



Water Quality

Clean Water...It Starts with You

Pleasure Boating

We depend on clean water. Not only does it provide a home for plants and animals, and drinking water for people, but it provides recreation, tourism and job opportunities. Many of us don't realize how our daily activities affect the water quality in our local marine and fresh water bodies.



Did You Know?

- **If you live in an area with storm drains...** when you wash your car, the soapy water and debris can run off your driveway into a storm drain that empties directly into local water bodies.
- **If you have an onsite sewage system such as a septic system...** that is not properly sized, constructed or maintained, the drainfield can become plugged which can cause partially treated wastewater to surface on your lawn or in ditches which lead to local water bodies.
- **If you live on a farm or ranch...** livestock manure, sediments and improperly applied pesticides and fertilizers can contaminate local water bodies.
- **If you are a boater...** the dumping of sewage, leaking fuel and oil and using toxic cleaning products can threaten water quality, especially near the shoreline.

These are just a few examples of nonpoint source pollution. It is different from point source pollution which comes from well defined sources, such as a sewage pipe or industry pipe. Nonpoint source

pollution comes from many places. It's not easy to identify or control, and all of us, often without knowing, contribute to it. Although progress has been made in reducing nonpoint and point source pollution, *nonpoint* source pollution remains a leading threat to water quality in BC.

It All Adds Up

Small amounts of nonpoint source pollution from each one of us may not seem to be a problem. But the combined effects of pollutants from almost four million British Columbians is threatening our clean water resources. Closed beaches, contaminated shellfish beds, fish kills and unsafe drinking water are just some of the environmental impacts.

We can reduce nonpoint source pollution. You can make a difference as an individual or by joining or forming a community stewardship group which cares for a local waterbody. BC Environment (now Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection) has produced five **CLEAN WATER** brochures: nonpoint source pollution, urban runoff, onsite sewage systems, agriculture and pleasure boating. All provide tips that people can follow to reduce or prevent nonpoint source pollution. This brochure focuses on **pleasure boating** and water quality.

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Imagine the Effects

- Untreated sewage released into water from pleasure boating contains harmful parasites, bacteria and viruses that contaminate shellfish, harm other aquatic life and threaten human health.
- Nutrients and organic matter in sewage use up oxygen that fish and other aquatic life need to survive
- Toxins from paints and wood preservatives cause tumours or liver lesions in bottom-dwelling fish and other aquatic life
- Many other contaminants from boating can harm aquatic life, such as leaking fuel and oil, boat cleaners which contain chlorine, ammonia, phosphate and other potentially harmful substances and trash thrown overboard.

What is the Legislation?

The *Pleasure Craft Sewage Pollution Prevention Regulations* under the *Canada Shipping Act* ban the release of raw sewage from pleasure boats in designated bodies of water. Pleasure boats operating in designated water bodies must be equipped with adequate holding tanks. The Canadian Coast Guard, Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Conservation Officers are all authorized to enforce this regulation.

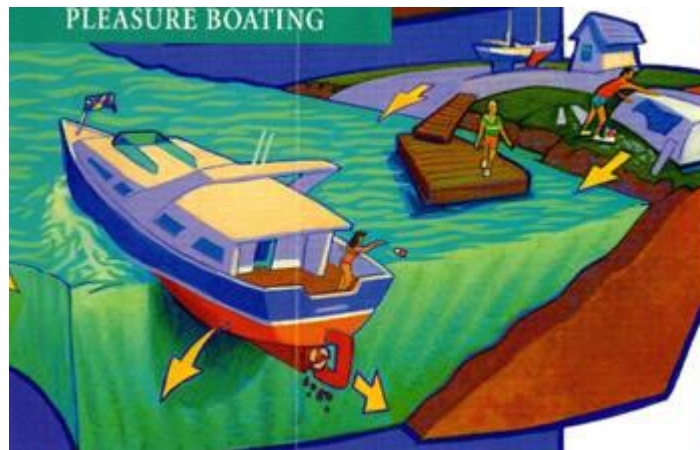
Citizen groups and individuals can contact the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection to find out which water bodies have been designated or how to have sensitive water bodies considered for protection under this legislation.

What Can You do About It?

The person on the front cover is using a dropcloth to collect paint scrapings while maintaining a boat. You too can do your part to prevent nonpoint source pollution. Follow these tips to protect the water bodies where you enjoy boating.

- Install a holding tank to avoid dumping sewage directly into waters.
- Use shoreside toilet facilities as much as possible.
- If no pumpout facilities are available, only release sewage in open waters that have good tidal flushing action. Avoid releasing sewage in marinas, bays, inlets and other sensitive areas such as shellfish leases.
- Create the demand for permanent or mobile pumpout services by letting marinas know you need it and will use it.
- Do not throw trash overboard. Use shoreside recycling and garbage bins.
- Use biodegradable, phosphate-free cleaners instead of chemical cleaners to clean the inside and outside of your boat.
- Conduct major maintenance chores on land.
- When maintaining your boat, use drop cloths to catch scrapings, paint chips, debris and drips and dispose of materials properly. Avoid using antifouling paints as they are harmful to aquatic life.
- Keep motors well maintained and tuned to prevent fuel and lubricant leaks.
- Consider installing 4-stroke engines which are less polluting than 2-stroke engines. Use electric motors where practical.
- Use absorbent bilge pads to soak up minor oil and fuel leaks or spills.
- Report any spills to the [Provincial Spill Reporting](#) number at 1-800-663-3456.
- Apply to the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection for designation of a waterbody you are concerned about.
- Peer pressure is often the best method of improving practices. Help educate fellow boaters.

Our individual actions add up!



You Can Make a Difference!

Protect clean water supplies by preventing nonpoint source pollution in the first place. It will take all of us working together cooperatively with neighbours, in our communities and with all levels of government to keep water clean.

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