

# Petroleum Control

**PETROLEUM IN OR ON THE WATER IS HARMFUL.** Floating petroleum is particularly harmful because it reduces light penetration and the exchange of oxygen at the water's surface, potentially affecting thousands of species of microbes, plants and animals such as larval blue crab and striped bass. The abundance of life in the microlayer attracts predators: seabirds from above and fish from below. Thus, petroleum pollution can potentially poison the entire aquatic food web.

## FUELING PRACTICES

Gas or diesel that spills during fueling as backsplash out of the fuel intake or as overflow out of the vent fitting can harm aquatic life, wastes money, and can result in stains on the hull and damage to gel coat and striping. Follow these tips to avoid problems:

- Fill tanks to no more than 90 percent capacity - gas that is drawn from cool storage tanks will expand as it warms up aboard your vessel.
- Do not rely solely on the fuel gauge. To determine when the tank is 90 percent full, listen to the filler pipe, use a sounding stick, and be aware of your tank's volume.
- Fill portable tanks ashore where spills are less likely and easier to clean up.

## THE LAW

*Both state and federal law, prohibit the discharge of petroleum products into the water.*

**The Federal Water Pollution Control Act (also called the Clean Water Act) prohibits the discharge of oil or oily waste into or upon the navigable waters of the United States or the waters of the contiguous zone if such discharge causes a film or sheen upon, or discoloration of, the surface of the water, or causes a sludge or emulsion beneath the surface of the water.**

*The U.S. Coast Guard may fine violators up to \$5,000. The NJDEP may levy additional fines.*

- Use oil absorbent pads to catch all drips.
- Slow down at the beginning and end of fueling.
- Fill your tank just before leaving on your next trip. This practice will reduce spills resulting from thermal expansion because the fuel will be used before it warms up.



## BILGE MAINTENANCE

Engine oil tends to accumulate in the bilge. Without precautions, the oil may be pumped overboard along with the bilge water.

To avoid fines and to protect

water quality, follow these tips:

- Keep your engine well-tuned to minimize the amount of oil that is released. Be certain that no seals, gaskets, or hoses leak.
- Place oil absorbent materials or a bioremediating bilge boom in the bilge.
- Place an oil absorbent pad under the engine.
- Replace oil absorbent materials regularly.
- Look for contractors or marinas that offer a bilge pumpout service.
- Do not treat oily water with detergents. Soaps pollute and make cleanup impossible. You may be fined up to \$25,000 for using soaps to disperse oil.

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## DISPOSAL OF OIL ABSORBENT MATERIALS

The disposal of used oil absorbent material depends on the type of product and how it was used:

- Standard absorbents saturated with only oil or diesel may be wrung out over oil recycling bins and reused. Alternatively, they should be double bagged with one plastic bag sealed inside of another and discarded in your regular trash.
- Bioremediating bilge booms may be discarded in your regular trash as long as they are not dripping. Because the microbes need oxygen to function, do not seal them in plastic bags.

## EMISSIONS CONTROL

Marine engines produce high levels of hydrocarbon exhaust emissions which contribute to ground level ozone, a known health risk. Follow these tips to help your engine operate as efficiently as possible:

- Use the gas-to-oil ratio recommended by the engine manufacturer. Too much oil can foul spark plugs and too little can lead to increased engine wear or failure.
- Use premium two-cycle engine oil. Premium oils improve engine performance and reduce pollution because they burn cleaner, contain more detergents, and prevent formation of carbon deposits.
- Use gasoline with the octane level recommended by the engine manufacturer.

## PREVENTIVE EQUIPMENT

Products are available that can help prevent spills and reduce emissions:



- Install a fuel/air separator along your vent line. These devices allow air, but not fuel, to escape through a vent opening.
- Attach a safety nozzle to portable gas cans used to fill outboard engines. These nozzles automatically stop the flow of fuel when the receiving tank is full.
- To prevent the discharge of oily bilge water, install a bilge pump switch that leaves an inch or two of water in the bilge.
- Alternatively, connect a bilge water filter to your vessel's bilge pump. Filters will remove oil, fuel, and other petroleum hydrocarbons from the water.
- When it is time to buy a new engine, select a fuel efficient, low emission model.

## IN CASE OF A SPILL

- Stop the flow.
- Contain the spill.
- Call the National Response Center at **1-800-424-8802**.
- Call the NJDEP's Discharge Response Unit at **1-877-WARN DEP**.
- Call the local county health department.

For more information about the Clean Marina Program  
visit [www.njcleanmarina.org](http://www.njcleanmarina.org)