



4.2 Boat Cleaning

Cleaning boats and boat equipment is important for aesthetics and longevity. Some of the soaps and solvents commonly used in cleaning boats can be toxic to marine life. Consequently, it is important to educate boaters about environmentally-sound cleaning products and practices. Set an example for your boating guests by selling and using “green” products while providing boat cleaning services by the marina.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The following laws apply to boat cleaning activities. If you perform boat cleaning services at your facility, please read the summary of these regulatory programs in Chapter 6.

- Massachusetts Air Quality Regulations
- Massachusetts Clean Waters Act
- Massachusetts Hazardous Waste Regulations

Best Management Practices

Consider employing the following BMPs for environmentally-protective boat cleaning methods.

- ▶ **Designated Maintenance Areas:** Cleaning should be restricted to designated maintenance areas. See section 4.1 for more information.
- ▷ **Natural Cleaners:** Promote the use of natural cleaners at your marina. The most natural cleaner you can use is water. Scrubbing a dirty section of your boat with a rag soaked with water can be as effective as any cleaning agent if you apply more “elbow grease.” Other natural cleaners that can be very effective include lime juice, borax, and baking soda. Because even natural cleaners can have a negative effect on the environment, use them in moderation.
- ▷ **Biodegradable Soaps:** When a boater needs to use a detergent, suggest phosphate-free soaps that are non-toxic and biodegradable. These soaps should still be used sparingly since even biodegradable soaps can harm marine life. Manufacturers and distributors of biodegradable soaps are listed in Appendix C.
- ▷ **Solvent Alternatives:** Encourage the use of solvent alternatives by distributing a list of non-hazardous cleaning products. For example, teak can be effectively cleaned with a mild soap and abrasive pad or bronze wool. However, never use steel wool as it will leave rust marks. A list of some of these products is provided on a fact sheet in the inside pocket at the back of this guide.

Consider This

Try cleaning with water and some extra “elbow grease” before relying on cleaning products. People forget that water is one of the best solvents available.

- ▷ **Use Solvents Properly:** When solvents are needed, they should be used in designated maintenance areas only. Keep covers and caps tightly closed as much as possible to minimize the release of VOCs. Also, limit amounts used to the minimum needed to get the job done. For more about solvent management and disposal, refer to Section 4.10.
- ▷ **Inform Do-It-Yourselfers:** Provide information to encourage your customers who work on their boats at the marina to use environmentally preferable detergents, soaps, and other cleaning products. Education can be provided by posting signs, distributing boater fact sheets, inserting clauses in customer contracts, and including tips in mailings. See Chapter 3, for more information.
- ▷ **Train Employees:** Train employees to be on the lookout for cleaning activities by Do-It-Yourselfers that may be harmful to the coastal environment.

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. Massachusetts Environmentally Preferable Products Procurement Program has information on natural cleaning products at **www.state.ma.us/osd/enviro/products.htm#building**.

Hazard Alert

Solvents are liquid substances capable of dissolving or dispersing one or more other substances. As a result, they are useful for cleaning up paints, oils, and greases. Solvents are classified as hazardous waste if their flash point is below 140°F. Check the label.



BOAT CLEANING

Complete this checklist if boat cleaning occurs 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
*Designated Maintenance Area			4-11	
Natural Cleaners			4-11	
Biodegradable Soaps			4-11	
Solvent Alternatives			4-11	
Use Solvents Properly			4-12	
Inform Do-It-Yourselfers			4-12	
Train Employees			4-12	

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

NOTES:
