

Bilge Cleaning

Potential Environmental Impacts:

Bilge water can commonly contain oil, fuel, antifreeze, and other contaminants. Even small amounts of such materials introduced into the marina environment can cause environmental problems, especially if they persist. Although some oil that spills into the water evaporates, petroleum hydrocarbons can remain suspended in the water column, concentrate on the surface, or settle to the bottom. An oil sheen can block necessary oxygen and light from moving through the surface of the water. According to the EPA, the hydrocarbons in oil harm juvenile fish, upset fish reproduction, and interfere with the growth and reproduction of bottom-dwelling organisms.

Legal Requirements:

- Oily bilge water that is discharged to the waters of the state must be reported to the CT-DEP's Oil and Chemical Spill Response Division at (860) 424-3338 [CGS §22a-450]. See Appendix E for more information on reporting spills.
- If oily bilge water or any petroleum product that is discharged into navigable waters causes a visible sheen, it may also be necessary to report the spill to the National Response Center at (800) 424-8802 [Section 311 of the Clean Water Act; 33 USC 1321]. See Appendix E for more information on reporting spills.
- If oily bilge water cannot be sufficiently cleaned for legal discharge, make arrangements with a waste hauler to properly dispose of the bilge water. See Appendix C.
- The use of dispersants, such as dishwashing soaps or detergents, on oil or fuel spills or sheen of any size is prohibited in most circumstances [40 CFR 110.4]. Dispersants may only be used with permission from federal or state authorities, and only in rare instances.
- If there is a stormwater discharge from your facility, you may have to register for a *General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater Associated with Industrial Activity* ("Stormwater General Permit"). See Appendix F for more information.

Best Management Practices:

- ✦ Before pumping out a bilge, visually inspect the bilge water to determine whether there is a visible sheen of oil.
- ✦ Use oil absorbent materials to remove oil before pumping a bilge.
- ✦ Use an oil/water separator to remove oil from bilge water.
- ✦ Don't use soaps and detergents to clean up oily bilge water.
- ✦ Educate customers to keep their engines properly maintained, to continually check and fix all leaks, and to keep an absorbent pad or pillow in the bilge to absorb small drips and spills.

Checklist for Clean Marina Certification:

- ✓ Do you provide an oil/water separation service to remove oil from bilge water?

YES	NO	N/A
-----	----	-----

- ✓ Do you place oil absorbent materials in boat bilges as a standard maintenance practice?

YES	NO	N/A
-----	----	-----

- ✓ Do you provide staff training on bilge cleaning?

YES	NO	N/A
-----	----	-----