
ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



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A Boater's Guide to Sewage Pumpout

One of the biggest water quality issues we face concerning surface water is controlling the amount of nutrients entering them. There are many sources of nutrients, ranging from manure on farms to failing sewage treatment plants. Boaters that illegally discharge human sewage or greywater (shower and sink water) directly overboard contribute to the nutrient problems found in New Hampshire waters.

The discharge of excessive nutrients to the water can create a series of chemical and biological events that impact water quality. The results include murky water, oxygen depletion, aquatic life die-off, spread of waterborne illness, algal blooms, and more.

What Does the Law Say About Boat Discharges?

All waters, coastal and inland, in New Hampshire are a "No Discharge Area," which is a designation granted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to prohibit all boat sewage discharges, whether treated or untreated sewage.

Through the provisions of RSA 487.2, it is illegal to discharge raw sewage and greywater from a boat in New Hampshire inland waters. Boat wastewater (including sewage and water from sinks and showers) can only be removed using an onshore pumpout facility for boats operating in New Hampshire's inland lakes. For this reason, boats cannot be equipped with a functional Y-valve or plumbing apparatus to switch between holding tank and through-hull discharge. Instead all boats must direct all wastewater to a holding tank.

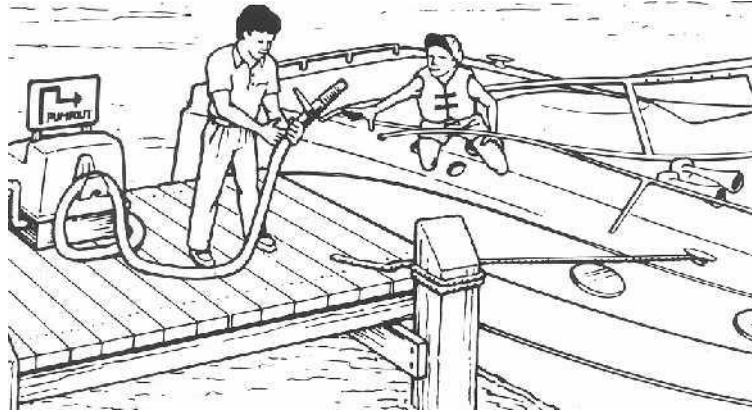
In the coastal zone, all boat sewage is prohibited from being discharged. This includes all estuaries, bays, and the open ocean within 3 nautical miles of the state shoreline, including from the Isles of Shoals. Boats in the coastal zone may have Y-valves; however federal law states that they must be secured in the closed position while operating in areas where boat sewage discharge is prohibited.

You are not required to have a toilet on your boat but if you wish to have one, ensure that it complies with the New Hampshire regulations by directing wastewater to a holding tank.

Many marinas in New Hampshire now offer pumpout services. There are also mobile pumpout services that operate in the coastal zone. A list of these pumpout options, as well as links to a

pumpout map and options for surrounding states is available on [the CVA Program directory website](#).

Any organization interested in installing new pumpout facilities or replacing old, failing systems may apply for funding through NHDES. These funds are provided to states through the federal Clean Vessel Act.



Advice on Marine Sanitation Devices from Marina Operators

1. If, when pumping out, the hose nozzle does not lock to the deck fitting, hold the nozzle in place during the pumpout.
2. If you have **any** questions about the use of pumpout facilities, ask staff for assistance.
3. Regularly maintain and clean the boat's plumbing and venting systems.
4. Don't let the waste accumulate in holding tanks all summer before pumping out. It may compact and be much harder to remove.
5. Pump out before you haul out your boat for the winter.

For More Information

For more information visit [the CVA Program website](#).

or use the following contact information:

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