

## ENVIRONMENTAL GUIDANCE FOR MASSACHUSETTS BOATERS

Boat owners play an important role in protecting our coastal waters and minimizing harmful environmental impacts associated with owning and operating a boat.

**Selecting an Anti-Fouling Paint:** Boat owner stewardship begins with the proper selection of an anti-fouling or bottom paint, which is designed to prevent biological growth that can reduce boat speed and economy. Invented here in Gloucester, MA, anti-fouling paint may contain concentrations of copper or biocides to control biological growth that may be harmful to marine organisms. Drawing inspiration from nature and nanotechnology (engineering at a molecular scale), bottom paint has come a long way in the last 20 years. Today's anti-fouling paints use less copper and other biocides, better control the release of these toxins, and break down quickly in seawater into less harmful chemicals. In fact, the newest bottom paints use no biocides at all, but instead create a surface that organisms just can't grab onto. See the box on the right that describes key criteria in selecting the anti-fouling paint that is right for you. All major marine paint manufacturers -- and marine suppliers -- offer choices for marine paints with reduced environmental impacts.

### Selecting an Anti-Fouling Paint

Ask your marine supply store, boat yard or marina about the best options for your boat.

Key criteria are:

- Performance
- Cost
- Ease of Use
- Maintenance, and
- Environmental Attributes

**Minimizing Water Quality Impacts:** Despite hull coatings, most vessels still require some form of mechanical cleaning to remove growth. The by-products of these boat maintenance activities -- when allowed to discharge to the water-- can have a severe and long-term impact on the aquatic environment. For that reason, this activity in the form of power washing at your local marina is tightly regulated, and requires a number of State, Federal, and often, local permits.

DO NOT scrape your hull on your mooring. Remove your boat from the water when your hull requires cleaning so that debris and chemicals can be captured and properly disposed. When selecting a service yard, be mindful of the regulatory measures in place, designed to protect water quality from uncontrolled discharges of power wash water. Most boat yards and marinas will be pleased to answer questions about their environmental stewardship compliance programs.

Many hull cleaning products used to wash hulls and decks contain ingredients such as chlorine, phosphates and ammonia that are toxic to fish and harmful to the environment. Use cleaners that do not have harmful chemicals, and have been tested and approved to be safe for the

environment. Ask your marina to stock green cleaners and biodegradable soaps and cleaners that do not contain harmful phosphates, chlorine, bleach, ammonia, artificial fragrances, or petroleum products. More frequent hull washings, and gentler brushes, are effective at extending the life of your anti-fouling paint coat and therefore may minimize environmental impacts associated with hull cleaning.

**What Else Can You Do?** Take a pledge to do your part in keeping Massachusetts waters clean by following the guidelines in the Boater Fact Sheets offered by the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management and review the “Clean Marina” guidance offered by the U.S. Environmental Protection and various state agencies. These informative references provide information on topics such as fueling, hazardous waste disposal tips, managing wastewater (e.g., bilge, graywater, sewage), prevention of stormwater from reaching our coastlines, environmentally responsible approaches to boat maintenance, marine debris, and non-toxic cleaning alternatives. Resources listed below provide (a) Boater Fact Sheets and (b) information about best management practices at Clean Marinas.



#### **Useful Resources**

Boater Fact Sheets - Massachusetts

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/czm/cwq/marinas/cm-g-factsheets.pdf>

Clean Marinas – U.S. EPA

[http://water.epa.gov/polwaste/nps/marinas/clean\\_marinas.cfm](http://water.epa.gov/polwaste/nps/marinas/clean_marinas.cfm)

*“Below the Waterline: The Understated Story of Bottom Paint”* An Exhibit at Maritime Gloucester which includes resources for boat owners