

Boat Operation & Fueling

The way that you operate your boat or personal watercraft can have a direct effect on public safety and the environment. When not operated properly, boats can result in injuries to people and animals, and can cause pollution. Specific considerations should be given when fueling your boat. Consider the following tips to make sure your boating activities are safe and protect the environment.


Boat Operation

1. Observe all rules and regulations including “no wake” zones.
2. Avoid operating through shallow areas (<3 feet). You risk causing damage to your boat and you may be harming sensitive habitats.
3. Don't regularly operate your personal watercraft within 200 feet of shore.
4. Take a boating safety course. Call your local Coast Guard Auxiliary or Power Squadron.
5. When your outboard motor needs replacing, replace it with a highly efficient 4- stroke or direct fuel injection 2-stroke engine. These higher efficiency engines will save you money on fuel and reduce the amount of unspent fuel that is released into the environment.

Fueling

1. Attend to fuel hose when fueling.
2. Always use an oil absorbent cloth or pad when fueling to catch small drips, particularly when you remove the fuel nozzle from the boat's fuel line.
3. Prevent spills by not topping off fuel tank, and listening to the filler pipe to anticipate when the tank is full.
4. To prevent spills from the tank vent of a built-in fuel tank, install a fuel/air separator or an air whistle in your tank line, or use a vent cup to capture overspill. Ask marina staff if they know who can provide this service.
5. Avoid overfilling tanks; remember that fuel expands as it warms up in the tank after being pumped from cooler storage tanks.
6. Fill portable tanks on shore. Always use an oil absorbent cloth or pad when fueling from portable tanks.
7. Add a stabilizer to your fuel if you use your boat infrequently. This will help preserve the fuel and make sure it burns efficiently.
8. If you see a leak or spill of any fuel, stop the spill at the source and contact the marina staff immediately.
9. If your vessel discharges fuel, oil or hazardous substances in the water, you must notify the U.S. Coast Guard by calling 1-800-424-8802. Also notify Vermont Emergency Management by calling 1-800-641-5005.

Adapted from the VT Boating Handbook, VT Boat-Ed, the VT DEC Marina website (<http://www.eaovt.org/sbcap/marinas.htm>), and the Connecticut Clean Marina Guide Book.



Lake Champlain Clean Boater Fact Sheet

