



OIL SPILL SCIENCE

SEA GRANT PROGRAMS OF THE GULF OF MEXICO

A BOATER'S GUIDE TO HANDLING OIL AND FUEL SPILLS

Work or play along the Gulf coast? Know what to do in the event of an accidental spill.

BE PREPARED



(Florida Sea Grant)

MAINTAIN your boat's engine, making sure that fuel lines are attached and undamaged. Faulty lines are the source of many small spills.

TAKE CARE when fueling. Whether at the dock or on the water, accidents occur due to distracted operators missing or overfilling the tank or hands-free fueling clips not operating correctly.

PROTECT yourself in the event of an oil or fuel leak while boating. Turn off electricity to prevent sparking and always have a fire extinguisher on board. Avoid inhaling fumes and keep gloves available if you must handle toxic chemicals.

Soak it, don't soap it!

Absorbent pads remove oil safely. Never use household detergents, as they harm sea life and can incur large fines.



PURCHASE oil absorbent cleanup materials at boating stores and keep on board to prevent and contain spills.



Oil absorbent booms, sheets (bottom), and pads can be kept on your boat to catch leaks under the engine or to contain and remove oil at the surface of the water (back). Bilge socks (top) trap any oily overflow on board, making safe disposal easy. (MASGC/Tara Skelton)

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SEE A SPILL

ALERT the authorities. By law, you must notify both the National Response Center and the state agency of any spill, no matter how small.

SOAK UP oil from the water using the cleanup materials described on the previous page.

STORE all used oil and oily absorbent materials in a closed container labeled “Used Oil.”

DISPOSE of used oil and oily absorbent materials at authorized locations:

- Local governments often host regional “Household Hazardous Waste Day” events.
- Some businesses like supercenters, oil change stations, and other types of automotive centers take used oil.



After alerting the authorities, use the oil-absorbing products you have on board to remove toxic chemicals from the water (above). If it is a smaller spill, officials may tell you to clean it yourself to the best of your ability. If larger, they may send help. By law, all waste oil, including oiled absorbent materials, must be disposed of safely in designated locations (right).

MAKE THE CALL

Boaters must report all spills to the National Response Center at

1-800-424-8802

and to the state hotline.

ALABAMA: 1-800-843-0699

FLORIDA: 1-800-320-0519

LOUISIANA: 1-877-925-6595

MISSISSIPPI: 1-800-222-6362

TEXAS: 1-800-832-8224

LOCATE AN OIL DISPOSAL SITE

Go to the following website to find out where in your community to dispose of used oil.

EARTH 911 — <http://search.earth911.com/>

Use the search term ‘motor oil’ and your zip code to find the nearest oil recycling location.



gulfseagrant.org/oilspilloutreach