A BOATER'S GUIDE TO LESS-TOXIC CLEANING

Simple household alternatives to boat cleaning and maintenance products

The products you purchase to clean and maintain your boat can have adversely effect on aquatic life, water quality and human health. Many boat cleaning and maintenance products contain chemicals that are poisonous, corrosive, flammable and/or chemically reactive. When you purchase boat cleaning products, take time to read the label. A signal word, such as "danger/poison," "warning," or "caution" can give you a general indication of the toxicity of a product. If you want more information on a product's contents, ask your retailer or contact the manufacturer for the "Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)." The MSDS will list any constituents considered to be hazardous substances by the federal government.

Choosing Cleaning Products:

Whether you clean your boat in the water or on land, boat cleaning products may end up in your local waterway. Most boat cleaning and maintenance products are more caustic than regular household cleaners because boat cleaning is a tougher job. If you decide to purchase a soap to clean your boat, choose phosphate-free non-detergent soaps, such as, vegetable or citrus-based soaps

How to be a Less Toxic Consumer:

- **Use elbow grease instead!**
- **Use less toxic alternatives whenever possible.**
- **Buy only the amount that you need.**
- **Properly handle and store materials.**
- **Dispose of hazardous waste legally and safely.**
- **Call 1(800)CLEANUP for more clean boating information and the locations for used oil recycling and hazardous waste disposal.**

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Alternatives to Traditional Cleaning Products:

You can minimize environmental impacts by using the following simple household alternatives to harmful products.

Product	Household Alternative
General cleaner	❖ Mix baking soda and vinegar. ❖ Or, combine lemon juice with borax paste.
Surface cleaner	❖ Mix 1 quart of hot water, 1tsp vegetable oil-based soap/detergent, 1tsp borax and 2 tbsp. vinegar. Vinegar is used as a mild acid to cut grease, borax is used as a water softener, especially good with hard water, to prevent soapy deposits. ❖ Mix 1 cup of vinegar in 1 quart of warm water. ❖ Dissolve baking soda in hot water for a general cleaner.
Degreaser	❖ Make a paste of lemon juice and borax. ❖ When shopping for degreasing products, look for water-based products or citrus-based degreasers. ❖ Avoid products that contain methylene chloride (known to cause cancer in laboratory animals). ❖ Do not use gasoline to clean marine parts. Gas contains benzene (carcinogenic to humans), that, upon evaporation, causes air pollution.
Dish cleaner	❖ Use vegetable oil- based soaps/detergents.
Window cleaner	❖ Dilute one cup of white vinegar with1qt.water.
Floor cleaner	❖ To clean vinyl tile and linoleum, use 1/4 cup white vinegar, 1/4 cup of washing soda, in 1 gallon of warm water, or one cup vinegar in 2 gallons of water. ❖ Remove scuff marks on linoleum with toothpaste.
Fiberglass cleaner	❖ Use a paste of baking soda and water.
Aluminum cleaner	❖ Mix 1 Tbsp. cream of tartar in 1 quart of hot water.
Brass cleaner	❖ Use Worcestershire sauce, or paste made of equal amounts of salt, vinegar and water.
Copper cleaner	❖ Use lemon juice and water, or paste made of equal amounts of lemon juice, salt and flour.
Chrome polish	Use apple cider vinegar to clean; baby oil to polish.

Hand cleaner	❖ Apply baby oil or margarine, then clean with soap and water.
Head and shower	❖ Clean frequently with a mix of baking soda and water; brush thoroughly. Sprinkle baking soda around the rim of the toilet. ❖ Or, to clean and deodorize the head, try a mix of 1/2 cup of borax per 1 gallon of water.
Stainless steel cleaner	❖ Mix baking soda or mineral oil for polishing, vinegar to remove spots.
Scouring Powders	❖ Instead of scouring powder, try using baking soda.
Rug/Upholstery cleaner	❖ Sprinkle on dry corn starch sprinkled on; vacuum.
Teak cleaner	❖ Use a biodegradable soap to remove the dirt and salt water. ❖ Instead of bleaching teak, try using a mild power soap and scrub with bronze wool.
Fiberglass stain remover	❖ Use a Paste of baking soda and water.
Mildew removers	❖ Scrub mildew with borax/water using a nylon scouring pad. ❖ Try scrubbing mildew with a vinegar and salt paste (equal parts), if problem is not severe. ❖ Try vinegar full strength, then rinse. ❖ To inhibit mold and mildew, wash area with 1/2 cup borax /1 gallon hot water .
Wood polish	❖ Use olive, walnut, or almond oil.
Drain opener	❖ Dissemble or use plumber's snake. ❖ Or flush with a mixture of boiling water, one-quarter cup of baking soda and one quarter cup of vinegar.
Paint Products	❖ Avoid paints containing methylene chloride and trichloroethylene (TCE) (evidence that these cause cancer in laboratory animals); benzene (known to cause cancer in humans); 1,1,1- trichloroethane (TCA) (irritant to eyes and tissues), xylene (toxic by drinking and breathing); or toluene (known to cause birth defects).
Wood Preservatives and stains	❖ Do not use old products that contain pentachlorophenol (PCP) (evidence that it causes cancer in laboratory animals), creosote, tributylin oxide, or folpet. ❖ Water-based preservatives are available that can seal wood and protect it from water rot. ❖ Use water-based stains. ❖ Use finishes derived from natural sources, such as, shellac, tung oil, and linseed oil.

Please note that these alternatives have not been tested by the California Coastal Commission. They are offered as suggestions. The sources that were relied upon to develop this list are cited below.

While baking soda, vinegar, lemon juice, and vegetable oils are far less harmful than bleaches, scouring powders and detergents, they can still be toxic to aquatic life. Use all cleaning products sparingly and minimize the amount discharged into the water. Never dispose of any cleaning products down the thru-hull drain; dispose of them on the shore.

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