



Most boats have bilges where excess water and wastes like oil can collect.

4.4 Bilge Water Handling

Dumping oily bilge water directly into the water can harm marine life, and is illegal. This section provides you and your boating customers with the information you need to minimize the impacts of contaminated bilge water.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The following laws apply to bilge water discharge. Please read the summary of these regulatory programs in Chapter 6.

- Clean Water Act – Discharge of Oils
- National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Multi-Sector General Permit for Industrial Activities
- Massachusetts Clean Waters Act
- Massachusetts Waterways Regulations

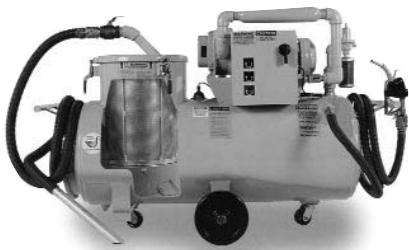
Best Management Practices

The following BMPs will help minimize the impacts of oil and other pollution that often results from bilge water discharge.

- ▶ **Suspend Bilge Water Discharges by the Marina:** Oily bilge water is hazardous waste and it is illegal for marinas to discharge it into the water. If your marina discharges bilge water, you are required to secure a NPDES Individual Permit for Industrial Discharges.
- ▶ **Prohibit Discharge of Untreated Water by Boaters at Your Marina:** Require as part of the environmental contract, or by other appropriate means, that untreated bilge water not be discharged within the marina perimeter. Provide customers with options for proper discharge either by making oil absorbent pads available or by providing services for pumping out bilge water. Encourage them to do the right thing with bilge water.
- ▷ **Make Oil Absorbent Pads Available:** Oil absorbent pads absorb oil while repelling water. They are an effective means for collecting oil that leaks into your bilge, and thereby preventing the discharge of oily water. Oil booms can be used in larger boats. Pads should be replaced several times a season and more often if the engine and engine lines are leaky. Make sure your customers who use oil absorbent pads know where they may be properly disposed of at the marina. If oil can be squeezed out of the pad, it must be disposed of as hazardous waste.
- ▷ **Vacuum Systems for Removing Bilge Water:** Consider purchasing a vacuum pump system to remove bilge water for your customers. A vacuum system removes all of the bilge water and pumps it into drums for off-site treatment and disposal.

The drums should be stored in a hazardous waste storage area prior to pick-up (see Section 4.10 on hazard waste). Providing this service will ensure that boaters can comply with the law. It may also generate revenue for the marina. See Appendix C for list of manufacturers.

LOCAL EXAMPLE



Yellow-Bellied Sump-Sucker™

Manchester Marine in Manchester, MA uses the Yellow-Bellied Sump-Sucker™ to clean out bilges at their marina. It is stored next to a boatlift in a convenient and efficient place for use after boats are hauled. The system consists of a large tank and several hoses. Water and scum are removed from the boat's bilge with a hose connected to the storage tank on the

Sump-Sucker. Once the bilge is dry it can be cleaned out with biodegradable soaps and pumped out again into the Sump-Sucker. The Sump-Sucker tank can be emptied through another hose into a storage drum, which can later be removed by a hazardous waste removal company. This system is more efficient, less messy, and reduces the possibility of a spill compared to the more traditional bilge cleaning methods. Manchester has a policy of mandatory bilge cleaning as the boats are hauled, which reduces liability by preventing spills. Manchester has defrayed the cost of the Sump-Sucker with an "environmental charge" to customers every time the Sump-Sucker is used. Call Rob Hoyle at Manchester Marine for more information (978) 526-7911.

- ▷ **Mandatory Bilge Water Removal:** Make bilge water pumping a requirement for all vessels hauled out at your marina. Include a charge for this service, which is incorporated into the haulout fee.
- ▷ **Bilge Oil Filters:** Sell and install bilge oil filters. These filters clean bilge water on the boat prior to it being discharged overboard. The filter cartridge system is built into the bilge pump system for convenience and efficiency.
- ▷ **Portable Oil/Water Separator:** Use a portable oil/water separator to treat oily bilge water and contaminated fuel. These systems treat bilge water on-site by directly pumping it through the separator, which removes petroleum products and sediments. The treated water can then be discharged into coastal waters. The oily water that is removed must be disposed of as hazardous waste.
- ▷ **Install Oil/Water Separators:** Promote the installation of oil/water separators in bilges. If your facility is equipped, consider adding separator installation to your list of services. Otherwise, contact local boatyards and find out where these services can be provided. If you discover that your customers are particularly interested in the service, you may be able to receive a commission from the boatyard.

Harzard Alert

Never use detergents to dissipate an oil sheen. It is illegal (see Chapter 6).

- ▷ **Inform Boaters:** Inform boaters about the negative effects of bilge water discharge. Direct them to solutions for managing bilge water.
- ▷ **Train Employees:** Train employees to be on the lookout for bilge water discharge by boaters. Discuss with your staff an effective way to deal with customers who are discharging bilge water. Some boaters may not know that it is an illegal act.

Useful Contacts

1. US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program — Call **(617) 918-1615** or look on-line at **www.epa.gov/owm/sw/industry/msgp** for information about the NPDES Multi-Sector General Permit and its requirements.
2. State Fire Marshall's Office — Call **(978) 567-3300** for information on state spill response and reporting requirements.
3. National Spill Response Center — Call **(800) 424-8802** to report a spill.
4. U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Office — Boston (Cape Cod Canal to NH border), **(617) 223-3000**; Providence (RI border to Cape Cod Canal; including Cape & Islands), **(401) 435-2300** or **(800) 644-0217**. Call for information on federal spill response and reporting requirements.



BILGE WATER HANDLING

Complete this checklist if bilge water is discharged at your facility.

Check either the "Yes" or "No" column to indicate if you are using each of the BMPs listed below. If the BMP does not apply (you are using a different BMP or the activity does not occur at your marina), put "NA" in the "Yes" column. In the "Action" box, list the next steps for all BMPs where you have checked the "No" column.

BMP	YES/NA	NO	Refer to Page	Action
*Suspend Bilge Water Discharge by the Marina			4-21	
*Prohibit Discharge of Untreated Bilge Water			4-21	
Make Oil Absorbent Pads Available			4-21	
Vacuum Systems for Removing Bilge Water			4-21	
Mandatory Bilge Water Removal			4-22	
Bilge Oil Filters			4-22	
Portable Oil/Water Separator			4-22	
Install Oil/Water Separators			4-22	
Inform Boaters			4-23	
Train Employees			4-23	

***BMP will assist with regulatory compliance.**

NOTES:
