

The Public Health Risks Associated with Fecal Pollution: Keeping Sewage Out of Maine Waters

What is the Problem?

Human and animal waste in the water makes the water unsuitable for recreation and pollutes shellfish areas. Human and animal waste contains fecal coliform, other bacteria and viruses which can cause severe human health problems.

Sewage contamination is a health threat. The DMR growing area classification program and local beach monitoring have reported increased levels of fecal coliform and *Enterococci* bacteria, which indicates the presence of disease-causing organisms. These organisms can cause hepatitis, norovirus, typhoid, cholera, dysentery, and gastroenteritis.

Pumping sewage directly into the water also creates problems for other aquatic life, by lowering the oxygen level in the water. It is also illegal.

We can all do our part to eliminate pollution by using onshore restroom facilities, picking up after pets, using vessel pump-out facilities and following the No Discharge Zone designations.

Did you know it's Illegal to....?

It is **illegal** for boaters to discharge untreated sewage directly into the water, unless they are 3 miles or farther offshore. While on the boat, fecal matter and other solid waste should be contained in a U.S. Coast Guard-approved marine sanitation device (MSD) (toilet). Portable toilets should be emptied into approved shoreside waste handling facilities, and holding tanks should be discharged into approved pump-out stations.

It is **illegal** to discharge any sewage (treated or untreated) in a No Discharge Zone designation. All boats with an installed toilet must have a properly functioning MSD.

If you know of violations, please contact the proper authority (see contact information on reverse side).

Did You Know?

- Casco Bay, the Boothbay Region, Kennebunk-Wells, southern Mount Desert, and W. Penobscot Bay are now designated as No Discharge Zones.
- Pumpout boats are located in Casco Bay, York Harbor, Boothbay Harbor, Blue Hill Harbor and Bass Harbor. For pumpout boat information, contact:
Friends of Casco Bay- (207) 776-0136
Town of Boothbay Harbor- (207) 380-9995
Camden Harbormaster- (207) 236-7969
Red Fern Boat @ Up Harbor Marina- 266-0270
- Most pumpout boats monitor WHF Channel 9 or 16

For more information, visit the DMR webpage:
http://www.maine.gov/dmr/rm/public_health/shellfishgrowingarea.htm, or the DEP webpage:
<http://www.maine.gov/dep/blwq/topic/vessel/pumpout/>.

- Illness caused by norovirus infection has several names, including stomach flu (this "stomach flu" is **not** related to the flu, which is a respiratory disease), viral gastroenteritis, acute gastroenteritis, non-bacterial gastroenteritis and food poisoning. Symptoms include: nausea, diarrhea, vomiting and stomach cramping which usually last 1-3 days and then you get better .



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What Everyone Can Do!

- Use onshore restroom facilities when harvesting shellfish, or at the dock. Encourage dock operators to provide adequate facilities.
- Pick up after your pet and dispose of waste in trash or pet waste receptacles.
- Install and properly use an MSD (preferably a holding tank) to keep raw sewage and chemicals out of the water.
- Don't use holding tank additives that contain chlorine, formaldehyde, or "preservatives", because these chemicals can harm marine life.
- Learn how an MSD works, make sure it functions properly and that the waste is going into the holding tank and not into the water. Make repairs when necessary: maintain and clean the boat's plumbing and venting system.
- Use pump-out facilities when available and ask for them if they are not.
- Encourage the development of more pump-out stations, as well as portable toilet dump stations, and learn how to use them.
- If your boat doesn't have an installed toilet, pack out all waste. Bring portable toilets ashore for proper waste disposal.
- Use swim diapers on young children and dispose of use diapers in the trash.



Contact Information

Maine Dept. of Marine Resources

Boothbay Harbor - (207) 633-9501/ Lamoine - (207) 667-5654
Anna.Bourakovsky@maine.gov or
Robert.Goodwin@maine.gov

Local Harbormasters: Contact town office for this information
(Search at: <http://www.maine.gov/local/>).

Maine Dept. of Environmental Protection Pumpout Program:

Pam Parker at (207) 287-7905 or Pamela.D.Parker@maine.gov

Maine Clean Boatyards & Marinas Program:

Phone: (207) 773-8725 or email at
swanton@mainemarinetrades.com

Maine Healthy Beaches Program:

www.mainehealthybeaches.org

University of Maine Cooperative Extension/Sea Grant:

Phone: 800-244-2104 and email at: esp@umext.maine.edu

Maine Coastal Program:

Phone: 287-1486 and email at: lorraine.lessard@maine.gov

How to Pump a Boat's Holding Tank

Remove cap from boat's deck waste fitting.

Insert pumpout hose nozzle into deck fitting. (An adaptor may be required for a proper fit. They can be found at marinas or a marine retail store).

Turn pump on. If there is a hose valve, open it to start suction.

When waste is no longer a solid stream, and bubbling begins, close hose valve and remove nozzle from deck fitting.

Put nozzle (with open valve) in bucket of water for 15 seconds to rinse hose. If desired, rinse boat's tank with water and pump dry.

Close valve and put away hose. Turn off pump if requested (Some are on timers.) Replace deck fitting valve.