

The Environment



USPS[®] IS IN IT!



The United States Power Squadrons[®]

Promoting Safe Boating
On the Water and in the Classroom

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**United States Power Squadrons[®]
Sail and Power Boating**



Environmental Best Practices for Boaters

**Setting the Example for
Stewardship of Our Seas, Rivers & Lakes**

Environmental Best Practices for Boaters

Trash

- Retrieve trash that does get into the water (even if it isn't yours) – keep a net handy for this purpose.
- Limit the packaging and plastic you take aboard.
- Recycle all cans, glass, plastics and mono-filament fishing line.
- Have easy to identify trash and recycling containers aboard.
- Do not throw or let any trash blow overboard – including cigarette butts (they contain plastic). Plastic materials are harmful to fish and birds!
- Do not throw fish waste into shallow or near-marina waters – discard in deep water or in the trash ashore.

Sewage

- Use restrooms onshore prior to departure.
- Use approved Marine Sanitation Devices (MSDs) underway.
- Pump out and rinse holding tanks regularly.
- Follow a regular maintenance schedule for your MSD based on the manufacturer's recommendations.
- Use enzyme-based products for odor control and reducing solids in holding tanks.
- Never discharge raw sewage in U.S. territorial waters.

Fueling and Spills

- Know how much fuel your tanks hold – fill with caution!
- Fuel expands as it warms up – don't top off your fuel tanks.
- Use absorbent pads to catch drips between the dock and boat, and around the vent overflow – then dispose of them properly!
- Fill trailerboat tanks before launching the boat and other portable gas tanks ashore.
- Keep engine tuned and watch for leaking seals, gaskets, hoses and fuel lines.
- Keep an oil absorbent pad under the engine and replace at least once a year.

- Maintain a clean and dry bilge.
- Plan for spills – keep absorbent material at hand.
- Never discharge oily bilge water overboard – pump into dockside holding tank or have professionally removed. An oil absorbent pad swirled in bilge water will collect oil.

Vessel Maintenance

- Wash boat regularly with fresh water to avoid frequent use of harsh detergents.
- Choose phosphate-free, biodegradable and non-toxic cleaners.
- Waxing & buffing requires less use of cleaning solutions – and your boat looks better!
- Try to do major cleaning and maintenance tasks when boat is out of the water.
- Conserve water by using a spray nozzle on the hose.
- Use drop cloth when sanding and scraping – collect all paint chips, dust and other residue, and dispose of properly.
- Share leftover paint and varnish.
- Dispose of solvents and waste gas at local hazardous waste collection sites.
- Use environmentally safe anti-fouling paints and follow manufacturer's instructions.
- Recycle used zincs.
- Keep engine(s) tuned: this reduces carbon monoxide emissions when moored, reduces hydrocarbon and soot emissions into the air, and saves fuel.
- Dispose of drained oil and any spent or spilled coolant at appropriate recycling centers when performing maintenance yourself.

Mariner's Environmental Awareness

- When fishing—keep only those fish you intend to eat – practice “catch and release” techniques to insure survival of those you throw back.
- Proceed slowly in shallow areas and do not disturb wildlife.

- Avoid stirring up bottom—suspended sediment limits light penetration and depletes oxygen.
- Sea otters, sea lions, manatees, whales and other sea mammals can be injured by impact with boats at higher speeds – avoid areas of high animal population or proceed slowly.
- Report any injured animal to local wildlife authorities—many times the life can be saved.
- Protect waters from nuisance, invasive species—remove any visible mud, plants, fish or animals before transporting. Clean and dry anything that comes in contact with the water (boats, trailers, equipment, clothing, dogs, etc.)
- Never release plants, fish or animals into a body of water unless they came from that body of water. Bilge water can also transport invasive species.
- High wake causes shoreline erosion and destruction of habitat.
- Disturbing sea grass beds increases erosion and disturbs the nursery habitats of many species of fish. Avoid these areas underway and when docking or beaching vessels.
- Noise and boat movement easily disturbs migrating and nesting birds - which causes harmful expenditure of energy, abandonment of nests to predators, and harmful heat or cold exposure.
- Harassment of wildlife is illegal and causes undue stress.

Mariner's Environment Stewardship

- Obey the laws governing our boating waters!
- Set the example for your crew and guests.
- Set the example for other boaters on our waters.
- Support marinas and other boating facilities that are environmentally responsible.
- Encourage those marinas and other boating facilities not providing trash cans, recycling containers and pumpout facilities to do so.