

# No Discharge Areas in New England



## What is a No Discharge Area?

A No Discharge Area (NDA) is a designated body of water where the discharge of treated and untreated boat sewage is prohibited (does not include grey water). Under the federal Clean Water Act it is illegal to discharge untreated (raw) sewage from a vessel in U.S. waters.

### MSDs - Marine Sanitation Devices (Boat Toilets)

Recreational boats are not required to be equipped with a toilet, but if they are, the Marine Sanitation Devices (MSDs) must be Coast Guard approved. The approved design requires the MSDs to hold sewage for shore-based disposal or treat the sewage prior to discharge. There are three types of MSDs:

**TYPE I:** MSDs discharge treated effluent having a fecal coliform bacterial count not greater than 1,000 per 100 milliliters of water and no visible floating solids.

**TYPE II:** MSDs discharge treated effluent having a fecal coliform bacterial count less than 200 per 100 milliliters and suspended solids not greater than 150 milligrams per liter.

**TYPE III:** MSDs are devices designed to store sewage (usually with disinfectants and deodorants added) until it can be pumped out at a pump-out facility or discharged outside the territorial sea boundary of three miles from shore. These are also known as holding tanks.

## Boat Waste in a No Discharge Area

When operating in a No Discharge Area, Type I, Type II, and Type III Marine Sanitation Devices cannot be discharged. In No Discharge Areas, the US Coast Guard regulations state MSDs Type I, Type II and Type III must be secured to prevent discharge.

A Type I, Type II and Type III MSDs must be secured when operating in a No Discharge Area. This can be done by closing the seacock and padlocking it, using a non-releasable wire tie, or removing the seacock handle (with the seacock closed). Type I and Type II can also be secured by locking the toilet door handle.

## Health Protection

Sewage wastes discharged from boats degrade water quality by introducing disease-causing microorganisms, nutrients, and chemicals into the marine environment.

Microorganisms, which include viruses and bacteria, may introduce diseases like hepatitis and gastroenteritis to people in contact with the water. Microorganisms may also contaminate shellfish beds and cause beach closures.

Nutrients are necessary for the growth of both microscopic and larger plants (seaweeds and eelgrass). However, when nutrients become too abundant they stimulate algae blooms which may lead to the loss of eelgrass and depletion of oxygen in water (called hypoxia.) Hypoxia can stress and even kill fish and other aquatic animals.

Chemical products can be toxic to marine and estuarine life and could pose a problem in areas where boats congregate and where there is little tidal flushing.

**Look for this CVA  
symbol to find pump-  
out facilities!**

