

# CLEAN BOATER TIP SHEET

## HULL MAINTENANCE

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As a boat owner, you are well aware of the care your investment requires. In order to keep your boat safe, reliable, and attractive, you must continually clean and maintain it. As you do so, you can minimize environmental impacts by following the hull maintenance recommendations listed below.

### Routine Hull Maintenance

- 🐛 If your marina allows do-it-yourself boat maintenance on site, perform repairs and maintenance activities in designated areas and follow your marina's "yard rules."
- 🐛 When working in marinas, use the specially designated sanding and painting areas. Check with the marina manager for the location and proper use of these areas.
- 🐛 Work indoors or under cover whenever wind could potentially blow dust and paint into the open air.
- 🐛 Do not work on your hull near the water.
- 🐛 Avoid cleaning your boat bottom when it is in the water because toxic antifouling hull paint may be removed and washed into the water.

### Sanding, Grinding, or Scraping

Sanding and painting can create environmental hazards if not conducted in a controlled area. Many antifouling paints are made with toxic chemicals designed to leach out and prevent bottom growth on the hull. When concentrated amounts of these materials are allowed to escape from hull maintenance and repair areas, there is a potential for environmental harm. Solvents, thinners, and brush cleaners can harm the environment if improperly handled. These materials contain cancer-causing agents and have a tendency to sink in the water, degrading water quality and damaging aquatic life and the aquatic environment.

- 🐛 Use environmentally friendly tools, such as vacuum sanders and grinders, to collect and trap dust. Some marinas have this equipment for rent; check with the manager.
- 🐛 Clean up all debris, trash, sanding dust, and paint chips immediately following any maintenance or repair activity. Dispose of the debris in your regular trash at home or in designated receptacles at your marina.
- 🐛 Use a drop cloth beneath the hull to catch sanding dust and paint drops when working over unpaved surfaces. Do not sand on windy days.

- 🐛 When sanding or grinding hulls over a paved surface, vacuuming or sweeping loose paint particles is the preferred clean-up method. Do not hose the debris away.
- 🐛 Use a dust-free sander if possible. It will reduce clean-up time and is more enjoyable to use because you won't be breathing in harmful paint dust. Ask your marina manager if dust-free sanders are provided through the marina.
- 🐛 If you are not using a dust-free sander, use tarps or filter cloth to help collect your scraps.

### Painting and Varnishing

Boat paint contains harmful components, including metals, solvents, and dyes. Precautions must be taken to prevent paint and paint chips from ending up in the water. You can play an important role in protecting water quality while painting your vessel by following these simple tips:

- 🐛 Buy paints, varnishes, solvents, and thinners in sizes that can be used within one year to avoid having to dispose of stale products. Share leftover paint and varnish with other boaters. Take unused products to a hazardous waste facility or ask your marina manager where to dispose of them.
- 🐛 When possible, use water-based paints and solvents.
- 🐛 Switch to longer lasting, harder or nontoxic antifouling paint at your next haul out. Select a bottom paint developed for freshwater lakes and rivers. Check with your marina operator for recommended paints appropriate for freshwater use.
- 🐛 Paints and solvents should be mixed far from the water's edge and transferred to work areas in tightly covered containers of one gallon or less.
- 🐛 Keep in mind that solvents and thinners can be used more than once by allowing the solids to settle out and draining the clean product off the top. Dispose of dried settled solids in your regular trash at home or in designated receptacles at your marina.
- 🐛 Thoroughly dry all empty paint cans and old brushes before disposing of them in the trash.
- 🐛 Don't wash rags containing solvents, paints, thinners, or teak treatment. Dispose of them in the trash.