

Appendix G

Boating Pollution Laws and Regulations

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POLLUTION REGULATIONS AND ASSOCIATED PLACARDS

United States vessels of 26 feet or longer must display in a prominent location, a durable placard at least 5 by 8 inches, fixed in a conspicuous place in the machinery spaces, or at the bilge pump control station, notifying the crew and passengers of oil discharge restrictions.

MARINE SANITATION

Definitions

- “Marine Sanitation” means waste associated with marine heads on vessels.
- “Marine Sanitation Device” means any device on board a vessel which is designed to retain, treat, or discharge waste associated with a marine head.
- “Inoperable device” means a device or system is considered inoperable when it cannot be readily placed back in service.

Marine Sanitation Devices

Marine sanitation device laws apply to boats with installed heads (commodes). Sanitation devices are classified by types. Types I & II treat sewage and then discharge it into the water. A Type III is a holding tank which retains the waste until it is pumped out at a marina or other facility. The following is a summary of the M.S.D. laws:

- Discharging untreated sewage into public water is prohibited. It is illegal to use a vessel which is capable of discharging untreated sewage.
- Public waters are classified as either discharge (capable of accepting treated sewage) or no discharge (waste must be retained in a holding tank until properly removed).
- Discharge into public waters is restricted to a Type I or II U.S. Coast Guard approved marine sanitation device on those waters classified as discharge.
- Marinas and docks operating on public water must provide a sewage removal service.

Discharge Reservoirs		No Discharge Reservoirs	
Barkley	Melton Hill	Beech River Lakes	Nolichucky
Caulderwood	Mississippi River	Boone	Normandy
Cheatham	Nickajack	Center Hill	Norris
Chickamauga	Old Hickory	Cherokee	Ocoee 1,2,3
Cordell Hull	Pickwick	Chilhowee	Tims Ford
Cumberland River	Reelfoot	Douglas	Watauga
Dale Hollow	South Holston	Ft. Patrick Henry	Wilbur
Ft. Loudon	Tellico	Great Falls	Woods
Kentucky	Tennessee River	J. Percy Priest	
McKellar	Watts Bar	Lake Graham	

Vessels shall be deemed in compliance of the marine sanitation law when:

- The vessel does not have an installed head.
- The vessel is equipped with a holding tank which is constructed or secured in such a way that overboard discharge of sewage is not possible.

- The vessel is operating on waters designated as “approved for overboard discharge of marine waste” and has an operate U.S. Coast Guard approved Type 1 or 2 marine sanitation device attached to installed marine head.
- The vessel is operating on waters designated as “no discharge for marine waste” and has rendered inoperable any system that would allow overboard discharge of sewage.

Most marinas have dedicated “pump out” stations available for removing sewage. All boaters should pump out sewage holding tanks on a regular basis.

Inoperable Device

Examples of an inoperable device are:

- Systems on which Y valves have been secured in a position which prohibits improper discharge of waste. Y valves will be considered “secured” when held in the closed position by non-releasing wire ties or seals as furnished by the Wildlife Resources Agency.
- Systems where wiring has been removed in such a way that the device cannot readily be reconnected for use.
- Systems where hoses have been removed so that overboard discharge of untreated sewage on discharge lakes, or overboard discharge of any kind on no discharge lakes is not possible.
- Removal of the “installed” head.
 - Methods such as removal of fuses, locking doors which provide access to the head, and removal of Y valve handles shall not be considered as making a device or system inoperable.

Preventing Discharge

When operating a vessel on a body of water where the discharge of treated or untreated sewage is prohibited, such as No Discharge Zones, the operator must secure the device in a manner that prevents any discharge. Some acceptable methods are:

- Padlocking overboard discharge valves in the closed position, using a non-releasable wire tie to hold overboard discharge valves in the closed position.
- Closing overboard discharge valves and removing the handle.
- Locking the door, with padlock or key lock, to the space enclosing the toilets (for Type I, Type II only).

Capacity To Retain Oily Mixtures

- Regulations issued under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act require all vessels with propulsion machinery to have a capacity to retain oily mixtures on board and be equipped with a fixed or portable means to discharge these oily mixtures to a reception facility. A bucket and rags meet this requirement.
- On recreational vessels, a bucket, oil absorbent pads and heavy-duty plastic bag, bailer or portable pump are some suitable means that meet the requirement for retention on board until transferring the oily mixture to a reception facility.
- No person may intentionally drain oil or oily waste from any source into the bilge of any vessel.

Source: American Boating Education, LLC., Tennessee American Boat Operator's Course

Retrieved from:

http://boatcourse.com/Tennessee/02_LawsAndSafetyEquipment/11_Pollution_and_Garbage.aspx
(accessed March 2011)

The Tennessee Boat Operators' Course is great source of boating safety information and is officially accepted by the Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency (TWRA), approved National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) and recognized by the United States Coast Guard.