

What You Can Do

People who enjoy boating can help reduce the amount of marine debris that enters the oceans by following these guidelines:

Boaters

- Bring ALL of your trash back to shore and collect any debris that you find in or near the water and dispose of it properly.
- Properly stow and secure all trash on your boat.
- Follow the marine debris regulations required by Annex V of MARPOL. Remember that it is illegal to dispose of any plastic materials in all U.S. waters and anywhere at sea.



- Reduce, reuse, recycle. Purchase reusable products and containers and recycle your plastic, metal, glass and paper products – including monofilament fishing line.
- Report illegal dumping to your local U.S. Coast Guard Sector Office. Call (800) 424-8802 to locate the Sector Office near you.
- Encourage your docks, marinas, fishing piers and boat ramps to provide adequate trash cans and recycling bins.
- Support environmentally responsible marinas.
- Serve as an example to others and encourage them to help keep the oceans free of debris.

Marinas

- Set up recycling bins for staff and customers.
- Call your local Department of Environmental Protection to find out what materials can be recycled in your area.
- Clearly label recycling bins and make sure that they are accessible.
- Encourage boaters to set up an onboard system to segregate trash for easy disposal and recycling on shore.
- Keep trash cans, dumpsters and recycling bins from overflowing by emptying them regularly.

BOATING AND MARINE DEBRIS



How Recreational Boaters
and Marina Owners Can
Prevent Marine Debris



RYAN BINNS, MARINE PHOTOBANK

What Is Marine Debris?

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration defines marine debris as any man-made object discarded, disposed of or abandoned that enters the coastal or marine environment.

Where Does It Come From?

All types of debris can be traced to one source – people. In fact, people's mishandling of waste materials and other items makes up the bulk of the marine debris problem. Researchers typically classify marine debris as coming from **land-** or **ocean/waterway-based** sources.

Most **land-based** marine debris reaches the ocean when people carelessly discard trash while on land. **Ocean/waterway-based** debris reaches the ocean through people's failure to properly dispose of or stow their trash while onboard their boats and vessels.

Boaters contribute to the debris problem when they throw trash, such as food wrappers, beverage containers, plastic bags and fishing gear, overboard.

Impacts of Marine Debris

Marine debris poses threats to boaters and the oceans and waterways that they enjoy.

Grocery and trash bags, fishing line, nets and rope can wrap around boat propellers and clog seawater intakes, causing costly engine damage and becoming a safety hazard.

Discarded fishing line, nets, rope and other debris can entangle, maim and cause many wildlife species to drown. Some debris, such as cigarette filters and grocery and trash bags, looks like food to many animals. Once ingested, these materials can cause starvation and/or choking.

Abandoned nets, plastic tarps, fishing gear and other debris can smother and crush sensitive coral reef and seagrass bed ecosystems and their benthic (bottom-dwelling) species.



Working Toward Solutions

The marine debris pollution issue can only truly be managed through prevention – changing the behavior that causes marine debris to enter the environment.

The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) is an international treaty designed to address the problem of vessels dumping their waste at sea. All ships, boats, platforms, marinas and docks must comply with Annex V of this law, which prohibits the disposal of plastics anywhere in the ocean and restricts the disposal of most other types of solid waste. For more information on Annex V of MARPOL and how it relates to boaters, visit the NOAA resources guide at www.marinedebris.noaa.gov or the U.S. Coast Guard's website at www.uscg.mil.