

## Vessel facility operation

Issued December 2010

*EPA 924/10: This information sheet is part of a series on environmental management practices for vessel and facility management on marine and inland waters. The information is extracted from the code of Practice published in 2008.*

### Introduction

The function and design of vessel facilities can affect the efficiency and environmental performance of operations such as servicing and repairs, cleaning and waste management. Whilst the behaviour of facility users can assist with pollution avoidance, it is also important to ensure the facility itself accommodates this goal. For example, the catchment capacity of the slipway and hardstand areas, stormwater controls and services for waste management should reflect the risk of environmental harm from the types of vessels using the facility.

### Who this applies to

- vessel operators
- boat and yard club operators
- marina operators
- boat yard operators
- boat ramp operators

### Operator must (required outcomes)

- 1 obtain environmental authorisations (an EPA licence) for prescribed activities of environmental significance under their control
  - 2 ensure the vessel facility is fit for the purpose<sup>1</sup> of permitted vessel operations and avoids, as far as is reasonable and practicable, the release of pollutants
- OR
- advise vessel operators and contractors of the limitations of the vessel facility to manage pollutants and refer them to their individual responsibility to comply with the *Environment Protection Act 1993*.

### Operators should (recommended practices)

- 3 restrict vessel operations on facilities that are not fit for the purpose and may result in the release of pollutants to the environment

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<sup>1</sup> In general, a **fit-for-the-purpose** vessel facility is one that can demonstrate it has the structural and operational capabilities to minimise the environmental impacts of its uses.

- 4 provide and maintain purpose-built service areas with structural pollution and waste control mechanisms that are located away from the water's edge, and stormwater drains for activities relating to vessel operations
- 5 ensure permanently moored vessels (with no registration or no means of propulsion) discharge no grey water, whether treated or not, to waters. Discharge from any fitted grey water treatment system should only discharge to a land-based wastewater system. Black and grey water holding tanks where fitted should be plumbed into a land-based wastewater system or access provided for a licensed waste contractor to pump out the tanks. Receipts for pump out should be kept and produced during audits by authorised officers
- 6 Grey water, whether treated or not, may not be discharged within an off-river marina, canal, near people in the water or adjacent to an SA Water off-take.

## Waste transfer stations

A number of waste oil transfer stations have been constructed at marinas, boat ramps and boat service facilities around the state. Provided they receive ongoing management and maintenance, these facilities reduce the impacts of maritime waste on the aquatic environment, and their construction and installation should seriously be considered at all vessel facilities around the state. Waste transfer stations can be designed for various kinds of wastes, including putrescible matter (including fish cleaning waste), paper and cardboard, iron and steel, plastics, tyres and batteries, depending on the uses made of the vessel facility.

## Licensing requirements

A licence is required under the Environment Protection Act 1993 for the conduct of some marina and boating facilities (refer to Appendix 2 of the Code of practice for vessel and facility management) and some forms of high-pressure water blasting, abrasive blasting and painting as they are considered prescribed activities of environmental significance.

**Where a code of practice exists for an activity of environmental significance, the optimum requirements of the code contained within 'musts' will, if appropriate, form conditions of licence.** However, due to the higher environmental risks associated with these activities, additional conditions of licence may also be applied, for example, those relating to infrastructure, reporting or monitoring requirements. Conditions of authorisation must be adhered to or prosecution will result. For more information visit <[www.epa.sa.gov.au](http://www.epa.sa.gov.au)>.

## Vessel facility operator requirements

Vessel facility operators should decide what activities or wastes they will and will not permit within their site and communicate this to users accordingly. If, for example, a boat ramp operator (usually a local council) provides an area for vessel wash-down, provisions for the management of the wastewater generated are required. **Discharges of wash-down water to stormwater drains or directly to waters are not acceptable.** Similarly, if the vessel facility operator does not wish to provide for the management of fish wastes or any other activity or waste, this should be made clear to users.

Vessel facility operators can use the defence against a charge on an offence, that they took all reasonable and practical measures to prevent the commission of the offence, including: clear signage and/or contracts outlining the limitations of the facility, and the responsibilities of users when using the facility to prevent pollution.

**Marinas, boat and yacht clubs** should provide:

- emergency response equipment
- wastewater collection facilities or service agreements with waste transporters
- refuelling facility
- slipping facilities with waste and wastewater controls
- waste transfer station(s) for oil, bilge water, paint, solvents, coolant, fish wastes, recyclables and garbage.

**Slipways** should provide:

- emergency response equipment
- slipping facilities with waste and wastewater controls
- waste transfer station(s) for oil, bilge water, paint, solvents and coolant.

**Boat ramps** should provide:

- emergency response equipment
- wastewater collection facilities
- wash-down facilities with wastewater controls
- waste transfer station(s) for oil, bilge water, coolant, fish wastes, recyclables and garbage

A Clean Marinas Program exists in Australia as a national, voluntary accreditation system for marinas, yacht clubs, boat clubs, slips, boat yards and associated industry operators across Australia. The program not only provides an easy-to-follow system to develop valuable environmental practices but also rewards marina operators with real business benefits. The EPA encourages operators to seek Clean Marina accreditation.

## References

EPA Code of practice for vessel and facility management (marine and inland waters),  
[http://www.epa.sa.gov.au/xstd\\_files/Water/Code%20of%20practice/vessels.pdf](http://www.epa.sa.gov.au/xstd_files/Water/Code%20of%20practice/vessels.pdf).

## Useful websites

EPA Vessel and facility management pages, [www.epa.sa.gov.au/vfm](http://www.epa.sa.gov.au/vfm).

## Disclaimer

This publication is a guide only and does not necessarily provide adequate information in relation to every situation. This publication seeks to explain your possible obligations in a helpful and accessible way. In doing so, however, some detail may not be captured. It is important, therefore, that you seek information from the EPA itself regarding your possible obligations and, where appropriate, that you seek your own legal advice.

## Further information

### **Legislation**

Legislation may be viewed at: [www.legislation.sa.gov.au](http://www.legislation.sa.gov.au)

Copies of legislation are available for purchase from:

Service SA Government Legislation Outlet  
 Adelaide Service SA Centre  
 108 North Terrace  
 Adelaide SA 5000

Telephone: 13 23 24  
 Facsimile: (08) 8204 1909  
 Website: <[shop.service.sa.gov.au](http://shop.service.sa.gov.au)>

### **For general information please contact:**

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