

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Quagga and Zebra Mussel Infestation Prevention Fee

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**Q: Why does my recreational boat (vessel) registration include an additional fee for quagga and zebra mussel infestation prevention?**

A: Recent legislation requires the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to collect an additional fee on behalf of the Department of Parks and Recreation Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW) on all recreational vessels subject to registration in the State of California.

This boater registration Mussel Fee will aid infestation prevention and education efforts through grant funding, administered by DBW, to eligible agencies for quagga and zebra mussel prevention programs at reservoirs that allow boating and fishing recreation and supplementary funding for California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) prevention activities.

**Q: Will I receive additional stickers for the new fee?**

A: Yes. A set of unique identifying stickers will be issued for the vessel as evidence of payment of the Mussel Fee which must be attached to the vessel. Fee exempt vessels will not receive a sticker.

**Q: What is the marine water exemption? How do I know if I am exempt from paying the fee?**

A: Boats used only in salt water such as along the California coast and bay areas such as San Francisco, Suisun, Monterey or San Diego are exempt from the Mussel Fee. Fresh water boaters must pay the Mussel Fee.

**Q: How do I claim the exemption?**

A: To claim the exemption, the vessel owner may notify DMV through one of the following ways:

- Check the appropriate box on the Vessel Renewal Notice.
- Verbally notify the department through the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system at 1-800-777-0133.
- Submit a completed Statement of Facts [\(REG 256\)](#) form.
- For original vessel registration applications, the vessel owner may claim the exemption by checking the appropriate box on the Application for Registration Number Certificate of Ownership and Certificate of Number for Undocumented Vessel [\(BOAT 101\)](#) form or submitting a completed [REG 256](#).

**Q: Why are marine water boats exempt from paying the Mussel Fee?**

A: Quagga and Zebra Mussels only live and reproduce in fresh water. Boat owners that do not operate in fresh water are exempt from the Mussel Fee for this reason.

**Q: What if I pay the fee but then become marine exempt because I no longer use my boat in fresh water?**

A: A refund of the Mussel Fee paid upon original vessel registration and vessel registration renewal is subject to established DMV business rules and processing procedures. See: [application for refund](#).

**Q: I have always used my boat in salt water, but I am thinking of occasionally using it in fresh water such as the Sacramento River or a reservoir. Do I need the stickers?**

A: Yes, you will need to go to a DMV office and purchase the Mussel Fee stickers.

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**Q: Will my Mussel Fee stickers allow me to boat in any fresh water reservoir or river without paying for an inspection or cleaning?**

A: The Mussel Fee stickers do not pay for individual boat inspections that may be required by local water agencies. Boat inspection programs are implemented by the water managers and are varied. Please contact the particular waterbody directly for information regarding their program and requirement prior to your visit. View this [California watercraft inspection](#) list for contact information.

**Q: Are Coast Guard documented vessels or out of state boats visiting California fresh water required to pay the Mussel Fee?**

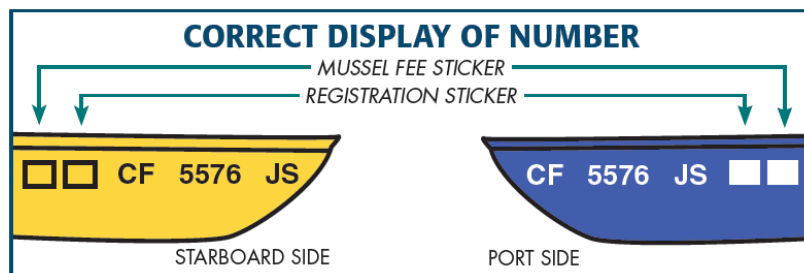
A: No. Documented and out of state registered vessels are not required to pay the Mussel Fee or display Mussel Fee Paid stickers. According to Harbors and Navigation Code Section 675 and the California Vehicle Code Sections 9853 and 9860, the quagga and zebra mussel infestation prevention fee is imposed upon California registered vessels. Existing law does not include a fee-collection mechanism for US Coast Guard documented vessels or boats registered outside of California. Individual water bodies may require inspections and inspection fees prior to launch for all vessels regardless of origin, registration or documentation. The Mussel Fee does not take that place of those inspection requirements.

**Q: What if I do not pay the fee or do not place the stickers on my boat?**

A: Law enforcement officers may stop a fresh water boater operating a vessel without the Mussel Fee Paid stickers.

**Q: Where do I place the Mussel Fee stickers?**

A: A sticker is to be placed on each side of the boat next to and in line with the CF number and vessel registration sticker so that law enforcement identification may be made. See graphic below.



**Q: What if I lose the stickers or they are removed or damaged on my boat? Can I get replacements?**

A: If boat owners lose the stickers or the stickers are damaged, substitute stickers may be obtained from DMV for \$16.

**Q: Can this replacement fee be waived?**

A: The fee is waived only for a replacement/substitute sticker when the vessel owner indicates on DMV's Application for replacement Plates, Stickers, and Documents ([REG 156](#)) form that the original stickers were not received from DMV.

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**Q: How do I get Mussel Fee stickers if I purchase a new boat?**

A: DMV will collect the Mussel Fee and provide stickers when you register your new boat.

**Q: What are quagga and zebra mussels?**

A: Quagga and zebra mussels, non-native freshwater mussels native to Eurasia, multiply quickly and encrust watercraft and infrastructure, and they compete for food with native and sport fish species. These mussels can be spread from one body of water to another by attaching themselves to nearly anything that has been in an infested water body or via standing water from an infested waterbody entrapped in boat engines, bilges, live-wells and buckets. More detailed information on these mussels may be found on DBW's [website](#).

**Q: What is being done in response to quagga/zebra mussels?**

A: An Interagency Quagga/Zebra Mussel Team\*, comprised of federal and state agencies and private partners, has been working together to contain and control quagga and zebra mussels in California since their discovery in Lake Mead in January 2007 and subsequently in water bodies in southern California. Zebra mussels were discovered in a central California water body in January 2008. Their actions include coordination and reporting of the following:

- Increased watercraft inspections at California Department of Food and Agriculture Border Protection Stations.
- Development and implementation of monitoring plans for high risk water bodies in the state.
- Training of state, federal and local agency staff and K-9 units to conduct watercraft inspections and monitoring.
- Public outreach and education to watercraft owners through print and online media, outdoor signage and distribution of information at public/media events. (e.g., a [Boat Cleaning Guide Book](#), [watercraft inspections](#) contact information, etc.). More information can be found on [DBW](#) and/or [CDFW](#) websites.

\* California Departments of Fish and Wildlife, Water Resources, Food and Agriculture, Parks and Recreation/Division of Boating and Waterways, Cal Fire, CalTrans, State Water Resources Control Board, Regional Water Quality Control Board, State Lands Commission, Natural Resources Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Geological Survey, National Park Service, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Pacific Gas and Electric and Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

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