

ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



29 Hazen Drive, Concord, New Hampshire 03301 • (603) 271-3503 • www.des.nh.gov

WD-WMB-2

2019

Marine Sanitation Devices — Equipping Your Boat to Comply with the Law

Under New Hampshire law, no boat in the inland waters of the state can allow overboard discharge of any kind. Under federal law, it is illegal to discharge any sewage from a boat into the coastal zone – that is all estuaries, bays, and up to three miles from shore including three miles surrounding the Isles of Shoals. The entire New England coast is considered a “No Discharge Area” except for portions of the Maine shoreline.

Marine sanitation devices (MSDs) are installed on boats to handle wastewater from a toilet. There are a few different types of MSDs. Type I and Type II MSDs treat sewage and then discharge it into the water. If it discharges the sewage spontaneously, neither is legal for boats on any of New Hampshire’s waters. If you have a Type I or Type II MSD, you must have it retrofitted in order to boat in New Hampshire – for inland waters the option to discharge must be completely removed and for coastal waters the MSD must have a Y-valve or other device that can prevent discharge. Type III MSDs is a holding tank that retains sewage to be discharged at an onshore pumpout facility or through a Y-valve once boaters have gone beyond the three-mile limit in the coastal zone.

Type III MSD is the only device that is legal to have installed while boating in New Hampshire. If you have a Type I or Type II MSD it must be retrofitted before boating in New Hampshire.

Types of Marine Sanitation Devices		
Sewage Treatment Device	Vessel Length	Requirements
Type I - Flow-through device (maceration and disinfection)	Equal to or less than 65 feet in length	The effluent produced must not have a fecal coliform bacteria count greater than 1000 per 100 milliliters and have no visible floating solids.
Type II - Flow-through device (biological treatment or maceration, and disinfection)	Any length	The effluent produced must not have a fecal coliform bacteria count greater than 200 per 100 milliliters and suspended solids not greater than 150 milligrams per liter
Type III - Holding tank	Any length	This MSD is designed to prevent the overboard discharge of treated or untreated sewage. Some Type III systems contain Y-valves. Type III holding tanks without Y-valves are the only allowable MSDs for use in New Hampshire’s inland waters!

This table was adapted from the [EPA Office of Water website](http://www.epa.gov).

Portable toilets are not regulated as MSDs; however the same provisions apply to these as well. Always empty portable toilets using dump stations on-shore.

The sewage disposal system you select will depend on your boat's design, space configuration, and electrical system. You may want to choose a flexible disposal system if you are boating in areas other than New Hampshire or going beyond the three mile limit in coastal waters. When purchasing a boat, consider the cost of retrofitting the disposal system if it does not meet the requirements for boating in New Hampshire.

Holding tank capacity depends on the number of people typically aboard, usual trip length, and whether you anchor or use marinas offering toilet and/or pumpout facilities. Other options include manual, electrical, or vacuum toilets; pipes or hoses; and flexible or rigid tanks. Many owners of smaller craft can opt for less costly portable toilets.

Articles in recent boating periodicals or boating websites are a great resource for detailed information on properly equipping your boat. Some things to consider include:

- If you use hose, buy "waste quality" hose to reduce odors and leaks.
- Use gradual curves rather than elbows at connections to avoid clogging.
- Make hose runs and vent lines as short as possible.
- Install vent fittings above the holding tank and above the waterline. Vent lines should have a constant rise from holding tank top to vent and include a gooseneck above the vent to avoid water back flooding.

For More Information

For more information visit the [CVA program website](#) or contact us by the following:

Clean Vessel Act Program
NH Department of Environmental Services,
PO Box 95
Concord, NH 03302-0095

Phone: (603) 271-8803
Email: CVA@des.nh.gov

