

CLEAN BOATING

Everything Counts By Donna Morrow



Maryland boaters experience year round our State's unique and special waterways.

Watching the ospreys return in March, a summer day's fishing with friends and family or anchoring in a quiet cove on an autumn evening are just a few of the idyllic moments that boaters in Maryland are lucky enough to enjoy.

Responsible boaters are always careful to operate and maintain their crafts in ways that will not harm the very aquatic resources that they care so deeply about. Boats require a great deal of attention; hulls must be scraped, painted, and cleaned; engines need to be lubricated and cared for; and a sea worthy vessel

must be winterized. Each of these chores has the potential to introduce pollutants into the environment.

CLEAN MARINAS

To help minimize the environmental impact of these activities in boatyards and marinas in Maryland, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Marine Trades Association of Maryland developed the Clean Marina Initiative. Created in 1998, the Clean Marina Initiative (CMI) provides marina and boatyard operators with technical assistance through the

Clean Marina Guidebook, site visits, and mentoring aimed at implementing methods to reduce pollution from routine operations.

Marinas that meet all applicable environmental regulations and adopt a significant portion of the recommendations in the *Clean Marina Guidebook*, are certified by DNR as Maryland Clean Marinas. As of February 2009, 133 marinas have been certified as Clean Marinas in Maryland. All DNR owned boating facilities and boat ramps are certified.

Recreational boaters should make it a point to patronize certified Clean Marinas and encourage other marinas to join the Clean Marina Initiative.



Many boaters do their own fueling, cleaning and maintenance, so here is a list of clean boating practices that all boaters should follow:

PETROLEUM CONTROL

Gas or diesel fuel is often spilled while fueling, either as backsplash from the fuel intake or as overflow out of vent fittings. Spills harm aquatic life, waste money and result in stains on the hull and damage to the boat's gel coat and striping.

FOLLOW THESE TIPS TO AVOID PROBLEMS:

- Fill tanks to no more than 90 percent capacity; gas drawn from cool storage tanks will expand as it warms up onboard your vessel.
- To determine when the tank is 90 percent full, listen to the filler pipe, use a sounding stick, and know your tank's volume.
- Instead of filling your tank upon returning to port, wait and fill it just before leaving on your next trip. This will reduce spills due to thermal expansion. Fuel will be used before it has a chance to warm up.
- Fill portable tanks ashore where spills are less likely to occur and easier to clean up should they happen.
- Use oil absorbent pads or containment jugs to catch all drips.
- Slow down at the beginning and end of fueling.

VESSEL MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

- Wash your vessel with a sponge or nonabrasive pad and plain water. This is an effective way to remove salt.
- Practice dry cleaning methods to remove stains. Spray the stain and spot scrub as needed. Rinse with a cloth instead of hosing cleansers overboard.
- If detergents are necessary, use phosphate-free, biodegradable, and non-toxic soaps (look for EPA or Green Seal certified products). Soaps should be used sparingly and recovered by rinsing with a cloth or collecting sudsy water in a bucket for disposal ashore.
- Collect all paint chips, dust, and residue for proper disposal.
- Share leftover paint and varnish to avoid waste.
- Use less toxic propylene glycol antifreeze.
- Select a bottom paint developed for the mid-Atlantic region.
- Recycle used oil, oil filters, and antifreeze.
- Bring used solvents and waste gasoline to local hazardous waste collection days.
- Call 1-800-4-RECYCLE or visit www.menv.com for locations of free public recycling centers.



DNR has a complete boating section on its website offering many more Clean Boating tips, locations of sewage pump-out stations, a list of certified Clean Marinas, and the Maryland Clean Boater Pledge. The Pledge allows boaters to learn about pollution prevention and commit to following those practices. Those who take the Pledge will receive a free thank you gift while supplies last. Visit www.dnr.maryland.gov/boating.

EVERYTHING COUNTS

Everyone who enjoys Maryland's waterways can play a part in protecting them. Whether it's a kayaker who snags a piece of trash and carries it ashore or a power boater who is meticulous in their fueling practices, each effort contributes to improved water quality. Governor Martin O'Malley's Smart, Green and Growing initiative is designed to involve every Marylander in efforts to restore the health of the Chesapeake Bay. Boaters are on the front line of those efforts.

Maryland boaters are keenly aware of just how precious and fragile our aquatic resources are and they are equally aware of just how vital it is for each of us to work to protect them even as we enjoy all they have to offer.