

Important Note: The following text is excerpted directly from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's publication, *Environmental Compliance, Pollution Prevention, and Self Assessment Guide for the Marina Industry*. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Pollution Prevention Unit. March 2003. The only changes that have been made are the addition of links to pertinent resources or regulations and Editor's Notes, where appropriate.

Floor Drains and Wastewater

The wastewater discussed in this section refers to all the wastewater generated at your facility that is not treated before it is discharged. This can include wastewater from spills, clean-up, leaks, or any other industrial wastewater that does not get treated.

Regulatory Alert

Do not discharge wastewater to your floor drains unless they are connected to either a public sewer or a holding tank.

Wastewater from marinas may contain heavy metals, toxics, solvents, oil and grease, gasoline, and other materials that could be hazardous. Care should be taken not to discharge these items, or other contaminants into floor drains unless you have approval from your local wastewater treatment facility, or are permitted by DEC.

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

The Environmental Conservation Law prohibits the discharge of pollutants into surface or groundwaters without a State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) Permit. The Safe Drinking Water Act, under the Underground Injection Control program administered by EPA was designed to prevent contamination of groundwater resulting from the operation of injection wells. In addition, the disposal of hazardous waste into floor drains may be a violation of the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). If you have floor drains at your facility, you must do one of the following:

- Make sure they are connected to a public sewer system. In most cases, floor drains are connected to a publicly owned treatment works (POTW). However, the owner should refer to the Local Codes Enforcement Officer and the Sewer Use Ordinance before making any new connections. Some municipalities restrict floor drains from being connected to the sewer system, depending on the type of operation. Also, you may be required by your POTW to connect an oil/water separator between the floor drains and the sewer system. Oil/water separators should be checked on a regular basis to make sure they are working properly. This includes cleaning out the sludge annually, testing it for toxicity and then disposing of it properly. If you are a conditionally exempt small quantity generator (CESQG), you can transport this sludge to an approved facility. This includes transporting dried sludge to your local landfill, but prior approval is needed. See the [resource guide section, http://www.seagrant.sunysb.edu/marinabmp/pdfs/DEC_resource_guide.pdf](http://www.seagrant.sunysb.edu/marinabmp/pdfs/DEC_resource_guide.pdf) for locations of the household hazardous waste collection facilities.

- If no POTW is located in your area, make sure your floor drains are connected to some kind of holding tank, where the wastewater can be pumped out and treated or disposed of properly. All wastewater should be hauled away by a 6 NYCRR Part 364 DEC permitted waste transporter to avoid any liability.

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Wastewater can be generated at your facility from washing floors or other cleaning operations. By minimizing the amount of wastewater, you reduce the amount of wastewater and sludge that must be managed or discharged. Here are some tips to help you minimize your generation of wastewater:

- Use dry floor cleaning methods. This includes sweeping and vacuuming.
- Train employees to use water efficiently.
- Use only nontoxic soaps to clean floors and marina craft.
- Prevent drips and spills from reaching the floor.
- If a small spill does occur, clean it immediately with shop towels or mops. This was discussed in the shop towel section. Never clean spills by hosing them down with water.
- Maintain marina craft only in areas where there are no floor drains. If floor drains are present, seal them off during work to prevent spills from entering the drains.
- Never have floor drains where hazardous materials are stored.
- If you collect your wastewater in a holding tank, try to reuse it whenever possible.
- Consider buying a water recycling unit to treat your wastewater on site.
- If your wastewater is nonhazardous, purchase equipment to evaporate your wastewater. Note that evaporators may require an air permit or registration. Evaporator bottoms may be hazardous waste.
- Wash your marina craft at an off-site commercial car wash.
- If you service vehicles at your facility, brush snow and ice off before bringing them into the service shop.

Some Commonly Asked Questions

- Q I just purchased a facility but there are no public sewers in my town. There is a floor drain in the middle of my shop, but I am not sure where it empties into. The only water that empties into this drain is from my operations floor area. Are there any special regulations that I have to comply with?
- A If your discharge from this floor drain does not end up in a public sewer or some type of holding tank, then there is a good chance you are in violation of the Environmental Conservation Law (ECL) for an illegal discharge to surface or groundwaters. You should determine where the floor drains discharge by using some environmentally safe dye or food coloring. Any discharge of wastewater from an industrial operation into the ground or surface waters of the state is illegal.