

Marinas – Large On-site Sewage Systems Best Management Practices (BMPs)



Marinas can have wastewater strengths greater than typical residential wastewater due to odor-control chemicals in holding tanks and low water usage typical of boats. The amount of biochemical oxygen demand (BOD5), total suspended solids (TSS), and total nitrogen are often in higher concentrations in boats that have wastewater holding tanks. The increased waste strength can cause premature failure of the drainfield and groundwater contamination.

Use these best management practices (BMPs) to reduce the strength of your wastewater.

- Don't sell holding tank treatments, stabilizers, additive and deodorizers containing any of the following chemicals:

Formaldehyde (Formalin)	Para-dichlorobenzene	1,1,1-trichloroethane (TCA)
Bronopol	Benzene	Trichloroethylene (TCE)
Dowicil	Tolene	Perchlorethylene (PCE)
Benzaldehyde	Xylene	Heavy Metals
Glutaraldehyde	Ethylene glycol	
Paraformaldehyde	Methylene chloride	

These chemicals harm the good bacteria in your septic tank. This can reduce the level of treatment in your septic tank and allow solids to transfer to your drainfield. Solids in your drainfield will reduce the life of your drainfield and may result in groundwater contamination.

- Encourage boat owners to not use any chemicals in their holding tanks. Odors from holding tanks can be reduced by emptying the holding tanks every day, ensuring the ventilation system is functional, and by flushing the holding tank out to remove solids each time the tank is dumped.
- Post "No Boat Chemical Dumping" signs at the boat dump station.
- Educate your visitors. Provide information about "No Boat Chemical Dumping" on your website. Discuss this when you accept reservations, and during check-in.
- Encourage the use of air fresheners in boat bathrooms to eliminate persistent odors.
- Encourage the use of your facility's restrooms and showers, instead of their boat holding tanks. Make restrooms inviting by making sure they are well lit and clean.

For more information visit our website at www.doh.wa.gov/loss or contact the LOSS Program at 360-236-3330 or wastewatermgmt@doh.wa.gov.

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