



## CLEAN BOATER FACT SHEET

# Bilge Water, Boat Sewage and Gray Water

All boats generate wastewater. Sources include bilge water, marine toilets, and laundry/dishwashing facilities. Please follow the tips listed below to make sure that you dispose of this wastewater properly.

## Bilge Water

Oil and gasoline can collect in your bilge and mix with bilge water. Discharging your bilge to the water exposes marine and aquatic organisms to these toxic substances.

1. Avoid pumping any bilge water that is oily or has a sheen.
2. Keep your engine well tuned, to prevent leaks, and clean; to spot oil and gas leaks more easily.
3. Regularly check fuel lines and hoses for leaks to prevent oil from entering the bilge.
4. Place an oil-absorbent pad in your bilge. Change the oil-absorbent pad regularly. If the pad is saturated with gas, allow it to air dry and reuse. If the pad is saturated with diesel or oil, double-bag and discard in the trash.
5. Consider installing a bilge oil filter or oil/water separator in your bilge discharge line to allow you to directly discharge bilge water while protecting the environment. Check with your marina staff to see if the marina offers services to install such systems or if they can refer you to an installer..
6. Ask your marina if they provide bilge water removal services. If they do not, maybe they know where such a service is provided nearby.

## Boat Sewage

Boat sewage contains disease-causing bacteria that can make people sick either through direct contact in the water, or through consumption of affected shellfish. Sewage also disrupts the chemical balance of the natural environment, degrading fish and shellfish habitat.

1. Use pumpouts! For a list of pumpouts in Connecticut, call the nearest marina or harbormaster, or contact the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's Boating Division at (860) 434-8638, [www.ct.gov/dep/cva](http://www.ct.gov/dep/cva).
2. Always use shore side restrooms when docked.
3. All Connecticut coastal waters are designated as No Discharge Areas. When operating a vessel on a body of water where the discharge of treated or untreated sewage is prohibited the operator must secure the device in a manner that prevents any discharge. Some acceptable methods are: padlocking overboard discharge valves in the closed position, using non releasable wire tie to hold overboard discharge

valves in the closed position, closing overboard discharge valves and removing the handle, locking the door, with padlock or keylock, to the space enclosing the toilets (for Type I and Type II only). Additionally, pursuant to federal regulations the discharge of all sewage from vessels is prohibited in all inland waters in Connecticut and the above-described requirement to secure MSDs applies. For more information on No Discharge Areas in Connecticut visit the US Environmental Protection Agency's website at [www.epa.gov/region1/eco/nodiscrg/ct.html](http://www.epa.gov/region1/eco/nodiscrg/ct.html) or visit the CT DEP website at [www.ct.gov/dep](http://www.ct.gov/dep), click on the heading "Programs and Services" and click on "No Discharge Area".

4. Maintain your Marine Sanitation Device (MSD). Keep the disinfectant tank full, use biodegradable treatment chemicals, and follow the manufacturer's suggested maintenance program.
5. Never discharge your holding tank soon after adding deodorants since some deodorants contain toxic formaldehyde that can kill fish.
6. Have your MSD inspected regularly to ensure that it is functioning properly.
7. Do not dispose of fats, solvents, oils, emulsifiers, disinfectants, paints, poisons, phosphates, diapers, and other similar products in your MSD.

## Gray Water

Gray water includes soaps and detergents from boat showers, dishwashing, and laundry facilities. These soaps, even those labeled as "biodegradable," contain substances that might be harmful to marine life.

1. Use shoreside showers, dishwashing stations, and laundry facilities whenever they are available.
2. Check product labels and use low nitrogen and phosphorous detergents for on-board laundry, dish washing and general cleaning.
3. Use all soaps and cleaners sparingly.