

# OIL AND FUEL

## WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT OIL AND FUEL POLLUTION FROM YOUR BOAT

### Preventive engine maintenance

- Keep the engine well tuned and operating efficiently.
- Practice preventive engine maintenance. Inspect fuel lines, hoses, hydraulic lines, valves, oil seals, gaskets and connections for deterioration and leaks. Fix leaks and replace worn parts. When replacing hoses, new sections should be the right length to prevent damage and leaks. Properly secure lines and hoses to prevent chafing, abrasion and damage.
- Choose Coast Guard-approved alcohol-resistant fuel lines.
- Install drip pans under all equipment that might leak.
- Avoid using solvents or toxic chemicals to clean engine parts. Use mechanical means (such as hand-scraping caked oil) or less toxic solvents (water-based). Do not let solvent run into the bilge.
- Transfer and remove fluids with care, using funnels, pumps, and absorbents to eliminate drips and spills and to keep the bilge area clean.

### Bilge care and preventing oil spills

- Never use soaps or detergents to clean oil or fuel – it is illegal and increases the pollution problem.
- Install an on-board bilge filtration system that filters gas, oil or diesel from bilge water before the automatic pump discharges the water.
- Use oil-only absorbents in the bilge, securely fastened to prevent clogging the bilge pump or its sensor, to capture unexpected leaks.
- If you have a large quantity of oil in the bilge, use a bilge pumpout system.
- Never use the sewage pumpout for the bilge.
- If the bilge and/or engine compartment still needs significant cleaning after bilge pumpout, use a steam cleaning service.

### Report oil and chemical spills

- If you see or cause a spill, do not apply soaps to disperse the sheen (it is illegal).
- Report spills of oil or chemicals to (800)424-8802, (800) OILS911, and to the marina office.

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## Spill-proof your oil changes and recycle used oil

- If you change the engine oil yourself, use a closed system – a portable vacuum oil change pump drained into a container that can be closed to prevent spills during transfer of oil (available at most marine supply stores).
- Do not mix used oil with other waste. Keep it segregated for recycling.
- Recycle used motor oil, oil filters, and fuel filters at a used oil recycling facility.
- Always keep oil-only absorbents on hand to wipe up spills.
- Saturated oil-absorbents are hazardous wastes and must be disposed of at the marina, the fuel dock, or at a hazardous waste disposal facility.

## Use safe, spill-proof fueling practices

- **SAFETY:** prevent fires by shutting off motors, lights, and electrical equipment. Extinguish cigarettes and any other sources of ignition. Keep fuel-soaked absorbents away from sources of ignition. Close doors, hatches, ports, and entryways and turn off blowers.
- Maintain nozzle contact with the fill pipe to prevent static spark and spills.
- Do not rely on the automatic shut-off nozzle to prevent spills; they do not shut off in time.
- Know the capacity of your tank and leave it at least 5% empty because fuel expands.
- Hold an absorbent sheet under the nozzle to catch drips, and properly dispose of fuel-soaked absorbents as hazardous waste.

## Fueling built-in tanks

- Fill tanks slowly to prevent overflows from the air vent. Avoid “topping off” the tank.
- Attach a fuel spill container to cover the air vent and catch spills (if available).
- Install fuel-air separator in air vent line to prevent spills or “splash back.”
- When fueling, keep your hand at the air vent or listen – air gushes when the tank is nearly full.
- At the end of boating season, leave tank full to reduce corrosion and condensation. Add fuel stabilizer to prevent stale gas.

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## Fueling outboard engines

- Fuel on land whenever possible.
- Use funnels to fill portable tanks, or spill-proof portable containers, and keep oil-only absorbents on hand to catch spills.
- Prevent stale gas by leaving fuel tank empty during long periods of inactivity.

## Information about preventing oil and fuel spills on your boat

### Boat U.S. Foundation

Stop the Drops Campaign  
(800) BOAT-USA  
[www.boatus.com](http://www.boatus.com)

### California Coastal Commission

Locate absorbent pad distribution centers and bilge pump-outs on the clean boating Website  
(800) COAST4U  
[www.coastal.ca.gov/ccbn.ccbndx.html](http://www.coastal.ca.gov/ccbn.ccbndx.html)

### California Department of Boating and Waterways

Information about clean boating habits  
(888) 326-2822  
[www.dbw.ca.gov](http://www.dbw.ca.gov)

### National Clean Boating Campaign

Information about environmentally sound boating practices  
[www.cleanboating.org](http://www.cleanboating.org)

## Location of used oil collection and hazardous waste disposal facilities

(800) CLEANUP  
[www.earth911.org](http://www.earth911.org)  
[www.coastal.ca.gov/ccbn.ccbndx.html](http://www.coastal.ca.gov/ccbn.ccbndx.html)

## Report oil and chemical spills to both numbers:

(800) OILS911 – State hotline  
(800) 424-8802 – Federal hotline



Funding provided by the  
California Integrated Waste Management Board