

DC Clean Marina Partnership



CLEAN BOATING TIPS

Washington, DC

Contain Trash

- Prevent trash from being tossed or blown overboard.
- Retrieve trash that blows overboard.
- Pack food in reusable containers.
- Buy simply packaged, non-plastic products; plastic can be deadly to fish and birds.
- Prohibit tossing cigarette butts overboard; they are made of plastic (cellulose acetate).
- Bring back what you take out; dispose of trash at home or in a marina dumpster.

Clean Gently

- Wash your boat frequently with plain water and a sponge or brush.
- Use detergents sparingly.
- Use phosphate-free, biodegradable, and nontoxic cleaners.
- Wax your boat; a good coat of wax prevents most surface dirt from sticking.
- Clean teak wood with a mild soap powder and a nylon brush.
- Conserve water; put an automatic shutoff spray nozzle on your hose.

Recycle Regularly

- Recycle cans, glass, plastic, newspaper, metal, antifreeze, used oil, and lead batteries.
- Purchase drinks and food in recyclable containers.
- Bring back used monofilament fishing line for recycling ashore.
- Use appropriate recycling bins at marina or yacht club.

Protect Sensitive Habitat

- Watch your wake; excessive wakes can lead to shoreline erosion—and to unhappy boaters at anchor or in dock.
- Do not disturb wildlife along the rivers and coves.
- Boat slowly in shallow areas.
- Avoid contact with submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) and avoid damaging propeller.

Fuel Cautiously

- Only top off your tank just before leaving on a trip.
- If you refill your tank upon return to port, fill it only 90 percent full to allow room for thermal expansion.
- Remember that fuel expands as it warms up, and fuel from an underground storage tank can be 30 to 50 degrees cooler than air temperature.
- Use oil-absorbent pads to catch drips from the fuel intake and vent overflow.
- Install a fuel/air separator on the vent line between the fuel tank and vent.

- Fill portable fuel tanks ashore.
- Add a fuel stabilizer to the tank if you use your engine infrequently, especially if you use diesel.

Control Oil in the Bilge

- Keep your engine well-tuned; No leaking seals, gaskets, or hoses.
- Never discharge bilge water with sheen; it is illegal.
- Place oil-absorbent pads or bioremediating boom in the bilge.
- Place an oil-absorbent pad under the engine during oil changes and to catch minor oil drops.
- Replace oil-absorbent materials as needed or at least once a year.
- Check fuel lines for damage; replace with alcohol-resistant hoses.
- Secure fuel hoses to prevent chafing and leaks.

Properly Dispose of Oil-Absorbent Materials

- When an oil-absorbent pad is saturated with gas, allow it to air dry on the dock and then reuse it.
- When the pad is saturated with diesel or oil, double-bag the pad in plastic bags, placing one sealed bag inside another; dispose in your home trash.
- Bioremediating bilge booms should not be put in plastic bags; discard in regular trash.

Maintain Your Vessel Wisely

- Collect all paint chips and dust; use vacuum sander; dispose of rubbish in regular trash.
- Share leftover paint and varnish with a friend.
- Leave empty paint cans open to dry before disposing in regular trash.
- Bring used solvents and waste gas to local centers on hazardous waste collection days.
- Use the less toxic propylene glycol antifreeze (orange color), not the toxic ethylene glycol (green color).
- Adjust boat engine to eliminate visible exhaust smoke after starting up.
- Keep your engine clean so you can quickly spot any leaks.
- Put used oil filters in double plastic bags before recycling.
- Select the least toxic bottom paint that will effectively control fouling in DC waters.

Sewage

- Never discharge raw sewage anywhere in U.S. territorial waters.
- District of Columbia waters are “no discharge” per District law, so always use pumpouts; every DC marina and yacht club has pumpout equipment for customers and members.
- Type I or II discharge marine sanitation devices (MSDs) may not be used in DC waters and never in any no-discharge area in Virginia, Maryland or other state.
- Pump out and rinse holding tanks regularly, before they are full.
- Use enzyme-based products to control odors and reduce solids in holding tanks.
- Avoid holding tank products that contain formaldehyde and quarternary ammonium compounds (QACs).
- Use a regular MSD maintenance schedule based on manufacturer’s recommendations.

Dispose of Fish Waste Properly

- Do not throw fish waste into marina waters.
- Discard fish waste over deep waters or in the trash in a plastic bag.
- Save fish waste for use as chum or bait, or in home garden compost piles.

Be a Responsible Boater

- Learn about environmentally safe products and practices.
- Read product labels; avoid buying toxic cleaners labeled with “Danger Warning” or “Avoid Contact with Eyes, Skin or Mouth.”
- Share clean boating information with other boaters.
- Obey laws governing speeding, littering and discharge.
- Help clean DC waters by removing any floating trash that gets trapped in your slip.
- Encourage marinas and yacht clubs to provide trash cans, recycling bins and pumpout stations.
- Support Clean Marina-designated facilities for being environmentally responsible.

Much of this information was adapted for the District of Columbia from the Maryland Clean Boating Tips brochure. The National Park Service, as part of the Washington, DC Clean Marina Program Partnership, funded this tip sheet.