



CLEAN BOATER TIP SHEET

SOLID WASTE CONTAINMENT AND DISPOSAL

Solid waste, such as bottles, cans, fishing line, plastic bags, six-pack holders, boat shrink wrap, and other refuse, can injure or kill aquatic life and birds by trapping or entangling them. Not only is trash unsightly and dangerous to wildlife, it can also foul props or water intakes of boats or other equipment.

The Law

Congress passed a law in 1987 to protect our waterways from garbage. The Marine Plastic Pollution Research and Control Act (MPPRCA) regulates the disposal of garbage within United States lakes, rivers, and bays. The act states that it is illegal to discharge plastic materials into any body of water and restricts the overboard discharge of garbage.

Contain Trash

- ☞ Don't let trash get thrown or blown overboard.
- ☞ If trash blows overboard, retrieve it. Consider it "crew overboard" practice.
- ☞ Pack food in reusable containers.
- ☞ Buy products without plastic or excessive packaging.
- ☞ Don't toss cigarette butts overboard. They are made of plastic (cellulose acetate).
- ☞ Don't toss fishing line overboard.
- ☞ Purchase refreshments in recyclable containers and recycle them.
- ☞ Properly dispose of all trash on shore. Take it home or leave it in a dumpster at the marina.

Controlling Solid Waste

- ☞ If you see a problem with trash or hazardous waste at the marina, contact a marina staff member immediately.
- ☞ Have a waste container on your boat. Your policy should be to carry out what you carry in. Be a good neighbor and pick up trash that you come across, either floating in the water or on land.

- ☞ Use recyclable containers and reusable bags. Minimize the use of plastic wrap and disposable bags on your boat.
- ☞ Find out if your marina recycles shrink wrap used for winter boat storage. Recycle your shrink wrap if possible.
- ☞ Properly dispose of unwanted waste chemicals through the household hazardous waste collection program in your community.
- ☞ Clean up after your dog and deposit all pet waste in a trash can or appropriate receptacle.
- ☞ Use the marina trash cans and recycling bins. Replace the lids after using them so that waste does not blow out of the cans or bins.
- ☞ Cut the rings of six-pack holders prior to disposal.

Fish Waste

Fish cleaning may damage water quality if the wastes are discarded into the poorly flushed marina basin. Fish waste has an unpleasant smell and is unsightly. In addition, decomposing fish waste reduces oxygen levels, which harms aquatic life. Disposing of fish waste in the marina basin is prohibited. Avoid problems by following these tips:

- ☞ Find out what your marina's fish cleaning and disposal policy is.
- ☞ Double bag waste and dispose of it at home or in a dumpster at the marina designated for fish waste.
- ☞ Clean your fish at a fish-cleaning station – not at the dock – to keep the marina and water cleaner, keep odors down, and reduce nuisance birds and pests.
- ☞ Compost your fish waste if your marina has a waste composting program.
- ☞ Avoid feeding wild birds, including ducks, geese, and seagulls, in the marina. Feeding birds encourages them to flock to the marinas and become long-term residents. Bird waste can contaminate water and create a mess on boats and walkways.

Recycle Regularly

- ♻️ If you need to dispose of or recycle hazardous waste, including used oil, absorbent pads, paints, and solvent, ask the marina staff where this material may be properly handled.
- ♻️ Recycle cans, glass, newspapers, antifreeze, oil, and lead batteries.
- ♻️ Bring used monofilament fishing line to recycling bins at your tackle shop or marina.
- ♻️ Become knowledgeable about disposal procedures for waste oils, filters, absorptive materials, and other hazardous materials at your marina.

Proper Waste (Solid and Liquid) Disposal

Always check first with your marina operator for proper disposal or recycling of wastes at the marina or other locations. All of the following materials can be properly disposed of at a household hazardous waste (HHW) facility. Otherwise, dispose of the following items according to the recommendations listed below:

Waste Product	Disposal Method
Oil	Recycle or take to a waste oil collection facility.
Oil Filters	Puncture and hot drain for 12 hours. Recycle oil and canister at a HHW or oil collection facility.
Antifreeze	Recycle or send to a HHW facility.
Paint and Varnish	Allow to dry completely and solidify. Dispose of in regular trash.
Solvents, Gasoline, and Pesticides	Bring to a HHW facility.
Expired Emergency Flares	Bring to local fire department or a HHW facility.
Batteries	Recycle or bring to a HHW facility.



UW Sea Grant Institute.



Fish cleaning station at Port Washington Marina, UW Sea Grant Institute.