

TIDE LINES

Environment Guidance for Boat Users

Dealing with wastes

Garbage

Oil

Sewage

Toxic Materials

Shore side Waste Management

Protecting wildlife habitats and species

These notes are for all boat users, and we hope they will help you to minimise the impact of your boat on the sea, the coastline and marine wildlife.

Government and coastal authorities expect boat users to regulate their own activities, without being policed. Please help to keep it that way by following these guidelines.

DEALING WITH WASTES

GARBAGE

Garbage means all food, domestic and operational wastes produced on board (except sewage) e.g.

- Packaging (plastics, glass, metal, paper, cardboard)
- Rope, line and netting
- Fabrics, such as cleaning rags
- Waste foodstuffs

Basic principles

- Put NO garbage in the sea
- Retain garbage on board and dispose of ashore

The UK has strict rules on dumping garbage at sea, with substantial penalties for offenders.

Good practice suggestions

- Plan provisioning: remove excess packaging before you stow. Where possible repackage into the boat's permanent containers
- Plan for managing wastes on board. Arrange for sufficient storage. Keep an adequate supply of strong bags. If necessary, install gadgets such as can crushers to reduce volume. Rinse used packaging to prevent garbage becoming smelly
- Separate wastes as far as practicable – particularly if your regular port or marina has recycling facilities
- Inform/train/persuade your crew to follow a good garbage management routine

Food wastes

- Do not dump any poorly degrading skins or peelings into the sea
- Do not dump other food wastes within three miles of shore (12 miles if in the North Sea or English Channel)
- Avoid discharge of all except “washing up” water when in marinas, on moorings or at popular anchorages
- To prevent any chance of spread of disease to livestock, securely isolate in sealed packaging any animal or poultry product waste landed from a place outside of Great Britain or dispose of such waste to a dedicated bin, if available

OILS AND OILY WASTES

Marine oil pollution is aimed mainly at oil tankers and commercial shipping, but leisure craft are not exempt from rules forbidding discharge of oil or oily wastes. **Substantial penalties apply.**

Basic principle

- Prevent **any** discharge of oil, fuel or similar harmful substance into the sea

Good practice suggestions

- Maintain fuel lines, connections and seals in good condition
- Separate the engine and main bilges to minimise the risk of contamination bilge water with engine oil
- Unless your boat is in peril do not pump into the sea from the bilge or machinery spaces any water contaminated with oil, fuel or materials toxic to the marine life (such as solvents or degreasing chemicals)
- Prevent escape of oil in bilge water by installing an in-line filter
- Use absorbent pads to soak up leakages and spillages. Retain these on board for disposal ashore into proper reception facilities
- Take ashore in proper containers any used sump oil and waste fuel, then dispose of into proper reception facilities
- As far as possible, use biodegradable oils and unleaded fuel
- **When choosing an outboard motor, bear in mind the lower emissions from a 4-stroke engine**
- Avoid any spillage into the sea when refuelling outboard or inboard tanks
- Keep the engine in efficient condition to minimise exhaust pollution

SEWAGE

This guidance aims to balance

- The long established practise of using direct-discharge sea toilets with
- The increasing expectation that users of boats with living accommodation will fit and use sewage holding tanks

Basic principle

- Do not discharge a sea toilet where doing so would affect water quality or harm the amenity value of local waters

Good practice suggestions

- Use shore side facilities wherever possible – tell the harbour authority or marina operator if these are inadequate
- Do not discharge a sea toilet into non-tidal, or weakly tidal waters in an area where local sewage is adequately treated before sea dispersal
- Do not discharge into crowded anchorages, near amenity beaches or close to commercial shell fish beds
- If your regularly use your boat in such inshore areas, fit a holding tank, and only pump out the tank into a proper harbour facility, or into the sea while underway at least three miles off shore
- Do not empty a chemical toilet into the sea

TOXIC WASTES

These include:

- Antifouling paints, scrapings and wash-off (particularly old TBT-based “Tributyltin” paint residue)
- Old batteries (containing acid, lead or nickel/cadmium/zinc compounds)
- Concentrated cleaning chemicals and solvents

Basic principles

- Keep toxic or damaging chemicals out of the marine environment
- Do not use TBT based antifouling paint from any source

Good practice suggestions

- Choose an antifouling which is effective in local conditions as least possible toxicity
- When cleaning off old antifouling, prevent dust or scrapings leaching into the sea or being dispersed in the wind. Collect and dispose as toxic solid waste
- Encourage your marina/boatyard/yacht club to install a “scrub off” facility which collects residues
- Minimise use of detergent based cleaners. Consider use (or joint use with others) a plain water power sprayer
- Dispose of old batteries and similar items to a dedicated reception facility

SHORE SIDE WASTE MANAGEMENT

All those who maintain landing places from the sea (harbour and local authorities, marina operators and some coastal clubs) have statutory waste management responsibilities which include

- Consulting users about their waste disposal needs
- Preparing waste management plans for all ship-borne wastes

Users can help by

- Telling authorities and operators if waste facilities are inadequate
- Responding to consultations
- Using the facilities when provided

HABITATS AND SPECIES PROTECTION

The coastline of Britain and Europe is rich in wildlife. Large parts of the coast have been given statutory designation to protect their nature conservation importance. Boat users enjoy free public right of navigation, but this comes with obligations: Not only towards other users, but to minimise the effects of recreational boating on natural habitats and species.

Good practice suggestions

- **Look for information**
 - Use whatever sources are available to find out the nature conservation interest of the area you are visiting
Boat users can help conservation by encouraging publishers of pilot books, almanacs and specialist sources to improve currently sparse information
 - Check for
 - Statutory management schemes for European Marine Sites (see FURTHER INFORMATION: Where to get it)
 - Statutory rules, such as byelaws – most likely to be found where there are declared nature reserves
 - Voluntary arrangements – for example those made under estuary management plans
- **Avoid damage and disturbance**
 - When afloat, particularly close inshore in small craft, keep a sensible distance from bird roost and nesting sites, and make as little noise and wash as possible
 - When going ashore, use recognised landing places. If visiting remote places, take care to avoid physical damage to wildlife habitats (such as bird nests on shingle) and disturbance to vulnerable species (such as overwintering birds and breeding seals)
 - Follow guidelines for minimising disturbance to whales, dolphins and porpoises (cetaceans)
 - Avoid anchoring or taking the ground in areas where there are important and vulnerable seabed species (such as soft corals or seagrass)

FURTHER INFORMATION

- More detailed on
 - UK marine pollution law and practice
 - Fitting and using a holding tank
 - Management schemes for European Marine sites

Is available to RYA personal members, see RYA Details below

- Coastal and marine sites designated for nature conservation:
 - English Nature (Tel: 01733 45500)
 - Countryside Council for Wales (Tel: 01248 385500)
 - Scottish Natural Heritage (Tel: 0131 447 4784)
 - Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (Tel: 01767 680 551)
- Minimising disturbances to whales, dolphins, porpoises and basking sharks
 - DETR (Tel: 0117 987 8694)
 - Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (Tel: 01225 334 511) (Web: www.wdcs.org)
 - WWF (Hotline: 0845 121 0500) (Web: www.wwf-uk.org/orca)
- Marine Industries products
 - British Marine Industries Federation (Tel: 01784 473377)

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