

# Selecting Underwater & Topside Maintenance Services for Your Boat

## Selecting a Service Provider

The following tips can help you select a professional maintenance service that will protect your boat and the marine environment.

**Ask your boat maintenance services to follow** marina requirements and use best management practices (BMPs) to avoid damaging boats or releasing pollutants into marina waters.



**Ask** your marina manager or harbor master **for a list of service providers**. Some marinas may not be able to provide business referrals.

**Hire a professional.** Ask to see the service's current business license & liability insurance.

**Ask for a copy** of the maintenance service's or association's **BMPs or standard procedures**.

**Get three local references** from a prospective maintenance service or other boaters who know their work. Ask if they were satisfied and try to see the completed work.

**Obtain and verify** the service's business address and telephone number. You may need to contact them in case of incomplete work, an illegal discharge or improper waste disposal.

## Explain Your Expectations

**Be direct.** Let the contractor know what you need and how it should be performed. The guidelines below will help you specify practices to protect your boat and the environment.

## Underwater Hull Cleaning

**If antifouling paint is applied, wait 90 days** before having the hull cleaned underwater.

**Avoid** underwater cleaning of vessels with soft, rapid sloughing or ablative hull paints.

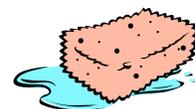
**Regular cleaning** prevents hard growth from forming. If the hull needs aggressive cleaning, the vessel should be hauled and recoated.

**Consider combining** low copper or non-toxic, hull paints with regular underwater hull cleaning or a slip liner. For more details, "**Alternative Antifouling Strategies Sampler**" at <http://ucanr.org/coast>

**Never allow cleaning to produce a colored "plume"** or cloud in the water; this indicates paint has been rubbed off the hull.

## Ask your hull cleaner to...

- Use only soft sponges, cloths or pieces of "carpet" to clean marine growth.
- Use stainless steel pads or brushes only on unpainted metal areas, never on bottom paint.
- Return zinc anodes to shore for recycling or proper disposal. Call 1-800-CLEANUP



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**Report all oil and chemical spills to  
National Response Center 1-800-424-  
8802 and CA Office of Emergency  
Services 1-800-0ILS911**

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## And for the Topside...

**Marina or Boatyard?** Limit work done in the marina to minor maintenance. Take larger projects to an onshore service with proper equipment and pollution controls.

### Ask your service provider to...

Use **biodegradable & environmentally friendly products**. Read labels & ask your maintenance service for more information.

**Reuse leftovers** such as paints & varnishes for touchups or share with other boaters.

### Painting. Ask your service provider to...

• Cover water between boat & dock with a plastic sheet or tarp. Clean, dry & reuse them. Reverse boat in slip to work on other side.

• Mix only the amount of paint needed for the job. Mix paint on land, not on the dock; avoid dripping paint on dock. Do not spray paint.



• Use drip pans & containment trays to catch drips and spills. Have absorbent pads & thinner ready to clean up spills. Clean brushes on land.

• Seal containers tightly when not in use.

• Don't paint in a heavy breeze.

### Sanding. Ask your service provider to...

• Cover the water between boat, dock and adjoining boats with tarps. Clean, dry & reuse tarps. Reverse boat in slip to work on other side.

• Use sanding equipment that has a dust containment bag. Dispose of residual sanding dust as hazardous waste. For hazardous waste disposal information call 1-800-CLEANUP

• Don't sand with steel wool; its dust makes

rust spots on other boats, docks or equipment.

• Plug scuppers to contain dust and debris.

• Don't sand underwater or in a heavy breeze.

### Cleaning. Ask your service provider to...

• Avoid products with lye, ammonia, sodium hypochlorite, petroleum, phosphates or chlorine.



• Use soap in moderation. More soap doesn't mean more clean.

### Exterior Teak Decks and Trim

**Allow teak to fade to gray.** Rinse it as needed with fresh or salt water to remove dirt. This reduces wear and tear from particles under foot.

### Teak trim requires different care than teak decks.

Varnished exterior teak lasts longer and provides more protection than an oil finish. Sand and varnish teak trim as needed.

### Ask your service provider to...

• Use teak cleaners and soaps sparingly. Solvents in cleaners eat away at the soft grain of teak and damage seam compounds.

• Caustic cleaners and varnishes should not be introduced to marine waters. Dispose of extras as hazardous waste.

• For the look of freshly sanded teak that is easy on the environment, scrub teak decks with clean salt water and let the sun bleach them.

### For Educational Use, Only...

This information is provided on an educational basis to assist you in choosing a marine service provider. Ask your boatyard, marine supply dealer, experienced boaters and government for local policies, regulations, referrals and any special conditions or practices.



REFERENCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Soundwatch, An Environmental Guide for Boaters (48° North); Rhode Island Marina Nonpoint Source Pollution Project (Rhode Island Sea Grant); Baywatch, A guide for Boaters (Environmental Health Coalition); Guidance specifying Management Measures for Sources of Nonpoint Pollution in Coastal Waters (US Environmental Protection Agency); "Building a Case Against Unlicensed Contractors" (San Diego Union-Tribune); Underwater Hull Cleaning Best Management Practices (Bear Underwater Services); "Three Ways You Can Save Yourself Money" (Anchorwatch); Jim Haussener (California Marine Parks & Harbors Association); Members of the Steering Committee for San Diego County Boating & Nonpoint Source Pollution Education Program; Selecting Underwater & Topside Maintenance Services for Your Boat 2010 (UC Cooperative Extension); Reviewers of 2007.