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Green Up & Clean Up Your Boat!

April 1, 2012 by [Boating Times](#) · [Leave a Comment](#)

BLUE WATER, GREEN BOAT

Green Up & Clean Up Your Boat



Prepping your boat this spring can be less costly to the environment than ever before. New eco-friendly ideas and products have entered the market, joining those we should more heartily embrace to keep the Earth cleaner. We've compiled a reference guide for ways to shed winter's dust and dirt (and shrink wrap) while protecting our environment and ourselves.

When it comes time to shed an average boat's 14 pounds of shrink wrap (usually made from petroleum-based low-density polyethylene), the goal is to avoid landfill disposals and subsequent greenhouse gas emissions. Repurposing shrink wrap is the green way to proceed, so ask your marina or boatyard if

they do on-site bulk shrink wrap recycling. If not, some municipalities like Hempstead and Southold have facilities for disposal (check with your town or village, too).

If there's no local or onsite recycling program, Dr. Shrink sells the REBAG[®] kit, available at www.dr-shrink.com and at some local boat retailers. This product allows boaters to have their shrink wrap shipped off for recycling. Locally, a



few commercial locations accept drop-offs of shrink wrap, such as Island Recycling Solutions, LLC, and PK Metals.

Once the covering is off, there's still a winter's worth of grunge to remove from our vessels. Skipping the disposable paper towels and the toxic cleaners safeguards your health as well as the environment's. Grab a reusable sponge, a box of baking soda, some vinegar, and some low-suds natural soap, combine with some free elbow grease, and goodbye grime!

When searching for environmentally friendly products this year, be aware that there are no regulations when it comes to most products marked "natural" or "green." Read the list of ingredients on the back of

the package, rather than just the boasts on the front, and also consider how a product was made in evaluating its greenness. You can also look for products bearing a "Green Seal" at www.greenseal.org, or visit <http://goclean.com/index.html> for ideas and products.

Achieving cleanliness does more than just bolster the pride we feel for our boats. In this era of pricey petroleum, Kyle Taylor, Vice President of Marketing & Sales for Earthborn Clean Products, advises that "making sure that your boat hull and propeller are clean may increase your fuel efficiency up to 20%." He adds that, "boats with clean hulls accelerate faster, have

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higher top-end speeds, and lower maintenance costs.”

When talking about his Boat Clean hull and surface cleaner (www.earthbornclean.com) Taylor promotes its “cutting edge” green technology, explaining that it works “at a molecular level to reduce surface tension, allowing the unwanted material to break away. This super-aggressive technology doesn’t affect rubber, paint, plastic, or fiberglass. It is safe for the user as well as the environment.”



Being green also obliges us to dispose of materials and substances such as batteries, oil, oil filters, and antifreeze properly. These items need special handling and careful disposal for your sake as well as the environment’s! Keep items separate, in their original packaging if possible (to prevent cross-contamination), and consult with your marina manager, municipality, or a local service station about proper collection and recycling. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation also has a list of Household Hazardous Waste collection and storage facilities www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8782.html.

During a check of your safety equipment, don’t toss away outdated visual distress signals. Old flares can still be set off, posing a risk to lives and property. Check with the police or fire department for disposal, or contact the US Coast Guard Auxiliary or US Power Squadrons to see if they are accepting expired flares for training purposes.



As readying your boat for the season is a labor of love, safeguarding the health of our navigable waterways should be, too. Jennifer Congdon of the New York State Clean Vessel Assistance Program (CVAP) urges boaters to “ensure their vessels do not contribute to sewage pollution.” CVAP is a grant program available through the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation for the construction, operation, and maintenance of marine pumpouts. Congdon recommends following these easy and cost-effective tips:

- To ensure that your marine sanitation device (MSD) is in good operating condition, clean and lubricate fittings, hoses and other pump mechanisms. Start by filling the head with water; inspect the condition of the holding tank and connecting lines, and double-check for leaks.
- Use environmentally friendly disinfectants for your MSD; avoid products containing chlorine, formaldehyde, or other toxic components. Be sure to read the product labels.
- Use rapid-dissolving marine toilet paper specifically designed for MSDs.
- Prior to the beginning of boating season, familiarize yourself with New York pumpout facilities and the current *No Discharge Zones* at www.efc.gov/cvap.



The chipped off and sandblasted remnants of most antifouling bottom paints pose a threat to our waterways and drinking water, and when your boat is launched, the repainted surface contains substances that are toxic to marine life. Be mindful of the collection and disposal of your washwater and paint residue.

Whether you paint the bottom yourself or engage a marine service, ask for the best available low-toxicity antifouling paint containing the least amount of copper for the type of boating you will do, or inquire about toxin-free antifouling products. Luritek’s Eco-Clad (www.ecoclad.com) represents the next generation of environmentally responsible bottom paints. Steve Schultz, President of Luritek, advises that “Eco-Clad does not prevent fouling by releasing heavy metals or biocides into the water. It works by following nature’s approach to keep barnacles from attaching to a fish, and creates a biofilm on the surface of the bottom of the boat that barnacles don’t like. It is like garlic candy to a barnacle!” The product reduces future prep work, Shultz says, as it “will last for several years in New York waters.” As of press time, Eco-Clad is awaiting approval for use in New York.



Other green-up resources www.epa.gov/, www.seagrant.sunysb.edu/marinabmp/default.htm, www.goingcoastal.org, www.ruahappycamper.com

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