

Cohasset-Scituate-Marshfield Vessel No Discharge Area

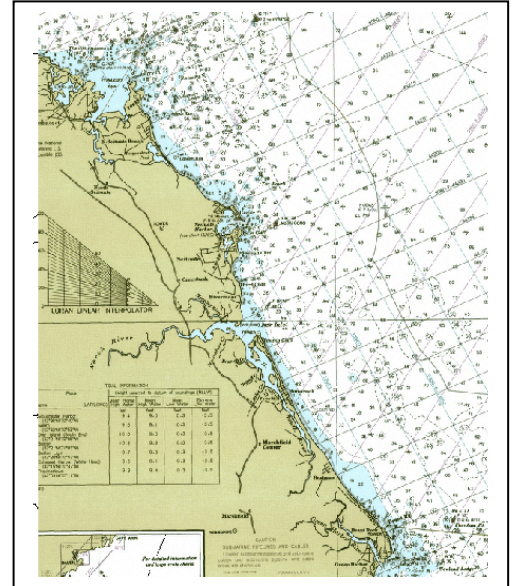
The Next Step in South Shore Water Quality Protection

To Cohasset, Scituate, and Marshfield area boaters:

The Towns that share the South Shore coastal waters are assessing the feasibility of a vessel sewage No Discharge Area, or NDA, for this region.

A public informational meeting will be held at the Scituate Town Library <http://www.scituate-townlibrary.org/> on May 22nd at 7:00PM to provide an interactive forum to discuss ideas, options, and issues regarding the NDA nomination and designation process. We encourage area boaters and all interested residents to participate in this public outreach initiative.

The Plymouth-Duxbury-Kingston NDA, which encompasses an area of approximately 63 square miles within the southern portion of the region, was designated in July 2006. This current initiative looks to build on this effort.



Regional Coastal Resources:

The coastal waters of the South Shore area are a world-class commercial, recreational, and ecological resource that is second to none. These waters support shellfishing, commercial and recreational fishing and boating, bathing beaches, anadromous fish runs, eel grass beds, tourism, numerous coastal and water dependent businesses, and the first designated scenic river in Massachusetts. The towns have made significant investments to improve coastal water quality through improved and expanded municipal sewer treatment facilities and stormwater remediation systems. The pursuit of a vessel NDA is the next step in this comprehensive resource protection strategy.



Source: Katie Lund

What is an NDA?

An NDA is a designated body of water in which the overboard discharge of ALL boat sewage, even if it is treated, is prohibited. In an NDA, vessel sewage must be discharged to a shore-side or mobile pumpout facility. A body of water can become an NDA if a community or state believes that the waters are ecologically and recreationally important enough to deserve further protection than that provided by current Federal and State laws. Federal Law prohibits the discharge of untreated sewage from vessels within all navigable waters of the U.S., including coastal waters (within three miles of shore). However, boats with functioning Type I and Type II Marine Sanitation Devices (MSDs) may discharge treated effluent in coastal waters, harbors, and bays UNLESS they are in an NDA. A Type III MSD or "holding tank" is the only type that can be used legally within an NDA. Currently there are 8 NDAs in Massachusetts including Nantucket, Wellfleet, Barnstable, all of Buzzards Bay, and Plymouth, Duxbury, and Kingston coastal waters.

Why Are NDAs Important?

NDAs are important because they prevent the discharge of boat sewage in sensitive areas such as estuaries, harbors, tidal rivers, and area beaches. Sewage wastes discharged from boats can contain microorganisms (bacteria, viruses, and protozoans), nutrients, and chemical products. Vessel sewage, like many other pollutants, can be harmful to the environment when it is not adequately treated. Sewage contains a high concentration of nitrogen, a substance that can lead to algal blooms and low dissolved oxygen concentrations that can affect the health of fish, shellfish, and eelgrass beds. Sewage also contains bacteria and viruses that can make shellfish unsuitable for human consumption and make our beaches unsafe for swimming.

Even small amounts of microorganisms from sewage wastes can introduce diseases like hepatitis to people in contact with the water. Many marine sanitation devices (MSDs) discharge "treated" waste with bacteria counts five to 70 times higher than that allowable under state law for shellfishing or swimming waters. In short, prohibiting boat sewage discharges in NDAs can reduce the risk of human illness from inadequately treated sewage.

Excessive nitrogen can be a problem in poorly flushed embayments because it stimulates harmful algal growth and contributes to reductions in dissolved oxygen. Both of these conditions can decrease the survivorship and reproductive potential of marine life especially relatively immobile organisms such as shellfish. None of the MSDs available today is designed to reduce the nitrogen concentration in “treated” wastes. Prohibiting MSD discharges in NDAs helps to reduce nitrogen inputs to sensitive waters.

Some boaters add chemicals to their heads (marine toilets) and MSDs to help reduce odor. Chemical products can be toxic to marine and estuarine life. Using non-toxic deodorizers and pumping out wastes at designated facilities helps to keep toxic chemicals out of coastal systems.



Source: Marine Boat Builders

What to Do When Boating in NDA Waters: When traveling in NDA waters, boaters with Type I or Type II MSDs must do one of the following: 1) close the seacock and remove the handle 2) fix the seacock in the closed position with a padlock or non-releasable wire-tie 3) lock the door to the space enclosing the toilet with a padlock or door handle key lock. When traveling in NDA waters, a Type III MSD (holding tank) must be secured in one of the following ways: 1) close each valve leading to an overboard discharge 2) padlock each valve in the closed position 3) use a non-releasable wire-tie to hold each valve leading to an overboard discharge in the closed position. All of these methods of

securing MSDs while in NDA waters are approved by the US Coast Guard. Shore-side and mobile pumpout facilities are available in this area to service pumpout needs and the majority of services are provided free of charge or subsidized through the Division of Marine Fisheries Clean Vessel Act (CVA) Program.

Additional NDA Informational Resources:

- Coastal Zone Management (CZM) NDA Overview: <http://mass.gov/czm/nda.htm>
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) NDA Information: <http://www.epa.gov/region01/eco/nodiscrg/index.html>
- Boaters' Guide to Tide and Pumpout Facilities: <http://mass.gov/czm/potoc.htm>
- A Boaters Guide to New England No Discharge Areas Brochure: http://www.epa.gov/region01/eco/nodiscrg/pdfs/NoDischarge_b.pdf
- North and South Rivers Watershed Association (NSRWA): http://www.nsrwa.org/programs/pump_out_assistance.asp

Vessel pumpout services are available in this area at:

| Location | Channel | Telephone |
|--|---------|----------------|
| Cohasset | | |
| Cohasset Harbor, Town Pier * | 10, 16 | (781) 383-0863 |
| Scituate | | |
| Cole Parkway Marina, Scituate Harbor* | 9 | (781) 545-2130 |
| Harbor Mooring Service, North & South Rivers * | 9 | (781) 545-2779 |
| James Landing Marina, Herring River | N/A | (781) 545-3000 |
| Waterline Mooring * | 9, 16 | (781) 545-4154 |
| Marshfield | | |
| Green Harbor, Town Pier * | 9, 16 | (781) 834-5541 |
| Mary's Boat Livery, North River * | 9, 16 | (781) 837-2322 |
| White's Ferry Marina, South River | 9, 11 | (781) 837-9343 |
| Erickson Marina, South River | N/A | (781) 837-2687 |

* CVA Funded – Free Pumpouts