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## Green Boating Tips

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### On the boat

Make sure your boat complies with Coast Guard Regulations

#### Engine:

- A well-**tuned engine** uses less fuel
- Use the grade of gasoline specified by the engine manufacturer
- Use or install a device to **prevent overboard discharges** from your tank vent. Such products will give warning and work to prevent spills when your tank is reaching its fuel capacity. Fill your tank slowly and leave 10% empty to prevent it from overflowing and allowing the fuel to expand as it warms.
- **Avoid using solvents or toxic chemicals** to clean engine parts. Use mechanical means (such as hand-scraping caked oil off equipment) or use less toxic solvents (water-based). Don't let solvents run into the bilge.
- **Minimize** the use of onboard **generators**
- **Minimize** the amount of time that you **idle at the dock**
- **Use dock-side electrical power** in lieu of generators
- Use **Biodiesel**, even a small percentage makes a difference
- Use **4-stroke** instead of 2 stroke outboard engines
- Consider **hybrid or electric** propulsion

#### Hull & Propeller:

- **Check your propeller.** If your boat is slow "out of the hole" or lacks top-end speed, you might have the wrong propeller
- While painting your boat, **use legal bottom paints and biodegradable cleaning agents** to ensure that no paint or cleansers enter the water. When searching for environmentally responsible boat cleaning products, search the Green Seal's database of 'Green Seal Certified' products at [www.greenseal.org](http://www.greenseal.org)
- Make sure the **hull is clean**

#### Deck:

- Wash with fresh water and spot clean to prevent dirt build up. **Do not allow soaps or detergents to enter into the water.** Soaps

may add nutrients that promote algae bloom. An increase in algae bloom can lead to a decrease in oxygen available to fish and other aquatic animals and can lead to suffocation.

- Use **less harmful cleaning methods**, including *baking soda, vinegar, lemon juice, borax*, and good old-fashioned elbow grease.
- Look for the words “**phosphate-free and “biodegradable”** on the cleaning products used onboard. *Buy only what you need.* The smaller the product size, the smaller the potential spill.

### **Bilge:**

- Maintain a **clean bilge**
- Consider a **bioremediation product** such as BIO-SOK to convert hydrocarbons into safe compounds.
- **Prevent oily discharges from the bilge**—Keep your engine well tuned to prevent fuel and oil leaks. Secure an oil absorbent pad or pillow under your engine where drips may occur. Check the pads often, do not let them clog the bilge pump, and use Earth911 to find out where to dispose of them.
- **Spill-proof your oil changes**—Use an oil change pump to transfer oil to a spill-proof container. Wrap a plastic bag or absorbent pad around the oil filter to prevent oil from spilling into the bilge. Use Earth 911 to recycle your oil and filters.
- **Inspect fuel lines, valves, oil seals, gaskets** and all connections for leaks and deterioration. When replacing hoses, new hose sections should be the right length to prevent damage and leaks.
- **Install drip pans** under all equipment that might leak.
- **Don't use soaps and detergents to clean oil or fuel.** Soaps emulsify oil, breaking it into invisible droplets that disperse through the water. Adding detergents is illegal and bad for the environment.
- **Use a bilge pump-out facility to pump oil or oily water out of the bilge.** Use Earth911 to find bilge pump-out facilities.

### **On the water**

- **Slower speeds** on the water will reduce fuel usage
- **Proper use of trim tabs** reduce drag, especially while accelerating up to planing speeds
- **Stow your trash**
- **Never throw** cigarette butts, fishing line, or any other garbage into the ocean. Take advantage of shore-side facilities to recycle plastic,

glass, metal and paper. Recycle your winter storage shrink-wrap at local marinas, dealers and suppliers.

- **Monitor dumping**—Never discharge sewage within three miles of shore. Use Earth911 to find a harbor pump-out stations and shore-side facilities. Manage your sewage in general or better yet install a composting head!
- **Reduce Greywater discharges**—This is the soapy water resulting from boat maintenance. Try a phosphate-free biodegradable soap for your maintenance. Also minimize discharge by doing dishes and showers on shore whenever possible.
- **Have a float plan** so you know exactly where you're going

## In the Marina

### Waste:

- **Recycle your waste**
- Look for **catch basins or other collection systems** at posted wash areas at local marinas. Pull the boat out of the water to clean the hull and be sure to capture any sediments and dispose of properly. Soft, abrasive toxic paints contain toxic materials such as copper, tin, mercury, chromium and lead that are harmful to marine life
- Dispose of **paints, batteries, antifreeze, cleaning products, oil and other hazardous wastes at a waste collection facility** when you return to land. 12V batteries are among the most recycled products in the world. Many marine accessories stores offer a \$10.00 credit on a new battery when you return your used one. Never discharge your sewage when you are near the shore. Check local rules and regulations for specific restrictions. Nearby pump-out stations and shore-side facilities are available for proper waste disposal.

### SanitationWaste:

- Always use a **sewage pump-out facility** to empty holding tanks
- If you have a “Y” **valve** with a through hull fitting that allows untreated sewage discharge directly overboard, it should only be used in the ocean beyond the **three mile territorial limit**. At all other times, the valve should be locked in closed position (use a padlock or non-releasable wire tie) so nothing can be discharged overboard.
- For sanitation systems that require treatment chemicals, look for **chlorine-free and formaldehyde-free products**

### Spills:

- **Do not allow excess cleaning products to enter into the water.** The most damaging pollutants are those that persist and tend to increase in concentration as they are transferred through the food chain
- **Limit fuel spills**—Fill your tank slowly and use absorbent pads or rags to catch drips and spills. Avoid “topping off” and leave the tank 10 percent empty to allow fuel to expand as it warms. Learn more about boat fueling.
- **Do not add soap**—Avoid using soap to disperse fuel and oil spills. It increases harm to the environment, and it is illegal.

### **Hull Cleaning:**

- **Minimize boat cleaning and maintenance in the water**—If possible, save maintenance projects for the boatyard. When performing work on the water minimize your impact by containing waste. Learn more about boat cleaning and maintenance.
- **Reduce toxic discharges from bottom paints**—Use a less toxic (or nontoxic antifouling) paint to minimize the discharge of heavy metals into the water. Dry storage is another good technique; it reduces the need for antifouling paints and saves money.
- Prepare the surface with **dustless vacuum sanders**. They help to prevent emissions of sanding debris that coat other boats, contaminate the water, and become airborne pollution.

Tips provided by Earth 911, Discover Boating, Dept. of Ecology, WA.