



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Environmental Conservation

Jason W. Brune
Commissioner

Post Office Box 111800
Juneau, Alaska 99811-1800
Main: 907.465.5066
Fax: 907.465.5070

Vessel owners and operators in Alaska:

We wish you a healthy and successful 2023 boating and fishing season.

Please remember that it is illegal to discharge untreated sewage within 3 nautical miles of shore. Discharging untreated sewage nearshore has negative environmental, economic, and human health impacts, including:

- Sewage can contaminate shellfish beds
- Sewage discharge can result in low oxygen levels in water that can harm fish and shellfish
- Sewage can spread fecal bacteria and diseases to humans
- The smell and visible residues from improperly discharged sewage sends the wrong message about how Alaskans care for their home waters

State law prohibits the discharge of sewage with less than primary treatment. Federal law requires all vessels with onboard heads use a U.S. Coast Guard certified Marine Sanitation Device (MSD). Type III MSDs are preferred and include holding tanks, incinerators, and recirculating tanks. These tanks store waste until it can be pumped out at a pump station or released offshore. Vessels equipped with a Y-valve are required to have those valves locked within 3 nautical miles of shore to prevent illegal discharge.

Discharging or dumping untreated sewage overboard in the harbor, on the fishing grounds, at anchor, or anywhere else within 3 nautical miles of shore is illegal. This applies whether you have an MSD onboard or are utilizing a bucket as a toilet. Penalties for illegal discharge of sewage can be up to \$2,000!

What can you do?

- ✓ Take charge of the waste your vessel generates
- ✓ Learn what type of MSD you have and what type of maintenance is required to keep it serviceable
- ✓ Work with your local Harbormaster or equivalent authority to determine if alternative options are available
- ✓ Utilize the sewage pump stations that are available at various harbors around the state
- ✓ **NEVER** discharge untreated sewage directly in the harbor
- ✓ Use onshore restrooms and outhouses when available
- ✓ Consider the use of bag-style camp toilets for solid waste and dispose the sealed bags along with other vessel solid waste at approved refuse collection areas

Please do what you can to keep our harbors and waters clean and safe for all users. Learn more about the Alaska Clean Harbors program and current regulations from these sites:

- Alaska Clean Harbors Program: <http://www.alaskacleanharbors.org/>
- EPA Vessel Sewage FAQ: <https://www.epa.gov/vessels-marinas-and-ports/vessel-sewage-frequently-asked-questions>
- EPA Information on MSDs: <https://www.epa.gov/vessels-marinas-and-ports/marine-sanitation-devices-msds>

Report all spills and violations to the appropriate authorities:

- Marine sanitary violations to the USCG National Response Center: 800.424.8802
- Oil spills and other hazardous substances to DEC Spill Response: 907.269.3060