



The *Marine Pollution Act* is NSW's key legislation for the regulation of marine pollution from vessels in NSW State waters. All boaters need to apply the best possible environmental practices when using and maintaining boats and these obligations apply to responsible cleaning and maintenance of boats. This fact sheet tells you how to clean your boat properly and stay within the legislation.

## Responsibilities for boat cleaning and maintenance

Most boaters understand the importance of a regular cleaning and maintenance schedule and the benefits delivered through fuel efficiency, reduced maintenance costs and extend life of equipment. Depending on access and storage, boaters must consider appropriate environmental practices when undertaking cleaning and maintenance to meet their obligations under the Marine Pollution Act.

Boat owners are encouraged to use low or non-phosphate, biodegradable cleaning products and should take all reasonable steps necessary to prevent the discharge of any cleaning products into waterways.

### Cleaning boats stored on land

Boats that are regularly removed and stored away from the water are easy to access for regular wash-down, cleaning and maintenance. While wash-down and cleaning will reduce and significantly prevent marine growth and build-up, care should be taken to prevent discharge of cleaning treatments (if used) into stormwater systems or waterways.

Boats should be cleaned in a commercial car wash facility, or, where this is not possible, in a location where runoff (water and chemicals) does not enter stormwater systems.

### Cleaning and maintenance of boats stored in-water that are not antifouled

Boats stored in-water (moored or berthed) often have limited access for cleaning of submerged surfaces that attract marine growth. If your boat is kept in-water, there are some important additional cleaning practices to

consider:

Regular use and inspection of your boat will assist with reducing the growth of marine organisms below the usual water line.

- Regular in-water cleaning of your boat's submerged surfaces and fittings (wiping or brushing off micro-organisms including bacteria and slime) is recommended to reduce marine growth - ideally every 6-12 months.
- Regular out-of-water cleaning (by scraping or water blasting) will remove larger marine organisms including barnacles and algae attracted to your boat's submerged surfaces and fittings - ideally every 12-24 months.

When possible, remove your boat from the water, and clean it where debris can be properly captured and disposed of. Scraping directly into the water is never acceptable.

### **Cleaning and maintenance of antifouled boats**

Most boats stored in water have an antifoul treatment applied to their submerged surface (hull) to delay the build-up of marine growth. However, antifoul treatments are actually a registered pesticide under the Pesticides Act 1999 and must be contained to prevent their discharge into our waterways. Boat owners are required to ensure antifouling products are approved for use in Australia and are used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Antifoul treatments need to be regularly inspected and their maintenance, removal and reapplication should not be undertaken unless the vessel is out of the water. For boats stored in-water that have an antifoul treatment applied, in-water cleaning is not an alternative for anti-fouling maintenance and renewal. Cleaning and maintenance to remove larger marine organisms that may potentially dislodge antifoul treatments should not be undertaken unless the vessel is out of the water. It is an offence to pollute waters and on-the-spot fines apply for individuals and companies.

When painting your boat's hull, use the right paint for the job and be sure to carefully follow the application instructions. Check with a marine painting professional to determine if there are more environmentally-friendly alternatives.

Maintenance involving the removal and reapplication of selected antifouling treatments should be conducted at an accredited shore-based maintenance facility. Where this is not practicable, you must take reasonable steps to contain and dispose of any residues generated during the process. At an absolute minimum, vacuum sanders and drop sheets should be used to catch paint scrapings and dust.

Before careening a vessel for cleaning, the vessel owner should consult with the local government authority or consent authority to ensure that they comply with any requirements under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

### **Use of boat bags for boats stored on water-water**

Some boat owners may consider the use of a boat bag to assist with protection of boat hulls and reducing marine growth. However, the use of boat bags is prohibited on moorings subject to a mooring licence issued by Transport for NSW. Where the use of boat bags is approved within a marina or at a private berth, no chemical products are to be used in the bag to discourage the growth of marine organisms.

Further information about the requirements for applying antifouling paints at marinas can be found on the EPA website (link) <https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/pesticides/licences-and-advice-for-occupational-pesticide-users/applying-antifouling-paint-at-marinas>.