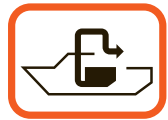
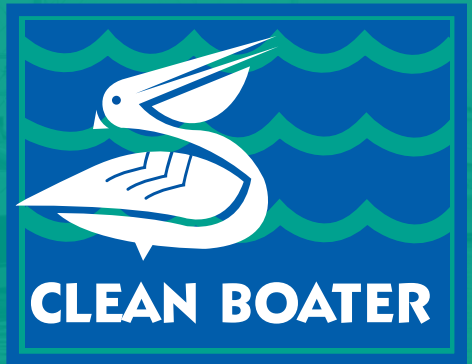




# CLEAN BOATING HABITS



# CONTENTS

Introduction to Clean Boating Habits	1
Economy and the Environment	2
Florida Clean Marina Program	3
Florida Clean Boatyard Program	4
Florida Clean Marine Retailer Program	5
Clean Vessel Act Program	6
Marine Sanitation Devices	7
Tropical Weather Preparedness	8
Petroleum Control and Spill Prevention	10
Cleaning Your Boat	12
Boat Cleaning - Exotic Plants and Wildlife	14
Boating Impacts on Aquatic Plants and Wildlife	16
Solid Waste Management for Boaters	18
Managing Hazardous Waste	20
Managing Fish Waste	22
Sewage Management	24
Mooring Fields	26
Clean Boater Pledge	28
Regulations	29



## **INTRODUCTION TO CLEAN BOATING HABITS**

Water defines our state, which is home to thousands of miles of shoreline and millions of acres of lakes, streams and creeks. Each day residents and visiting boaters cruise our waterways for both business and pleasure. Our waterways provide transportation routes, venues for commercial and recreational fishing and destinations for swimming, diving and wave-running. In fact, no matter where you stand in the state, you are never more than 75 miles from a coast.

As Florida residents, it is our responsibility to help protect our state's waters. This handbook provides many easy actions that help protect water resources. Regardless of why we're out on the water, for recreation or to make a living, we share responsibility for preserving the boating life we love by keeping our waterways and shorelines vibrant, clean and healthy.



## **ECONOMY AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

Keeping Florida's waters clean not only makes good environmental sense, it also makes good economic sense. The state's multi-billion dollar tourism and fishing industry rely on healthy waterways and coastlines. Since 2000, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection has encouraged clean boating through the development of several voluntary, non-regulatory designation programs that focus on the marine industry. These programs recognize water-related facilities that engage in environmentally friendly practices in and around Florida's waterways.





## **FLORIDA CLEAN MARINA PROGRAM**

The Florida Clean Marina Program is a voluntary recognition and designation program. Participants in the program receive assistance in implementing best management practices to reduce their impact on the environment. This assistance is provided through workshops, continuing education, on-site instruction and mentoring by other Clean Marinas. To become designated, marinas voluntarily implement a set of environmental measures designed to protect Florida's waters. These measures address critical environmental issues such as sensitive habitat protection, waste management techniques, stormwater control, spill prevention and emergency preparedness.



## **FLORIDA CLEAN BOATYARD PROGRAM**

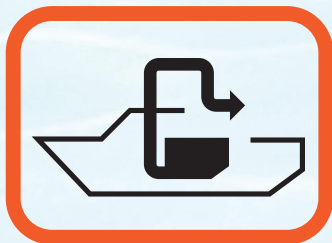
The Florida Clean Boatyard Program is a voluntary designation program that recognizes boatyards that have demonstrated a commitment to protecting Florida's aquatic resources by implementing a set of environmentally responsible practices. Best management practices, such as using dustless sanders, oil and solvent recycling and recirculating pressure washer systems, help to preserve the state's natural resources for future generations.



## **FLORIDA CLEAN MARINE RETAILER PROGRAM**

Much like the Clean Marina and Clean Boatyard programs, the Florida Clean Marine Retailer Program is also a designation program that recognizes an important segment of the marine industry for its commitment to protecting Florida's natural resources. The program encourages retailers to educate boaters about clean-boating techniques. To become designated, retailers voluntarily implement a variety of best management practices in their boat and engine servicing operations and facilities.





***KEEP OUR  
WATER CLEAN—  
USE PUMPOUTS***

## **CLEAN VESSEL ACT PROGRAM**

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Clean Vessel Act grant program provides funding to marinas for the purchase, installation, maintenance, repair and operation of boater pumpout and dump station facilities. Funded through a Sport Fish Restoration Grant made available by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, pumpout facilities help ensure the proper disposal of human waste and sewage from recreational boats.

To date, DEP has awarded millions of dollars in Clean Vessel Act grant funds throughout the state. These funds have been used to install or operate hundreds of stations and vessels, diverting more than 20 million gallons of sewage from our waters.

# **pitch in, pump out**

# MARINE SANITATION DEVICES

Marine Sanitation Device (MSD): any equipment for installation on board a vessel, which is designed to receive, retain, treat or discharge sewage, and any process to treat such sewage (Federal Pollution Control Act, Section 312).

As of Jan. 30, 1980, if a vessel has an installed marine sanitation device, it must be one of these three types:

Types of Marine Sanitation Devices (MSD)

MSD Type	Vessel Length	Standard
Type I: Flow-through device provides 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 1,000 per 100 milliliters and have no visible floating solids.
Type II: Flow-through device provides maceration and disinfection in an advanced form.	Greater than 65 feet in 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 may contain deodorizers and other chemicals. May be equipped with a "Y" valve that will allow overboard discharges.	Any length	The MSD is designed to prevent the overboard discharge of treated or untreated sewage.

**Note:**

- *Discharging vessel sewage directly overboard is illegal within 3 miles of shore of United States territorial waters and 9 miles in the Gulf of Mexico.*
- *Discharging vessel sewage overboard from a vessel equipped with ANY of the above MSDs is prohibited in No Discharge Zones.*
- *Many areas will require that the "Y" valve on a Type III MSD be disabled, disallowing any discharge.*
- *In some navigable waters of the United States, graywater (galley, bath and shower water) is considered sewage as it applies to rules and regulations.*





## **TROPICAL WEATHER PREPAREDNESS**

**Fact:**

High winds and water levels during a hurricane or tropical storm can cause the release of normally secure pollutants into the environment. Boats are often sunk, releasing fuels, oils and other chemicals into the environment.

**Goal:**

Eliminate possible sources of pollution from areas that may be affected by storms.



### **Actions to Prepare for Severe Weather:**

- Develop a severe weather preparedness plan and ask your marina for its site-specific preparedness plan.
- Remove portable containers of paint, fuel, oils and cleaners; either properly dispose of or store securely.
- If possible and still safe, remove boats from the water. In circumstances where this is not possible, move vessels out of slips and into open or highly protected waters.
- Secure boats, whether in the water or on a trailer, with extra safety lines and fenders.
- Remove portable marine sanitation devices, if possible.
- Secure all hatches, doorways and windows to prevent water intrusion.
- Remove or secure loose gear and equipment.
- When possible, use marina provided mooring balls instead of vessel anchors, which can damage seagrass, coral colonies and other fragile elements of the marine floor environments.

[www.boatus.com/hurricanes](http://www.boatus.com/hurricanes)

[www.nhc.noaa.gov/prepare/marine.php](http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/prepare/marine.php)



## **PETROLEUM CONTROL AND SPILL PREVENTION**

### **Fact:**

A single gallon of fuel can contaminate 750,000 gallons of water. The cumulative effect of multiple small spills can have a serious impact on our environment.

### **Goal:**

Reduce petroleum-based pollution in Florida's surface waters to maintain a healthy, beautiful environment.

### **Actions to Take While Fueling:**

- Fuel your boat on the upland.
- Listen to your boat. The tank gurgles before it's full.
- Keep your hand on the nozzle. Do not use the handle stop.

- Use a vent collection device to capture escaping fuel.
- If your tank overfills, use rags for cleanup. When finished cleaning, give the soiled rags to the marina operator for proper disposal.
- Do not hose off spilled fuel into the water.
- Notify marina management immediately if a fuel spill occurs.
- Do not use soaps or detergents on spills. This makes the problem worse and violates federal law.

### **Actions to Take for Bilge Oils:**

- Use a proper preventative maintenance schedule to reduce oil contamination.
- Do not discharge bilge water overboard while on the water.
- Keep engines tuned and in fine working condition.
- Regularly check seals, gaskets, hoses, connections and fittings for leaks, drips and damage.
- Clean and maintain bilges. Do not use detergents for cleaning.
- Use absorbent pads to remove oil from the bilge. Oil absorbent or bioremediating bilge booms work great.
- Before pumping bilge water, use water/oil separators or absorbents to soak up any loose oil. Trailer your boat to an area that provides containment for bilge and boat plug discharges.
- Recycle or properly dispose of used oil and absorbent material. Contact your local environmental office or marina staff for assistance.





## **CLEANING YOUR BOAT**

### **Fact:**

Many products used to wash hulls and decks contain ingredients such as chlorine, phosphates and ammonia that are toxic to fish and harmful to the environment.

### **Goal:**

Use cleaning methods and cleaners that eliminate the risks and hazards to aquatic life and the environment.

### **Actions for Safe Cleaning:**

- Use cleaners that do not contain harmful chemicals.
- Use cleaners with a third-party certification that have been tested for toxicity and environmental impacts. Major certifications include the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Safer Choice, Green Seal and EcoLogo.





- Read product labels and look for cleaners that are non-toxic, biodegradable, packaged in recyclable containers and do not contain phosphates, chlorine, bleach, ammonia, artificial fragrances or petroleum products.
- Remove your boat from the water and clean it where debris and chemicals can be captured and properly disposed.
- Use water to wash down your boat after use.
- Use your own homemade, environmentally friendly cleaning products. Find out how at [www.dep.state.fl.us/green/cleaning.htm](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/green/cleaning.htm).
- Ask your marina or ship's store to stock green cleaners and biodegradable soaps and cleaners.
- If feasible, move your boat to upland dry slips. Your boat will stay cleaner and have less of an environmental impact.



## **BOAT CLEANING – EXOTIC PLANTS AND WILDLIFE**

### **Fact:**

Exotic plants and wildlife such as hydrilla, water hyacinth and zebra mussels that become attached to vessels and trailers can accidentally be introduced to new waterways.

Once introduced, exotic plants and wildlife are difficult and expensive to control and eradicate. Exotic species contribute to the degradation of water quality and impact native fish and wildlife by out-competing them for food and sunlight.

### **Goal:**

Prevent the introduction of exotic plants and wildlife into Florida's unspoiled waters.

### **Important Note:**

The importation, transportation or release of exotic plants and animals is prohibited or regulated by section 369.25 (aquatic plants), section 370.081 (saltwater animals) and section 372.26 (imported fish), Florida Statutes.



*Hydrilla produces a dense mat of vegetation at the surface that shades out bottom plant life. When these plants die, oxygen levels in the water decrease and affect other aquatic life.*



*While often very pretty, water hyacinths also shade out bottom plants and can deplete oxygen levels.*



*Zebra mussels are a danger to marine infrastructure, including boats, and can displace native species.*

### **Actions to Prevent the Introduction of Exotics:**

- Do not chop vegetation with propellers. This causes it to spread to other areas.
- Always check bilges, live wells and trailers at ramps to minimize the spread of exotics. Bilges and wells should be emptied and treated for larvae and spore removal.
- Dispose of waste in properly sealed containers.
- Remove all plant fragments from trailers, props, bait wells, fishing tackle, dive gear and other equipment for disposal in an upland facility or receptacle.
- Flush raw water cooling systems and clean sea strainers before launching boats trailered or motored from other states or nations.





## **BOATING IMPACTS ON AQUATIC PLANTS AND WILDLIFE**

### **Fact:**

Poor boating habits can have a lasting impact on the health and safety of aquatic plants and animals.

Manatees, dolphins and sea turtles are especially susceptible to impacts from boat propellers, wakes and waste thrown over the side. These marine inhabitants move slowly through our waters and are large draws for Florida's ecotourism industry.

Two important components of Florida's designation as the Fishing Capital of the World are our seagrasses and mangroves. Both serve as food sources, refuges and nursery habitats for a variety of marine life, including juvenile fish that will one day draw anglers from around the world. Mangroves and seagrasses control erosion and help maintain water quality.

**Goal:**

Preserve and protect Florida's native vegetation and wildlife.

**Protective Actions and Habits:**

- Avoid known areas of seagrass beds, sand bars and shoals.
- Do not use propellers to chop aquatic vegetation. Dead vegetation sinks to the bottom of the water column where it degrades and lowers the oxygen level needed for aquatic wildlife.
- If you run onto a grass bed or sand bar, stop immediately and tilt your engine. Use a push pole, paddle or walk your boat to get out of the area.
- Read and follow navigational charts and markers to avoid sensitive areas.
- Observe and obey all signs. Known areas of seagrasses and manatee high traffic areas are often marked with No Trespassing or No Wake Zone signs.
- Read the water. A grass bed may appear as a large dark area under the water. Wear polarized sunglasses to reduce the glare on the water, making it easier to see these areas.
- Do not harass the wildlife. Maintain a safe distance and look, but do not touch.
- Report manatee, dolphin and sea turtle injuries, deaths, tag sightings or harassment to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission at 1-850-413-9900.





## **SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT FOR BOATERS**

### **Fact:**

Florida's waterways and coasts are primary reasons people choose to live and travel here. Trash in the water is unsightly and often injures or kills sea life. Federal law prohibits any vessel operator from discharging plastics, or garbage containing plastics, into the water. Florida's litter law prohibits the dumping of litter on or in the tidal and coastal waters of the state. Local laws may place additional restrictions on the discharge of garbage and waste.

### **Goal:**

Manage and dispose of all solid waste properly to keep our waters clean.



### **Actions for Proper Waste Management:**

- Properly stow all loose items, plastic bags, drink cans and other articles so that they do not blow overboard.
- Carry a trash bag. Never throw your garbage overboard. Pick up the trash you see.
- Do not discard cigarette butts over the side. Place them in a sealed container and dispose of them properly back at the dock.
- Recycle materials such as glass, aluminum, plastic, newspapers, batteries and oil. Place each one in the appropriately marked containers at marinas, boat ramps or other appropriate upland facilities.
- Break apart the rings on any 6-pack holder. Animals can become trapped in the rings.
- Dispose of used fishing line, hooks and other litter and tackle in the appropriate container. Discarded monofilament fishing line is not only an eyesore, but it is also a danger to marine life.
- Encourage your marina and marine retailer to provide recycling and trash containers.



## MANAGING HAZARDOUS WASTE

**Fact:**

Hazardous waste poses a threat to the environment if it is improperly disposed of into the water, air or ground. The typical hazardous waste generated by boaters includes paint waste, used batteries, bilge pump switches containing mercury, used oil, gasoline and out-of-date flares. Florida law prohibits discharges that cause pollution to state waters.

**Goal:**

Eliminate the use or generation of hazardous materials and dispose of properly.

**Proper Hazardous Waste Management Actions:**

- Use alternatives to hazardous waste. Replace regular paints with those that have a lower Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) or are solvent free.
- Place ignitable paint waste and old, unused fuels in closed containers so that the vapors do not escape into the air and create a human health issue or explosive risk.
- Put used oil into a closed container that will not fill with rain and overflow into the water or onto the ground. Many full service gas stations, automotive parts stores and repair shops will dispose of used oil for little to no cost. Visit [www.earth911.com](http://www.earth911.com) or call 1-800-741-4337 for a list of locations, based on your zip code, where used oil can be disposed of at no cost.
- Disposal should be a last resort. Try to recycle and reuse leftover chemicals or paints by asking around to see if someone else can use them.
- When replacing your boat or car battery, take them into the store and trade them in for a possible credit toward the replacement battery.
- Buy bilge pump switches that do not contain mercury. Properly dispose of old switches.
- Always check with your marina about how to dispose of paint waste, mercury containing bilge switches, old flares, used oil and fuel. Contact your local solid waste authority for more information on the proper disposal of hazardous waste.





## **MANAGING FISH WASTE**

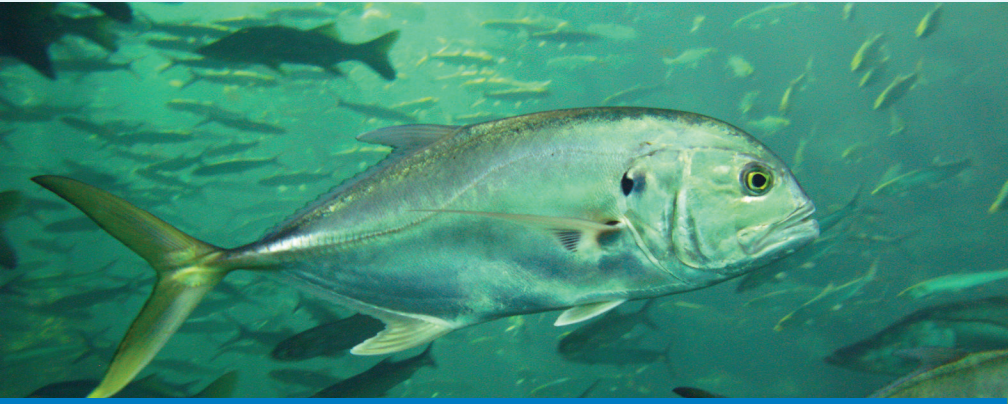
### **Fact:**

Improper disposal of fish waste into marina waters can severely impact the fisheries we enjoy. Besides being an eyesore, large amounts of decomposing fish waste can lead to decreased oxygen in the water – harming the fish, shrimp and crabs in the basin. Throwing fish waste in the water can also create safety hazards for both wildlife and people. Alligators, possums, sea gulls and raccoons are all attracted to areas where fish waste is readily available.

### **Goal:**

Practice sound fish waste management through responsible cleaning and waste disposal.





### **Actions for Proper Fish Waste Disposal:**

- Dispose of any unneeded bait away from marinas, enclosed rivers or basins. Ideally, dispose of fish waste or bait offshore.
- Where allowable by law, eviscerate (gut) fish and dispose of waste while still out on the water.
- Save, freeze and reuse fish waste as bait or chum for your next trip.
- Use fish cleaning stations that have macerators, trash receptacles and wastewater hook ups. Do not throw carcasses in the water.
- Eliminate the need to clean your catch by practicing catch and release. No fish, no waste, no harm.

### **Important Note:**

Many fish can be eviscerated (gutted) while on the water. However, most game fish cannot be filleted until you return to the dock. Contact the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for information on specific species at [www.myfwc.com/fishing](http://www.myfwc.com/fishing).



## SEWAGE MANAGEMENT

### **Fact:**

Raw sewage is unsightly, fouls our water and can have serious impacts on aquatic life and human health. Sewage from humans and agricultural runoff influence the magnitude of fish kills, algae blooms and gastrointestinal issues.

Compounding this problem is the presence of chemical additives that are often used to disinfect and deodorize vessel toilet systems and holding tanks. These additives often contain formaldehyde, paraformaldehyde, quaternary ammonium chloride and zinc sulfate.

In Florida, boaters are prohibited from discharging raw sewage into the state's waters extending 9 miles out into the Gulf of Mexico and 3 miles out in the Atlantic Ocean.

### **Goal:**

Use pumpout facilities and waste dump receptacles to reduce or eliminate the discharge of sewage into our waters.

### **Actions for Proper Sewage Management:**

- When in a marina, use the restrooms and showers provided on land.
- Give your business to marinas with the proper facilities, including pumpout stations or vessels.
- Encourage marinas to provide convenient pumpout services.
- Dispose of all waste, including those from pets, properly.
- On small boats, use portable toilets and dispose of your waste at the dock or ramp.
- Follow the instructions when using and maintaining your Marine Sanitation Device (MSD).
- Use enzyme-based products in your holding tank instead of deodorizers and disinfectants that can harm aquatic life.
- Protect yourself with proper personal protection (gloves and goggles) when servicing your MSD and operating pumpout equipment.
- Hand washing with antibacterial soap and water is essential for anyone using pumpout equipment. Individuals should wash their hands after every contact with the equipment.

### **Important Note:**

Sections 327.53(4)(a) and 327.53(5) Florida Statutes, prohibit the discharge of raw sewage from any vessel. All vessel owners, operators and occupants have to comply with the U.S. Coast Guard's regulations pertaining to MSDs and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's regulations pertaining to No Discharge Zones or areas where sewage discharge is prohibited.





## MOORING FIELDS

**Fact:**

Vessel anchors can damage sea grass, coral colonies and other fragile elements of marine floor environments.

**Goal:**

When possible, use managed mooring areas to minimize or eliminate damage to the marine floor environment.



## **Actions to Take for Safe Mooring:**

- Ensure that your vessel is compliant with U.S. Coast Guard, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and local laws and regulations regarding safety equipment, registration and sanitary equipment.
- Observe no anchoring and idle speed/no wake zones.
- Do not harass protected or endangered species. Avoid wildlife when possible.
- Use pumpouts. Better yet, use available facilities on the upland to reduce the need to use on-vessel sanitary equipment.
- Properly dispose of litter, human and pet waste.
- Fuel only at designated fueling stations at the marina. Do not refill fuel tanks while in a mooring field.
- Use environmentally friendly cleaning methods and green cleaners.
- Immediately report all oil spills, no matter how small, to the harbormaster and the U.S. Coast Guard National Response Center at 1-800-424-8802 or online at [www.nrc.uscg.mil](http://www.nrc.uscg.mil). Do not use detergents to disperse the spill.
- Use bilge socks or other absorbent materials in the bilge to prevent inadvertent discharge of oil into the water.
- Evacuate mooring fields and anchorages during severe weather, tropical storms or hurricanes.

# CLEAN BOATER PLEDGE

As a participating member of the Florida *Clean Boater* Program, I pledge to do my part in keeping Florida's waterways clean by following the guidelines set forth in the Clean Boating Habits booklet. I will identify opportunities and implement practices to prevent pollution associated with my boating activities such as: fueling, cleaning and washing, sewage handling and maintenance. I will further ensure that all passengers aboard my vessel follow the guidelines and maintain a clean boating environment.

As a *Clean Boater*, I Pledge To:

- Recycle and keep Florida's waterways free of trash.
- Practice proper fueling techniques.
- Use pumpout facilities.
- Support Florida *Clean Marinas*, *Clean Boatyards* and *Clean Marine Retailers* whenever possible.
- Promote clean boating habits and the *Clean Boater* program to fellow boaters.
- Remember that a clean environment ALWAYS starts with ME.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Event Attended \_\_\_\_\_

[www.dep.state.fl.us/cleanmarina](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/cleanmarina)



## **REGULATIONS**

**U.S. Coast Guard maritime safety,  
security and stewardship,  
marine safety, ports waterway  
and coastal security,  
marine environmental protection.  
[www.uscgboating.org](http://www.uscgboating.org)  
[www.uscg.mil](http://www.uscg.mil)**

**U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary  
Complimentary Vessel Safety Check  
[www.cgaux.org](http://www.cgaux.org)**

**Florida Fish and Wildlife  
Conservation Commission  
Boating, safety, fishing, licenses,  
boat ramps and access  
[www.myfwc.com](http://www.myfwc.com)**

**MINIMUM REQUIRED  
SAFETY EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST**

**[www.uscgboating.org/safety/default.aspx](http://www.uscgboating.org/safety/default.aspx)**

## **Important Contact Information**

Florida Department of Environment Protection  
Office of Sustainable Initiatives  
Florida Clean Vessel Act Program  
850-245-2118

[www.dep.state.fl.us/cleanmarina/cva](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/cleanmarina/cva)  
[clean.vessel.act@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:clean.vessel.act@dep.state.fl.us)

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission  
[www.myfwc.com/boating](http://www.myfwc.com/boating)

## **Report Boating, Wildlife and Environmental Violations and Concerns:**

To report environmental emergencies only,  
call the State Warning Point at

**1-800-320-0519**

**1-850-413-9911**

Non-emergencies

**1-850-413-9900**

U.S. Coast Guard Sector St. Petersburg  
Prevention Department 813-228-2189



Paid in part by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Sport Fish Restoration