

## Marine Sewage and Wastewater Disposal

### DEQ regulates "Waters of the State"

If you own or operate a marine vessel on Oregon's waterways you are subject to regulation for disposal of sewage and/or other types of wastewater.

"Waters of the State" includes lakes, bays, ponds, impounding reservoirs, springs, rivers, streams, creeks, estuaries, marshes, inlets, canals, and the Pacific Ocean within the territorial limits of the State of Oregon.

The discharge of any sewage (treated or untreated) from marine toilets is prohibited on all freshwater lakes, impoundments and reservoirs that are not accessible by boat *from the ocean*. In Oregon, "sewage" means human excreta *as well as* kitchen, bath and laundry wastes (often considered *gray water*).

### Boats Under Way

It is *never* legal to dump untreated sewage in Waters of the State. A *Marine Sanitation Device* (MSD) is a unit designed and authorized by the U.S. Coast Guard to receive toilet (head) waste from a boat under way. If your boat has a head and/or internal plumbing you must use a MSD to treat sewage.

A "port-a-potty" or other type of self-contained system that can be carried on and off the boat and does not discharge to the water may be used in lieu of a head with a MSD, but at no time can any amount of sewage be diverted to the water.

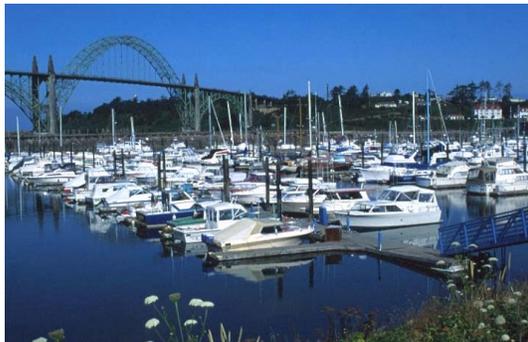
There are three types of MSDs:

- Type I and II MSDs treat sewage and can only discharge back to the water *while the vessel is underway* unless otherwise posted.
- A Type III MSD is a sewage collection unit, and its stored contents *cannot* be lawfully discharged to Waters of the State *at any time*.

MSDs are not allowed to discharge treated wastes from boat houses, floating homes or any boat when docked or tied up.

### Boat Houses

A *boat house* is a floating structure used to shelter a boat. A boat house may have a fresh water connection, and may or may not have plumbing fixtures. If it has any plumbing fixtures, including but not limited to toilet,



*To preserve Oregon's waterways, DEQ encourages the collection and proper disposal of all wastewater.*

showers or sinks, it must be continuously connected to a DEQ approved sewage system that treats both sewage and *gray water*.

### Floating Homes

A *floating home* is a structure used as a residence for extended periods. Floating homes are not capable of self-propulsion and must be towed to a location. A floating home has permanent plumbing fixtures and while moored must be continuously connected to a DEQ approved sewage system that treats both sewage and *gray water*.

### Houseboats

A *houseboat* is a floating structure used as a stationary residence, or "cruising vessel" (mobile residence), or a combination. A houseboat has means of self-propulsion, and usually contains plumbing fixtures.

If the houseboat is in use as a stationary residence at a marina or moorage, it must be connected to a sewage disposal system that treats sewage including gray water.

### "Liveaboards"

A "liveaboard" is a floating, self propelled boat or structure, generally manufactured or intended for use as a vessel. It has a fresh water inlet, internal plumbing, and some type of toilet facility.

When it is in use as a stationary residence at a new or expanded marina or moorage, its slip must have a permanent sewage connection hookup provided by the marina or moorage.



State of Oregon  
Department of  
Environmental  
Quality

### Water Quality Surface Water Management

811 SW 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Portland, OR 97204  
Phone: (503) 229-5657  
(800) 452-4011  
Fax: (503) 229-5408  
Contact: Ranei Nomura  
[www.deq.state.or.us](http://www.deq.state.or.us)

However, DEQ does not require a continuous connection to the hookup point.

Any discharge to Waters of the State from a liveaboard's Type III MSD is a violation of both state and federal law and the same discharge rules for Type I and II MSDs apply.

DEQ encourages liveaboard owners to collect and properly dispose of *gray water*.

### **Vessels**

Recreational boats and commercial vessels that contain internal plumbing must adhere to State and Federal guidelines for proper disposal of sewage and other wastewaters.

### **Recreational Boat**

A recreational boat is a floating, self-propelled boat or structure, with or without internal plumbing, used principally or entirely for transportation or recreation on the water. Boaters are also prohibited from discharging sewage wastes from a Type III MSD to Waters of the State and the same rules for Type I and II MSDs apply.

DEQ encourages recreational boat owners to collect and properly dispose of *gray water*.

### **Commercial Vessel**

DEQ does not regulate Type I and II MSD discharges from commercial vessels such as tour vessels, restaurant ships, cruise ships, commercial ships, tug boats, etc., while they are operating or underway.

However, DEQ can and has regulated (prohibited) *gray water* discharges that have been deemed to be significant in volume or concentration. Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 468B.050 requires a DEQ permit for discharge

of any waste to Waters of the State, but Type I and IIMSD discharges while underway are exempt from this law by the Clean Water Act. All other commercial vessel waste discharges including *gray water*, *bilge water*, *ballast water*, etc., are subject to Oregon law.

Placing a waste into Waters of the State is a violation of ORS 164.785 and is a Class A misdemeanor. Vessel *bilge water* cannot be lawfully discharged to Waters of the State, even if preceded by an oil-water separator. *Bilge water* contains many other pollutants and possible organisms other than petroleum products. These contaminants would not be affected by an oil-water separator.

### **For additional information**

For more information about wastewater from floating structures and residences, contact your nearest DEQ office or visit our website:

*[www.deq.state.or.us](http://www.deq.state.or.us)*

For questions about Marine Sanitation Devices, contact the United States Coast Guard:

*[www.uscg.mil](http://www.uscg.mil)*

For questions about vessel wastewater discharges other than from MSDs contact DEQ or the Oregon State Marine Board:

*[www.boatoregon.com](http://www.boatoregon.com)*

### **Alternative Formats**

Alternative formats of this document can be made available. Contact DEQ's Office of Communications & Outreach for more information (503) 229-5696.