

# WASTE CONTAINMENT AND DISPOSAL CLEAN BOATING TIP SHEET



Trash and waste in our lakes is ugly, dangerous to humans and wildlife, and illegal to dump. Boaters are often the first line of defense in preventing trash and waste from entering our waterways. This fact sheet covers ways you can help keep the lakes free of trash, waste and chemicals.

## REDUCE, RECYCLE AND CONTAIN TRASH

- Avoid products with plastic or excessive packaging.
- Purchase refreshments in recyclable containers, and recycle them.
- Pack food in reusable containers.
- Purchase reusable water containers to reduce plastic waste.
- Prevent trash being thrown or blown overboard. If trash blows overboard, retrieve it. Consider it “crew- overboard” practice.
- Dispose of cigarette butts properly. They are made of plastic (cellulose acetate) and take up to 15 years to break down.
- Dispose of all recyclables and trash on shore. Place them in a recycling bin or dumpster at the marina, or dispose of at home.



## PROPER WASTE DISPOSAL

Dispose of the following items according to the recommendations listed below.

Waste Product	Disposal Method	Why?
<b>Anti-freeze</b> <i>Only use propylene glycol (pink, blue or clear) anti-freeze.</i>	Dispose of at a marina, automotive center, or county drop-off station that accepts and recycles anti-freeze.  Do not pour into a storm sewer or septic system.	Would you want to swim in anti-freeze? Anti-freeze can harm aquatic life, especially if multiple boats flush their engines and holding tanks in the same area. Anti-freeze dumping in open waters causes fish-kills. Used anti-freeze can also contain heavy metals or fuel from engines that can classify it as hazardous waste.
<b>Batteries</b>	Return to battery retailer for recycling. Some household hazardous waste drives and drop-off centers will also accept batteries, but check first.	Most marine/automotive batteries are “lead acid” batteries, which means they are considered to be a hazardous waste due to presence of lead and battery acid. As a plus, reclaimed materials can be used in new products such as new batteries and stainless steel products.
<b>Expired Emergency Flares</b>	To date, flares cannot be recycled but special care should be taken with their disposal. To dispose of expired flares contact your local county public works department, police or fire department, or Coast Guard Auxiliary.	Throwing flares in your household trash can cause a dangerous situation and setting off old flares can result in false distress reports. The expired flares may be used in training exercises or in boater education demonstrations. Trading them in may earn you a discount on the purchase of new flares.
<b>Fish Scraps</b>	Find out what your marina’s disposal policy is, then discard fish waste in designated areas or bag waste and dispose of in a dumpster.  Do not dump fish waste in the surrounding water.	Fish cleaning may pose a problem if the waste is discarded into a poorly flushed marina basin. Fish waste has an unpleasant smell and is unsightly. In addition, decomposing fish waste reduces oxygen levels, harming aquatic life. In some cases, dumping fish waste into water is against the law.

## CLEAN BOATING TIP SHEET: WASTE CONTAINMENT AND DISPOSAL

Waste Product	Disposal Method	Why?
<b>Monofilament</b>	<p>Recycle. Collection bins may be available at your tackle shop or marina. Or you can collect your used monofilament and mail it to a recycler.</p> <p>Michigan Clean Marina program is a local sponsor of the BoatU.S. Reel in and Recycle monofilament recycling campaign.</p>	<p>Monofilament often accumulates in popular fishing areas and may tangle around boat propellers and aquatic life, while taking over 500 years to decompose. This poses threats to anglers, the fish they catch and important fish habitat and breeding grounds. Abandoned line can “ghost fish” by continuing to catch and drown aquatic species (e.g., fish, turtles and birds).</p>
<b>Oil</b>	<p>Recycle. Your marina or household hazardous waste drop-off centers should be able to help.</p>	<p>Discharge of oil or oily waste to the water is illegal. Also, recycled motor oil is refined and made into new lubricants, easing the demand on non-renewable resources.</p>
<b>Oil Filters</b>	<p>Some marinas have facilities to drain, crush and recycle oil filters. Check with your marina or marine repair and supply store for details.</p> <p>If you can't recycle your filter, the state of Michigan recommends that you puncture and drain the filter for 12 hours before disposal. Recycle the oil.</p>	<p>Draining and crushing filters reduces waste volume and reclaims additional oil.</p>
<b>Solvents, Gasoline and Pesticides</b>	<p>Bring to a household hazardous waste collection facility.</p>	<p>These products contain toxic chemicals. If we put them in the garbage, pour them down the drain, dump them onto the ground or overboard, the result can be contamination of soil and water.</p>
<b>Paint and Varnish</b>	<p>Oil-based paint and varnish: If containers are full, consider donating to a home improvement resellers like the Habitat for Humanity ReStore. If not, take to county hazardous household waste drop-off station.</p> <p>Latex paint: Remove lid and allow paint to air dry in a well-ventilated area. Dispose of dry paint and can in regular trash.</p>	<p>Paint contains solvents and metals that can harm the environment and endanger human health if disposed of improperly.</p> <p>Paint should never be poured down the drain; many of the chemicals in it cannot be treated by sewage treatment or septic systems.</p>
<b>Shrink-wrap</b>	<p>Recycle. See <a href="http://www.michigancleanmarina.org">www.michigancleanmarina.org</a> for more information.</p>	<p>Hundreds of thousands of pounds of this material are sent to landfills each year. Recycling saves landfill space and provides material for creation of new plastic products.</p>
<b>Sewage</b>	<p>Visit a pump-out station. For more information, refer to Michigan Sea Grant's <i>Vessel Sewage and Marine Sanitation Device</i> tip sheet.</p>	<p>Michigan is a “no discharge” state, making vessel sewage discharges illegal. Also, it is just good practice to dispose of the waste properly. Sewage carries diseases and other pollutants that are harmful to people, aquatic plants and animals.</p>

For more information on hazardous waste disposal and recycling locations and programs, see:

Michigan Clean Marina program: [www.michigancleanmarina.org](http://www.michigancleanmarina.org)

Michigan Department of Environmental Quality: [www.michigan.gov/deq](http://www.michigan.gov/deq)

Michigan Recycling Coalition: [www.michiganrecycles.org](http://www.michiganrecycles.org)