

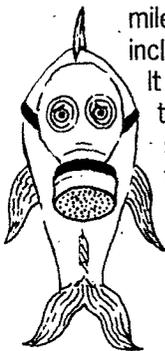


# THE SCOOP ON POOP

The San Francisco Estuary offers boaters a variety of on-the-water experiences — from exploring the Delta's secluded coves and inlets to sailing the Bay's open expanse. But pollution to the Estuary from a number of sources can spoil our opportunities for boating and water recreation. Unfortunately, recreational boaters can add to the pollution problem.

## **RECREATIONAL BOAT SEWAGE DISCHARGES — WHAT'S THE EFFECT?**

Human sewage from boats creates environmental problems, especially in shallow or poorly flushed inlets or marinas. Boat sewage introduces disease-carrying bacteria and viruses into the water. You can get sick if you swim in polluted waters or eat raw or partially cooked shellfish taken from contaminated waters. Untreated boat sewage lowers oxygen levels in water, making it more difficult for fish and other aquatic life to survive. And boat sewage creates an aesthetic problem as well.



Although it's illegal to discharge untreated sewage into all navigable U.S. waters, some recreational boaters still discharge raw wastes into coastal and inland waters. You might think an individual boater's contribution to the overall pollution problem is small. But when you consider that there are 822,000 boats registered in California, it's easy to see that those individual contributions can add up to a significant total.

## **WHAT'S THE LAW?**

- It's illegal to discharge untreated sewage anywhere within the three-mile territorial limit — a region that includes the entire Bay-Delta Estuary. It is not legal to dump just outside the Golden Gate. Legally, untreated sewage may only be discharged in the open ocean outside the three-mile limit. (CWA §312)
- The U.S. Coast Guard can issue fines of up to \$2,000 for the illegal discharge of sewage. (CWA §312)

## SAN FRANCISCO ESTUARY PROJECT

- Richardson Bay in Marin County has been designated a "No-Discharge Area." It's illegal to discharge sewage of any kind, treated or untreated, within Richardson Bay. (CWA §312, 40 CFR Part 140)
- You are not required to have an installed marine toilet on your boat, but if there is one, it must be connected to a Coast Guard-approved Marine Sanitation Device (MSD). Boats 65 feet and under may use a Type I, II or III MSD. Boats over 65 feet must have either a Type II or Type III MSD. (40 CFR Part 140, 33 CFR, Part 159) If your boat doesn't have an installed marine toilet, consider using a port-a-potty. You can empty your port-a-potty at a marina dump station.

### **WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF MARINE SANITATION DEVICES (MSDs)?**

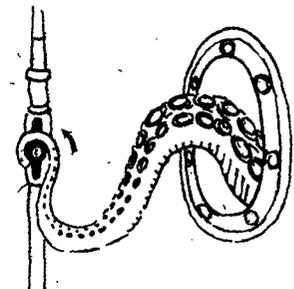
An MSD is designed to prevent pollution from the discharge of untreated sewage. There are three kinds of MSDs.

- \* **Type I MSD** breaks up the sewage, disinfects it with chemicals, then discharges the treated sewage overboard. It is legal to discharge wastes from a Type I MSD directly overboard, but first you must add the appropriate chemicals for treatment. Without chemicals, the discharge from a Type I system is considered raw sewage — an illegal discharge.
- \* **Type II MSD** is similar to a Type I MSD, but treats the sewage to a higher degree through maceration, biological decomposition and chem-

ical additives. Type II MSDs are typically found on larger boats. It is legal to discharge waste from a Type II MSD directly overboard.

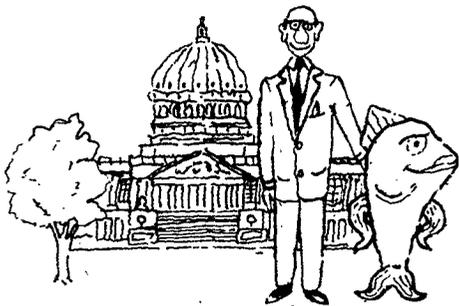
The disinfectants used in Types I and II can include chlorine, quaternary ammonia and formaldehyde, which harm aquatic life. Consider using environmentally friendly products that do not contain these ingredients. Always read labels carefully and use the recommended amount of chemicals. Better yet, use shore-side toilets, a port-a-potty or a pumpout station. Never discharge near sensitive shellfish beds, in shallow coves or near swimming beaches or other areas where water-contact recreation takes place.

- \* **Type III MSD** is essentially a holding tank where untreated sewage is stored until it can be properly disposed of at a pumpout station. Adding chemical deodorizers does not constitute treatment and does not allow you to dump wastes overboard. Some Type III MSDs have a "Y" valve installed so that you can dump directly overboard when you are operating outside the three-mile limit. Within the limit, you must secure the valve in the closed position with a padlock or non-releasable wire tie or remove the handle entirely to prevent the possibility of a discharge overboard.



## WHAT IS THE CLEAN VESSEL ACT OF 1992?

Congress passed the Clean Vessel Act in 1992 to help reduce pollution from vessel sewage discharges. It identified vessel sewage discharges — although just one of many pollution sources — as a “substantial contributor to localized degradation of water quality in the United States.”



Nationwide, the effort to control boat pollution has been hindered by an inadequate number of pumpout and dump stations. In California, there are only 150 pumpout facilities statewide to accommodate boats with holding tanks and a fewer number of dump stations for boaters with port-a-potties. In the Bay-Delta region, about 80 pumpout facilities and 13 dump stations must accommodate over 240,000 registered boats.

To address the need for more pumpout and dump stations, Congress passed the Clean Vessel Act (Public Law 102-587, subtitle F), thereby establishing a five-year federal grant program administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. A total of \$40 million is available to states on a competitive basis for the construction, renovation, operation

and maintenance of pumpout and dump stations and for related educational programs.

In 1993, California received a first-year federal grant of \$636,000, with \$450,000 available to the public and private sectors for pumpout installations. A local match of 25% is required. Over the next five years, the California Department of Boating and Waterways intends to use Clean Vessel Act funds to build an additional 250 pumpout stations throughout the state.

## WHO CAN APPLY FOR CLEAN VESSEL ACT FUNDING?

All government-owned and private boating facilities whose pumpout and dump stations are open to the public may apply. Grant funds may be used to construct, renovate, operate or maintain pumpout and dump stations. Special consideration will be given to requests for facilities in waters most likely to be affected by vessel discharges and requests that encourage public/private partnerships.

For more information and guidelines on Clean Vessel Act grants, contact Kevin Atkinson (916-322-1804) or Marinda Isley (916-322-1832) at the California Department of Boating and Waterways, 1629 S Street, Sacramento, CA 95814.

### **PUMPOUT POINTERS**

- Use public toilets on shore whenever possible.
- Keep your MSD in good operating condition. Make sure all fittings, hoses and other pump mechanisms stay clean and lubricated. Keep a complete repair kit for your particular type of head on board. To help prevent clogs, look for rapid dissolving marine toilet tissue specifically designed for MSDs. Post-use instructions near the head.
- Find a pumpout station. It only takes a few minutes to pump the wastes out of a 15-gallon holding tank. For a free map of Bay-Delta pumpout stations, call the San Francisco Estuary Project at (510) 286-0460.
- Follow pumpout instructions.
- If instructions aren't posted or aren't clear, ask! Encourage the marina operator to post easy-to-understand instructions.
- Rinse water through the system for one minute once you've finished. Expensive breakdowns commonly occur when the marina's sewer lines get clogged because of inadequate rinsing. Flushing water through the system is cheap preventive maintenance.
- Pump out only your holding tank. Pumpouts are not designed to handle bilge water or solid objects.
- Turn off the pump when you're finished. Yes, boaters do pump out their holding tanks and then drive off, leaving the unit still running. Make sure the pump is off before pulling away so it will work for the next boater.
- Consider using a mobile pumpout service if you don't want to service the holding tank yourself.

### **KEEPING OUR WATERWAYS CLEAN**

You can help protect the resource we all enjoy so much — the San Francisco Bay-Delta Estuary. Keep the Estuary clean by treating and disposing of vessel wastes responsibly through the proper use of Marine Sanitation Devices and pumpout stations.

*This pamphlet was produced by the San Francisco Estuary Project in cooperation with the California Department of Boating and Waterways under a grant from the Clean Vessel Act. The San Francisco Estuary Project is a cooperative state-federal program whose primary goal is to restore and protect water quality and natural resources while promoting effective management of the Bay and Delta.*

*If you would like more information about boating and the environment or if you would like to have a speaker address your group, please call the San Francisco Estuary Project at (510) 286-0460.*

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