

Greywater Discharges Banned from Vessels in BC's Inland Waters

What are Greywater and Blackwater?

Greywater is any waste discharging from showers, kitchen, bathroom and wet bar sinks, dishwashers, washing machines and hot tubs. Blackwater is wastewater from toilets.

Why are greywater discharges a problem?

Studies conducted by the California Department of Health Services show that the concentrations of pollutants in greywater, including disease causing bacteria, are similar to that of domestic sewage. The US Environmental Protection Agency has banned all greywater discharges into US waters. Currently, most vessels with heads and/or galleys are equipped with blackwater holding tanks only, greywater is discharged directly into the water body.



Why hasn't anything been done about greywater discharges before now?

In the past, discharges from vessels were regulated federally by the *Regulation for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships and for Dangerous Chemicals* under the *Canada Shipping Act*. This regulation prohibits the discharge of blackwater into designated waters, however, in non-designated waters blackwater discharges are not prohibited. The regulation makes no prohibition against the discharge of greywater into either designated or non-designated waters. Recent changes to this federal regulation combined with the growing understanding of the risks associated with greywater discharges have prompted the Ministry of Environment to step up enforcement of the relevant provisions of the *Environmental Management Act*.

What action will be taken to prevent greywater discharges from boats now and in the future?

Section 13 of the province's *Environmental Management Act*, prohibits the discharge of both black and greywater from any vessel into any water, unless specifically authorized.

Ministry staff will be working in partnership with regional and municipal governments, industry and local boating associations on this issue. A key component of the strategy involves education of boaters on the requirement that all vessels equipped with heads and/or galleys must have the capacity to capture both black and greywater. It is hoped that through increased awareness and industry cooperation, a high level of voluntary compliance can be achieved.

How will these actions be performed?

The strategy involves phased-in compliance, starting with education and ending with enforcement when necessary. This will provide the time required for the boat industry to adapt and boat owners to retrofit vessels to meet requirements under the prohibition. The phase in will also allow the development of suitable pump-out facilities.

Under the strategy, by 2010 all vessels will be required to capture both black and greywater discharges. Boaters failing to capture discharges may be subject to enforcement.

Who will these actions affect and where and when will they be enforced?

The enforcement of the greywater discharge prohibition will be concentrated in the Thompson, Cariboo, Okanagan and Kootenay regions, and will apply to any boat or houseboat equipped with a head and/or galley.

Who can I contact if I have more questions?

For further information please contact a local Ministry of Environment office.



Ministry of Environment Regional Offices

Vancouver Island Region

2080 Labieau Rd
Nanaimo BC V9T 6J9
(250)751-3190

Skeena Region

3726 Alfred Ave
Smithers BC V0J 2N0
(250)847-7260

Lower Mainland Region

2nd Floor, #10470 152nd St
Surrey BC V3R 0Y3
(604)582-5250

Peace Region

400-10003-110 Ave
Fort St. John BC V1J 6M2
(250)787-3225

Thompson Region

1259 Dalhousie Drive
Kamloops BC V2C 5Z5
(250)371-6200

Okanagan Region

102 Industrial Place
Penticton BC V2A 7C8
(250)490-8200

Kootenay Region

401-333 Victoria Street
Nelson BC V1L 4K3
(250) 354-6333

Cariboo Region

#400 – 640 Borland St.
Williams Lake BC V2G 4T1
(250)398-4569

Omineca Region

4051 18th Ave
Prince George BC V2N 1B3
(250)565-6135

