 86 points



CRUISE SHIP SCORES 2024

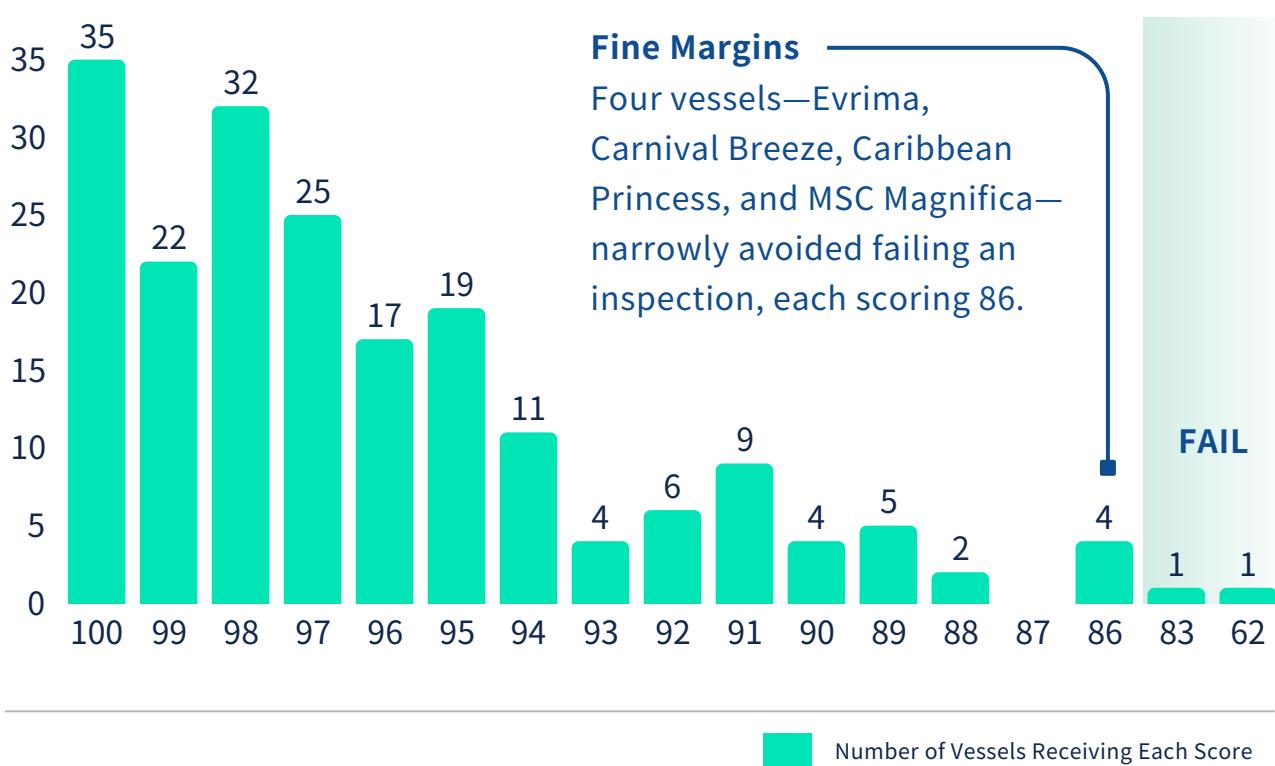
How the Industry Performed

In 2024, VSP conducted 197 inspections across 150 cruise ships. Scores ranged from a high of 100 to a low of 62, **with an industry-wide mean of 96**, identical to 2023's average.

A score of 100 was awarded in 35 inspections, one more than the previous year. Only one vessel, Norwegian Breakaway, earned a perfect score on two consecutive inspections (February 25 and September 22, 2024) in 2024.

Two ships failed their inspections: Margaritaville at Sea Paradise received an 83 on May 1, while Hanseatic Inspiration recorded the lowest score of the year with a 62 on September 29.

Figure 1 – Distribution of 2024 Cruise Ship Inspection Scores



THE MOST INSPECTED LINES



70%

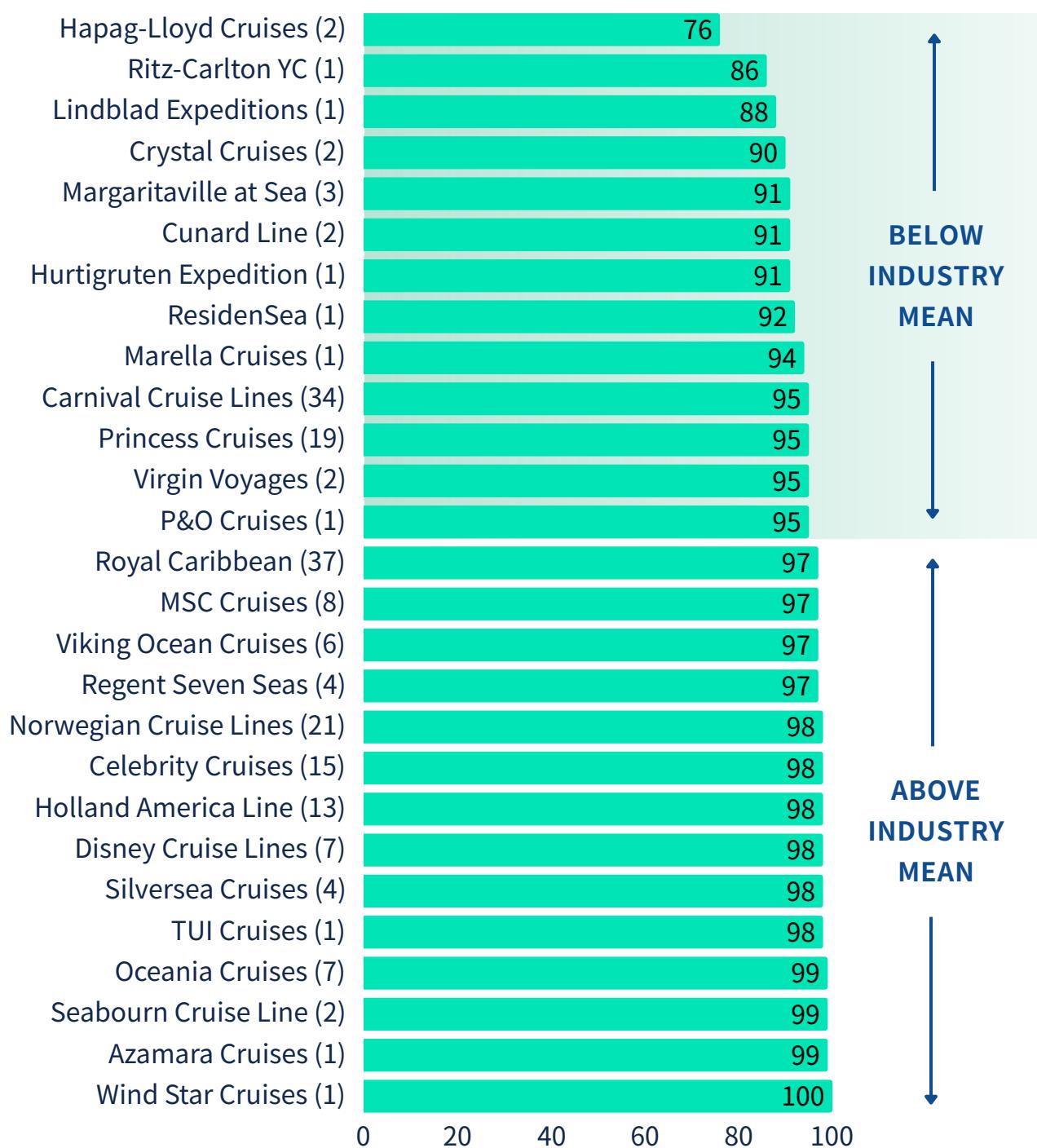
of all inspections (n=139) in 2024 were conducted on vessels from just **SIX CRUISE LINES**, highlighting both the focused oversight on these companies and their strong presence in the U.S. cruise sector.

Mean Inspection Scores of the 'Big Six' Cruise Lines

Cruise Line	No. of Inspections	2024 Mean Score	Change from 2023
Royal Caribbean	37	97	No Change
Carnival Cruise Lines	34	95	Down 1 Point
Norwegian Cruise Lines	21	98	Up 1 Point
Princess Cruises	19	95	No Change
Celebrity Cruises	15	98	Down 1 Point
Holland America Line	13	98	Up 2 Points

CRUISE LINE SCORECARD

Figure 2 – 2024 Mean Inspection Scores by Cruise Line (Number of Inspections in Parentheses)



Mean Inspection Score by Cruise Line

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The Vessel Sanitation Program was established to support the cruise industry in developing and maintaining effective public health systems, with inspections serving as opportunities for cruise lines to practice continuous improvement.



What the Scores Mean

1

Cruise ship failures in VSP inspections are rare.

Since inspections resumed in October 2022 after the suspension of cruise operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, only three ships have failed.

2

Compliance levels across the industry remain high.

Although the percentage of ships scoring 96 or higher declined by 2% in 2024 to 66% (n=131), results still reflect a strong adherence to VSP standards.

3

Inspection scores are not just a measure of how clean a ship is.

While sanitation is crucial, a ship can be spotless and still fail. VSP standards extend far beyond basic cleaning, with most critical requirements related to factors other than cleanliness.

4

Inspection scores do not predict future disease outbreaks.

They reflect compliance at the time of inspection and should not be misinterpreted—as sometimes reported in the media—as an indicator of where passengers are more likely to become ill.



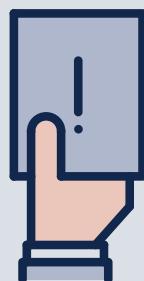
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Violations

Evaluating Vessel Sanitation Program 2024
Inspection Violations

COMPLIANCE AT A GLANCE

From 197 cruise ship inspections in 2024:



5929
VIOLATIONS
WERE IDENTIFIED

AN AVERAGE OF
30.1
VIOLATIONS
PER INSPECTION

AN INCREASE OF
18%

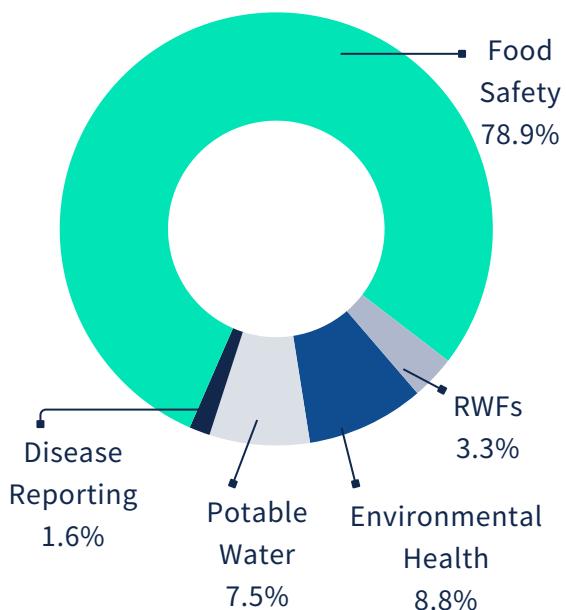
In 2023, the average number of violations per inspection was 25.5

Violations Identified During Inspections

Violations were discovered in nearly all of VSP's 44 compliance categories, **with the exception of**

Item No. 04, which relates to halogen residual levels in a vessel's potable water system. In 2023, only one violation was reported in this category.

Figure 3 – 2024 Violations by Compliance Category (Percentage of Total)



VIOLATION HIGHS AND LOWS

Figure 4 – Top 5 Highest No. of Violations in a Single Inspection

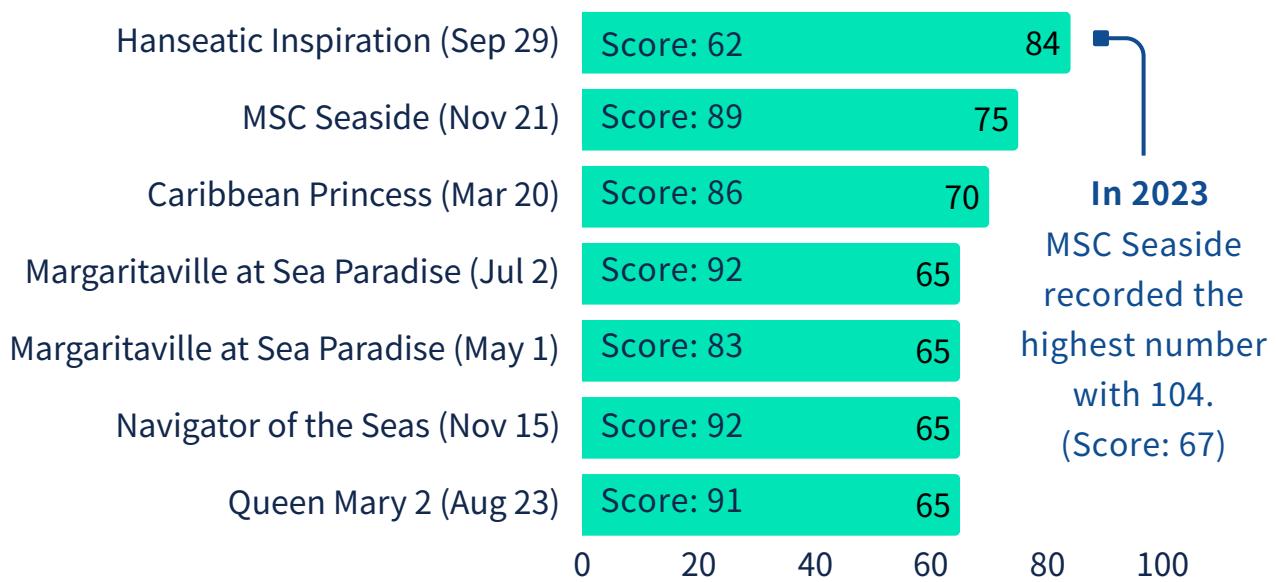
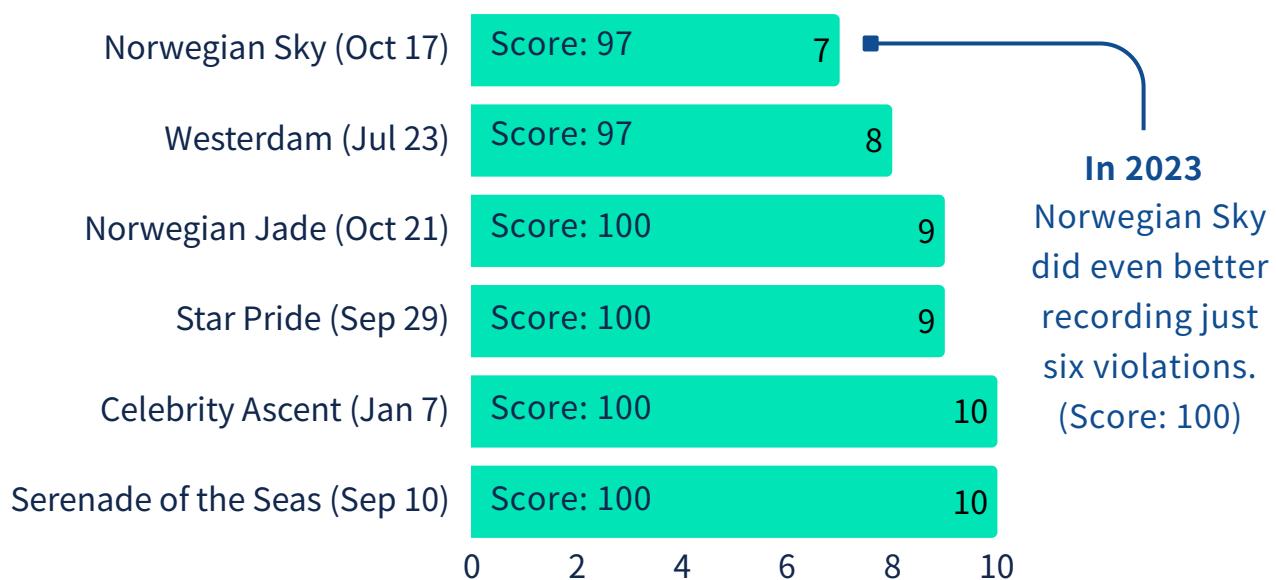


Figure 5 – Top 5 Lowest No. of Violations in a Single Inspection



CRUISE LINE TRENDS

For cruise lines with at least four ship inspections in 2024, the graphic below shows the average number of violations per inspection. The small circle in the top right corner indicates their 2023 average for comparison.



Princess
Cruises
19 Inspections



8 Inspections



34 Inspections



37 Inspections



15 Inspections



4 Inspections



6 Inspections



21 Inspections



4 Inspections



13 Inspections



7 Inspections



7 Inspections

THE MOST CITED VIOLATION

Item No.

33

Item No. 33 remained the most frequently cited violation category in 2024, covering standards for the design, construction, maintenance, and cleanliness of decks, bulkheads, and deckheads in food areas on a cruise ship.

Identified in:

190
of
197
INSPECTIONS

Responsible for:

16% of all violations cited in 2024



Most Item No. 33 violations recorded in a single inspection:

Margaritaville at Sea Paradise (July 2)

20

FINDINGS



The most common violations in this category included damaged deck tiles, missing sealant, accumulated food debris and grease, and water leaks or condensate.

DESPITE ALSO ACCOUNTING FOR THE MOST POINT DEDUCTIONS

1 POINT WAS DEDUCTED IN ONLY

86

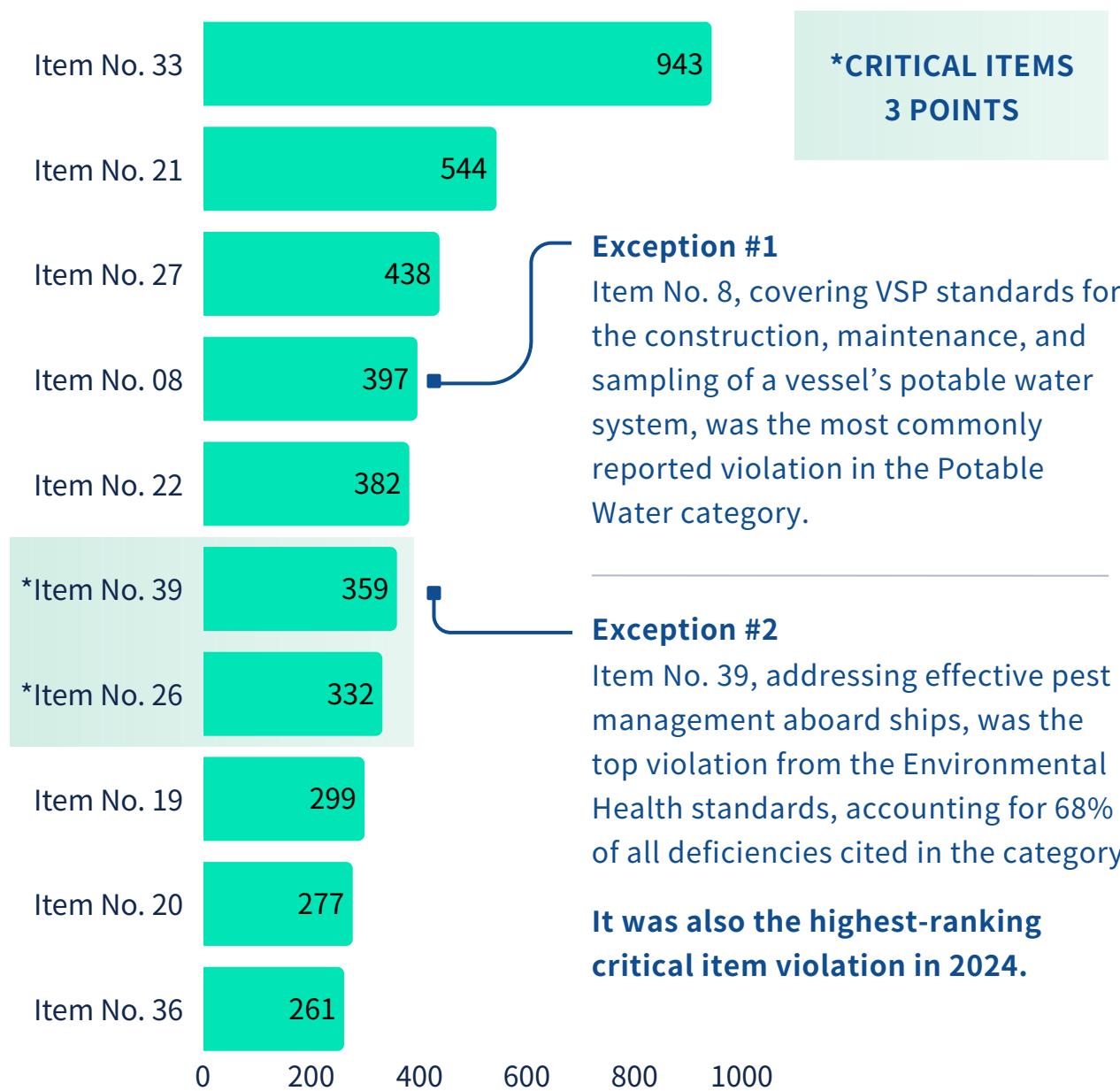
OF THE 190 INSPECTIONS WHERE OBSERVED

TOP TEN REPORTED VIOLATIONS

Figure 6 – Top 10 Most Reported Deficiencies by Item Category



Eight of the 10 categories with the highest reported deficiencies were related to food safety standards.



Total Number of Violations

FOOD SAFETY SPOTLIGHT

Why Food Safety Issues Rank High

For those unfamiliar with the inspection process, it may be surprising that eight of the 10 most frequently cited violations relate to food safety. However, there are clear reasons for this.

Food safety is the largest section of the **VSP Operations Manual**, with nearly as many standards as all other topics combined. It is also one of the few areas where inspectors can directly observe compliance; in most others, inspections rely heavily on documentation review and interviews.

These same eight food safety categories also ranked among the top ten deficiencies in 2023, highlighting ongoing issues with the cleanliness and maintenance of food facilities that warrants attention.

Eight Most Common Food Safety Category Violations

Item No. 33	Standards for the design, construction, maintenance, and cleanliness of decks, bulkheads, and deckheads.
Item No. 21	Standards for the design, construction, and maintenance of nonfood-contact surfaces, equipment, and utensils.
Item No. 27	A standard outlining the cleanliness requirements for nonfood-contact surfaces of equipment.
Item No. 22	Standards for the design, construction, maintenance, and cleanliness of warewashing facilities.
Item No. 26	Critical food safety standards for cleaning and sanitizing food-contact surfaces, equipment, and utensils.
Item No. 19	Standards for preventing contamination of food during storage, preparation, display, and service.
Item No. 20	Standards related to the design, construction, and maintenance of food-contact equipment and utensils.
Item No. 36	Standards for the minimum light intensity in food areas, including light bulbs/heat lamps construction specs.

FOOD SAFETY SPOTLIGHT

Critical food safety standards, where noncompliance poses the greatest risk to the health of crew and guests, account for 10 of the 16 designated critical item categories. Violations in these areas can result in 3–5-point deductions.

In 2024, inspectors observed



855

**CRITICAL FOOD
SAFETY
VIOLATIONS**

with at least one cited in



183

**OF THE 197
INSPECTIONS
CONDUCTED**

18% of all food safety violations were critical items

133 violations for Potentially Hazardous Food temperatures

61 violations were related to food handler infections

108 violations for noncompliant handwashing facilities

IN 2024, ONLY 14 SHIPS PASSED AN INSPECTION WITHOUT A CRITICAL FOOD SAFETY VIOLATION BEING RECORDED

Carnival Legend
Celebrity Ascent
Celebrity Silhouette
Enchantment of the Seas
Grandeur of the Seas
Norwegian Jade
Norwegian Jewel

Norwegian Sky
Norwegian Star
Quantum of the Seas
Sapphire Princess
Serenade of the Seas
Star Pride
Valiant Lady

TOP CRITICAL VIOLATION

Item No.

33

In 2024, the most frequently cited critical compliance violation was Item No. 39, which ranked sixth among the Top 10 Reported Deficiencies and relates to on board pest management.

The Trouble with Pests

The persistent frequency of pest sightings during inspections directly correlates with the high number of violations related to food facility cleanliness and maintenance, as these issues create conditions that attract pests.

In 2023, Item No. 39 ranked third among the top reported deficiencies and remained the most frequently cited critical item standard. While pest citations decreased by 1% in 2024, this may be due to inspectors occasionally grouping multiple sightings into a single violation rather than recording them separately.

PESTS WERE
FOUND IN

131 OF THE **197** INSPECTIONS

Most issues were due to the presence of flies in food areas

3 POINTS
WERE
DEDUCTED IN

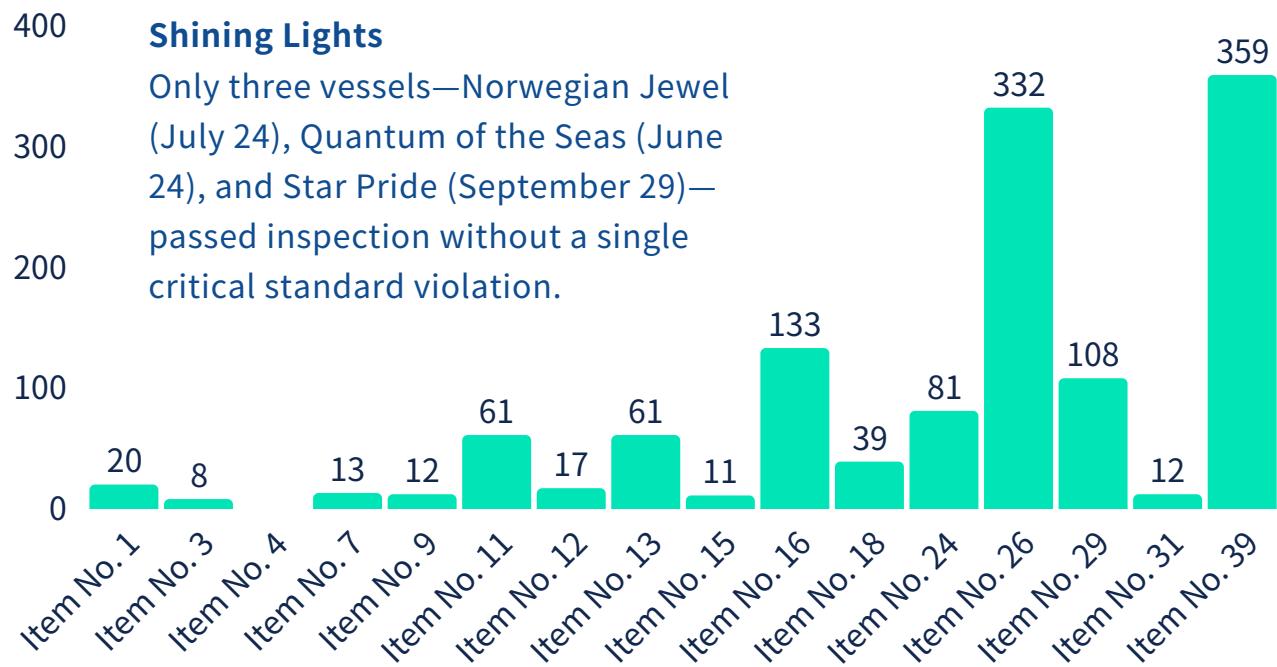
25

OF THE 131
INSPECTIONS WHERE
PESTS WERE SIGHTED



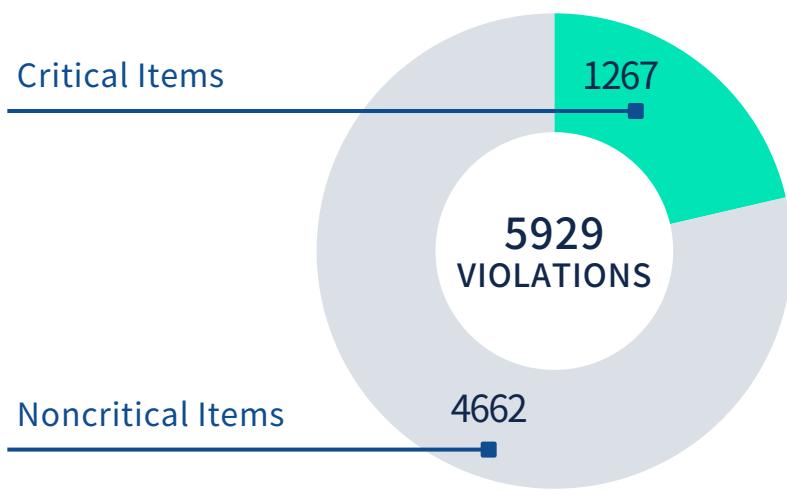
CRITICAL VIOLATION OVERVIEW

Figure 7 – Critical Violations by Item Category



CRITICAL ITEM STANDARDS ACCOUNTED FOR 21% OF ALL VIOLATIONS CITED IN 2024

40%
OF ALL POINTS
DEDUCTED BY VSP
INSPECTORS IN 2024
WERE FOR
VIOLATIONS IN
**CRITICAL ITEM
STANDARDS**



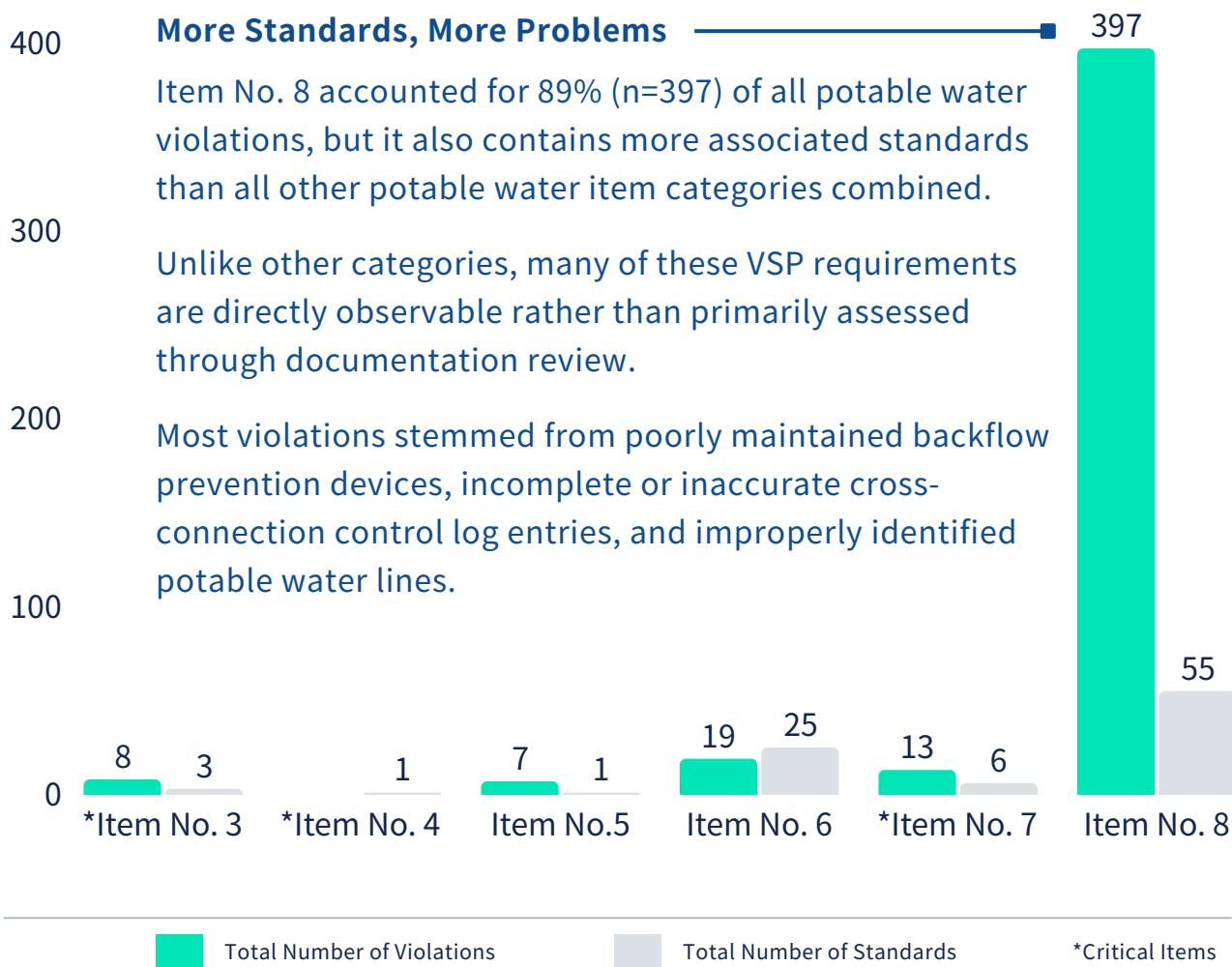
POTABLE WATER SAFETY



The Highest Ranking Nonfood Violation

Item No. 8 was the most frequently cited nonfood-related violation and, for the second consecutive year, ranked fourth among the top reported deficiencies. This item category covers noncritical standards for potable water system construction, maintenance, cross-connections, sampling, and procedures.

Figure 8 – Potable Water Violations vs. Associated VSP Standards by Item Category



POTABLE WATER SAFETY

Figure 9 – Vessels Cited for a Critical Potable Water Violation in 2024

■ Violation Cited

Vessel Name	Item No. 3	Item No. 7	Points Were Deducted In Only Six Inspections
Celebrity Edge		■	
Celebrity Solstice		■	
Coral Princess		■	3-points for piping not properly disinfected before installation.
Disney Magic	■		
Enchantment of the Seas	■		
Evrima	■	■	5-points for routinely producing potable water while at anchor.
Grandeur of the Seas		■	
Hanseatic Inspiration	■	■	3-points for piping not properly disinfected before installation.
Mariner of the Seas		■	
MSC Magnifica		■	
MSC Seashore	■		
National Geographic Sea Bird	■	■	5-points for failing to measure halogen levels during bunkering and production.
Norwegian Gem		■	
Norwegian Sun	■		
Royal Princess		■	
Seabourn Quest		■	3-points for backflow preventers not being disinfected prior to installation.
Seven Seas Grandeur		■	
Silver Shadow		■	
Viking Sky	■	■	

RECREATIONAL WATER SAFETY

Recreational Water Facility Violations: A Sharp Rise from 2023

Recreational Water Facility (RWF) violations accounted for just over 3% (n=195) of all citations in 2024 but nearly 9% (n=67) of total point deductions. Nearly half of all inspected vessels (n=97) received at least one citation for noncompliance with VSP RWF standards.

Violations under Item No. 9, which addresses critical halogen and pH requirements for aquatic venues, rose by 71%, though only 12 citations were recorded. Notably, Carnival Cruise Line (CCL) accounted for seven of these, a sharp shift from the previous year when they had no recorded citations in this category.

Item No. 10, which covers a broad range of standards—including RWF operation and maintenance, pool safety equipment, and contamination response plans—rose from 109 violations in 2023 to 183 in 2024.

These violations resulted in a 3-point deduction in 23 of the 96 inspections where they were cited, making Item No. 10 the fifth-highest item category contributing to point losses during inspections.

Figure 10 – RWF Violations by Item Category



DISEASE REPORTING

There are two VSP item categories outlining standards for disease reporting and surveillance of acute gastroenteritis (AGE) cases:

**Item No.
1**

Critical standards for the reporting of AGE cases to VSP.

**Item No.
2**

Noncritical standards related to disease surveillance records.

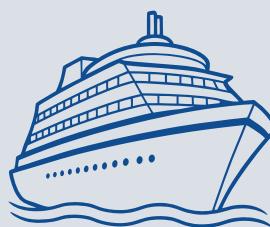
In 2024, inspectors observed



92

**DISEASE
REPORTING
VIOLATIONS**

with at least one cited in



103

**OF THE 197
INSPECTIONS
CONDUCTED**

For the second consecutive year

**PRINCESS
CRUISES**

had the most violations

4 Item No. 1 citations for inaccurate reports

11 Item No. 2 findings for inaccurate records

7 fewer reporting violations were cited in 2024 compared to 2023, while record-keeping violations increased by 19



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Point Deductions

Evaluating Vessel Sanitation Program 2024
Inspection Point Deductions

POINTS DEDUCTED IN 2024

The Variability of Scores

During inspections, points are deducted at the category level rather than for each individual violation. This means that whether a ship has one or multiple violations within the same item number, the total deduction is capped at the assigned category value, ranging from 1 to 5 points.

Of the 5,186 points that could have been deducted from vessel scores across all 197 inspections in 2024, inspectors applied less than 15%, resulting in a total deduction of 777 points.

According to VSP's website, points are deducted when there is **a pattern of similar violations within a category** or a single, **significant violation**—though the exact criteria for defining both remain unclear.

While weighted scoring systems are designed to ensure objectivity, the interpretation of violations and the determination of significance introduce an element of subjectivity. Additionally, inspectors' professional judgement and risk assessments may vary, leading to differences in how points are deducted across inspections.

A Point of View



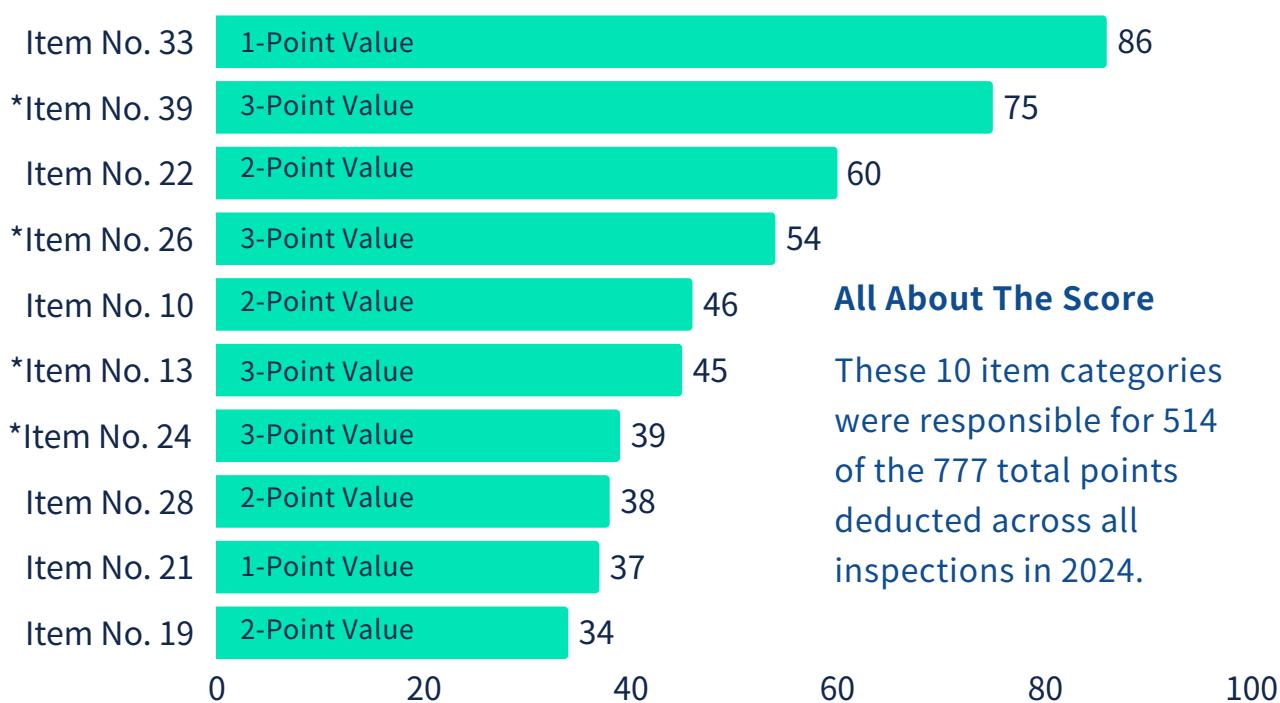
Of the
5929
violations
cited across
197 inspections

ONLY
777
points were
deducted from
inspection scores

out of a possible
5186

WHERE MOST POINTS WERE LOST

Figure 11 – Top 10 Item Categories Responsible for the Most Point Deductions



The 10 item categories above accounted for 66% (n=514) of all points deducted, with six also ranking among the most frequently cited violations (Figure 6).

Among the most penalized categories, **Item No. 13 had the highest likelihood of leading to point deductions:** 24.6 points per 100 violations. As citations in this category are raised only when patterns of similar violations or a single, significant lapse in food safety standards are observed, this is unsurprising.

Item No. 24, ranked 18th in total citations, had the second-highest deduction rate (16.0 points per 100 violations), followed by Item No. 10 (12.5 points per 100 violations). Item No. 24, which covers critical sanitizing temperatures and concentrations for warewashing equipment, was cited in 59 inspections, with three points deducted in 13 of those.

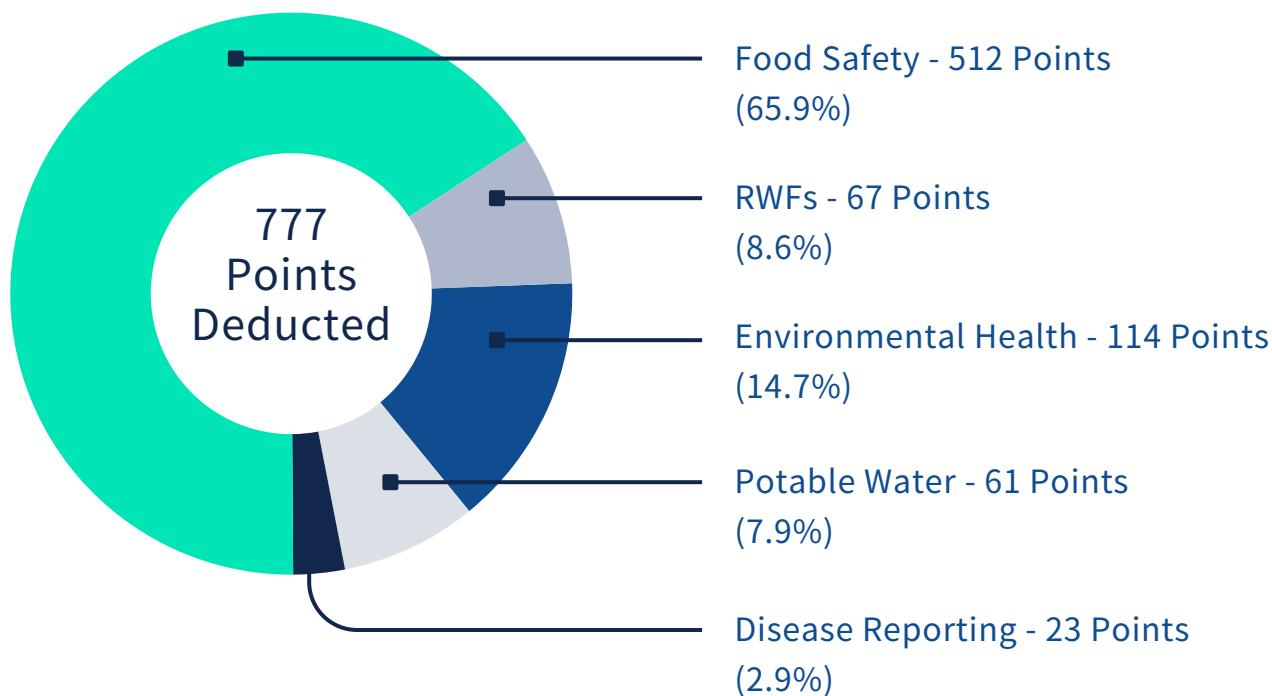


Total Points Deducted

*Critical Items

POINT DEDUCTION OVERVIEW

Figure 12 – 2024 Point Deductions by Compliance Category



Item Categories with the Highest Deduction Rates

Item No.
09

With 58.3 points per 100 violations, Item No. 9 had the highest likelihood of leading to point deductions when violations were observed.

Item No.
03

With 45.0 points per 100 violations, Item No. 3 was the second most likely category to result in point deductions when cited.

Item No.
44

Item No. 44, similar to Item No. 13, is cited only for patterns of similar violations or a single significant lapse in nonfood standards. It had the third-highest deduction rate, with 27.5 points per 100 violations.



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Discussion

Report Conclusions & Recommendations

DISCUSSION

The 2024 inspection data highlights several key trends. While most vessels continue to demonstrate strong compliance with VSP standards, certain violation categories have seen notable increases, signaling areas that require greater attention.

Violation Trends

Recreational Water Facility violations, though comprising just over 3% (n=195) of all citations, had a disproportionate impact on overall compliance. The significant rise in Item No. 10 violations suggests a need for greater oversight and preventive measures in this area.

Most violations remain concentrated within the same ten item categories, which together accounted for 71% (n=4,232) of all deficiencies. Seven of these relate directly to the cleanliness and maintenance of food facilities. If pest sightings—often a consequence of such deficiencies—are included, this number rises to eight.

The persistence of these violations suggests that current corrective actions fail to address their underlying causes. A review of corrective action statements reveals, for instance, a heavy reliance on reactive maintenance rather than structured, preventive programs. The recurrence of these issues underscores the need for a more proactive and systematic approach to compliance.

Notably, VSP does not review or approve corrective action statements submitted by operators; instead, compliance is simply checked at the next inspection. This raises the question of whether VSP should provide more structured guidance on best practices for corrective actions, rather than relying on self-reported operator fixes.

DISCUSSION

Another area of concern is the high prevalence of critical standard violations, which accounted for 21% (n=1,267) of all reported deficiencies. These trends may stem from procedural weaknesses, training gaps, or broader operational issues.

The fact that only three vessels passed inspection without a critical violation raises the question of whether current compliance expectations are overly stringent or whether gaps in implementation and oversight are driving these results.

Several factors could be contributing to this trend, including:

- The associated risks are not fully appreciated across the industry.
- The operational challenges of compliance exceed the resources available to ships.
- The categorization of critical standards may be too strict, requiring a reevaluation of how violations are classified and weighted.

These findings suggest a need for a more in-depth assessment of whether VSP's critical standards align with practical operational constraints and whether existing compliance strategies are effectively mitigating public health risks.

Scoring and Compliance Trends

While almost all vessels continue to achieve passing scores, patterns of point deductions indicate persistent compliance challenges.

The concentration of deductions within a limited set of violation categories raises concerns about whether scoring outcomes effectively reflect public health risks: or whether operators have adapted to mitigate point losses without fully resolving root causes.

DISCUSSION

If vessels repeatedly accumulate violations in the same areas, it highlights the need for a stronger focus on sustained compliance rather than just passing inspections.

The weighted scoring system is intended to help cruise lines prioritize improvements, but its effectiveness depends on consistency in its application and a deeper emphasis on long-term corrective actions rather than reactive fixes.

Looking Forward: Strengthening Compliance Through Root-Cause Analysis

To advance public health compliance, the emphasis should shift from correcting individual violations to addressing their root causes.

Persistent deficiencies indicate that many corrective actions remain reactive rather than preventive, treating symptoms rather than the underlying operational gaps. Cruise lines should prioritize meaningful compliance improvements rather than simply optimizing for a higher score.

Ultimately, the goal of the VSP inspection process is not just compliance, but a proactive approach to public health: one that mitigates preventable risks, strengthens operational resilience, and fosters a culture of continuous improvement.



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Appendices

List of VSP Item Number Categories & References

VSP STANDARD CATEGORIES

How VSP Standards Are Categorized

The table below lists the 44 Item Numbers that categorize all VSP Operations Manual standards, along with a brief description of their focus areas and assigned point values.

These are divided into 16 Critical Compliance Item categories and 28 Noncritical Compliance Item categories, each addressing key public health requirements.

VSP ITEM NUMBER CATEGORIES 1-6

Item No.	Point Value	Description
DISEASE REPORTING		
01	4	Disease Reporting
02	1	Medical Logs Maintenance
POTABLE WATER		
03	5	Source, Bunkering & Production; Halogen Residual
04	5	Distribution System Halogen Residual
05	2	Distribution System Halogen Analyzer Calibrated
06	2	Halogen Analyzer Chart Recorder Maintenance, Operation, Records; Microbiological Sampling, Records

VSP STANDARD CATEGORIES

VSP ITEM NUMBER CATEGORIES 7-17

Item No.	Point Value	Description
POTABLE WATER		
07	3	System Protection Cross-Connections, Backflow; Disinfection
08	1	Filling Hoses, Caps, Connections, Procedures; Sample Records, Valves; System Construction, Maintenance
RECREATIONAL WATER FACILITIES		
09	3	RWF Halogen Residuals
10	2	RWF Maintenance, Safety Equipment
FOOD SAFETY		
11	5	Food Handlers Infections, Communicable Diseases
12	4	Hands Washed; Hygienic Practices
13	3	Management, Knowledge, Monitoring
14	1	Outer Clothing Clean; Jewelry, Hair, Hand Sanitizers
15	5	Food Source, Sound Condition; Food Reservice
16	5	Potentially Hazardous Food Temperatures
17	2	Temperature Practices; Thawing

VSP STANDARD CATEGORIES

VSP ITEM NUMBER CATEGORIES 18-29

Item No.	Point Value	Description
FOOD SAFETY		
18	3	Cross-Contamination
19	2	Food Protection; Original Containers; Labeling; In-Use Food Dispensing, Preparation Utensils
20	2	PHF Temperature Maintenance Facilities; Food-Contact Surfaces; Food TMDs
21	1	Nonfood-Contact Surfaces; Ambient TMDs
22	2	Warewashing Facilities; TMDs; Test Kits
23	2	Prewash; Wash & Rinse Solutions
24	3	Sanitizing Rinse
25	1	Wiping Cloths/Chef's Towels
26	3	Food-Contact Surfaces Equipment/Utensils Clean; Safe Materials
27	1	Nonfood-Contact Surfaces Equipment/Utensils Clean
28	2	Equipment/Utensils/Linen/Single/Service Storage Handling Dispensing; Cleaning Frequency
29	3	Facilities Convenient, Accessible, Design, Installation

VSP STANDARD CATEGORIES

VSP ITEM NUMBER CATEGORIES 30-42

Item No.	Point Value	Description
FOOD SAFETY		
30	1	Hand Cleanser, Sanitary Towels, Waste Receptacles; Handwashing Signs; Maintenance
31	3	Toxic Items
32	1	Solid Waste Containers
33	1	Decks/Bulkheads/Deckheads
34	1	Plumbing Fixtures/Supply Lines/Drain Lines/Drains
35	2	Liquid Waste Disposal
36	1	Lighting
37	1	Rooms/Equipment Venting
38	1	Unnecessary Articles, Cleaning Equipment; Unauthorized Personnel
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH		
39	3	IPM Program Effective; Approved Pesticide Application
40	1	IPM Procedures; Outer Openings Protection
41	2	Housekeeping
42	1	Child Activity Centers

VSP STANDARD CATEGORIES

VSP ITEM NUMBER CATEGORIES 43-44

Item No.	Point Value	Description
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH		
43	1	Ventilation
44	2	Person In Charge, Knowledge

References

[1] CDC. Vessel Sanitation Program 2018 Operations Manual. Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services, CDC; 2018.

<https://www.cdc.gov/vessel-sanitation/php/guidance/index.html>

[2] CDC. Vessel Sanitation Program: Inspection Reports. Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services, CDC; 2024.

<https://www.cdc.gov/InspectionQueryTool/InspectionSearch.aspx>



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