



# Responsible Boating Handbook



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# Welcome

Whether you are a new visitor or an old friend we welcome you to Empire Marina Lake Macquarie and hope you enjoy your stay. Lake Macquarie is the largest coastal salt water lakes in the southern hemisphere, covering an area of 110 square kilometres. It is breathtakingly beautiful, offering the water lover an unspoilt and special place to enjoy, relax and have fun.

It is of paramount importance to us that boaters and clients assist with maintaining the beauty of the lake by observing a few simple guidelines as set out in this booklet.

Our staff are happy to assist you with any further information you may require. Our office hours are 8.00 am – 5.00pm 7 days. In the event of any emergency please contact the office on 4958 3333 or 0439 556 885 (24 hours).

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*“We invite you to enjoy all that our beautiful lake has to offer and ask that you help us to preserve this special place by boating in a safe, fun and responsible way.”*

*Marina Management*

# Our Environment

We are fortunate to be situated in such an extraordinary place and Marina Management take any potential environmental impacts extremely seriously. Please familiarise yourself with the Marina Berth Agreement, including the Terms and Conditions as these comprise your legal obligations as well as some common courtesies for all the Empire Marina Lake Macquarie community.

## Water Quality

We conduct regular water monitoring in and around the marina and have been doing so for many years. We need to ensure that our only impacts are beneficial, and as a result, we ask that you assist us by ensuring your bilge is clean, you use the onsite facilities for waste removal and the bathroom and laundry amenities when in your berth and to please be aware of what goes into the water at all times.

Always be aware of your prop wash - ensure that you do not stir up sediments or create waves that can damage the lake foreshore or cause nuisance to others around you.

Big or small, basic or customized, it's easy to forget that your boat is a vessel that requires constant care and attention. Fortunately, routine maintenance and small repairs aren't that tough. In the long run, a little elbow grease will definitely pay off plus help retain your boats value. Remember first impressions count!

# Cleaning & Maintenance

Greywater is the soapy water from the boat galley sinks and showers and can be used to describe the dirty rinse water created when washing a boat. The environmental impact of greywater can be significant if harsh soaps and chemicals are used.

The simplest task is to “**wash your boat regularly**”. Rinse your boat thoroughly with fresh water after every outing to remove salt residue. Salt will not only corrode metal, fasteners and other hardware, it will remove the shine from your gelcoat. Use a long-handle, soft-bristle boat brush and some PH Neutral, environmentally safe boat soap and don’t forget to rinse well. Check the marina office for suitable products and further information.

Non-Toxic Cleaning Alternatives – Source *Marina Industries Association*  
“*Clean Boaties Factsheet*”

The following list provides non-toxic alternatives to typical cleaning products. Please note that even non-toxic substances can cause harm to the environment so use sparingly.

- When cleaning, always try water and a little elbow grease first
- All-purpose cleaner: mix one cup white vinegar with five litres of water
- Air freshener: an open box of baking soda
- Ammonia-based cleaners: vinegar, salt, and water
- Brass cleaner: Worcestershire sauce or paste made with equal amounts of salt, vinegar, and water
- Copper cleaner: lemon juice and water or paste of lemon juice, salt, and flour
- Chlorine bleach: baking soda and water or borax
- Chrome cleaner/polish: apple cider vinegar to clean; baby oil to polish
- Disinfectants: one half a cup borax in three litres of water

- Drain opener: dissemble and use a plumber's snake or flush with boiling water mixed with one-quarter cup baking soda and one quarter cup vinegar
- Fibreglass stain remover: baking soda paste
- Floor cleaner: one-cup vinegar plus five litres of water
- Paints: use latex or water-based paints
- Paint remover/stripper: use heat gun to peel off paint
- Paint thinners: use water (effective for water-based paints)
- Stainless steel cleaner: baking soda or mineral oil for polishing, vinegar to remove spots
- Toilet bowl cleaner: use toilet brush and baking soda
- Wood polish: olive or almond oil (interior walls only)
- Window cleaner: mix two tablespoons vinegar in one quart of water or rub glass with newspaper

## [Bilges/Engine rooms](#)

The truth is that you do have to engage in regular maintenance on your boat. Remember that only minor repairs can occur on the marina berth. If you are in doubt, please contact the Marina Office. The bilge might not be the first thing that comes to mind when you think of the things you need to clean on your boat, but it can easily become one of the nastiest places on board. The most important reasons to keep your bilge clean are:

- to prevent growth of bacteria
- eliminate foul odours
- prevent rust and corrosion of equipment that lies in the bilge
- Identify leaks

Please don't ignore it.

## Engine Oil:

Most new model boats have drip pans installed under the engines to prevent oil from dripping directly into the bilge. Whether you have drip pans or not it is a good idea to put absorbent pads under the engines. They not only absorb the oil that could drip but provide a quick way to find leaks.

**Absorbent materials and pads are available from the Marina Office.** Each time you do an engine check, which should be each time prior to starting, check the pad to see if any new oil spots have appeared. If so, try to track down the source immediately.

## What You Can Do:

You should inspect the bilge and its surroundings with a flashlight at least once a month. Look for the following:

- Lift up the float switch on your electric bilge pump to make sure it turns on the pump automatically
- If you find unusual amounts of water, be sure to track down the source
- Check all through-hull openings and fittings
- Make sure that all fittings below the waterline have double hose clamps
- Check the seacocks to make sure that you can turn them off. You could sink your boat if a hose comes loose from a seacock and you can't stop the flow of water because the valve is corroded
- Look for corrosion and rust
- Check for unusual growth or mildew
- Check all pipes, hoses and clamps
- Check limber holes

### **Don't Pollute:**

Remember that it is **illegal** to pump oily discharge or effluent overboard. If you find oil in your bilge water turn off the bilge pump and immediately contact the marina office to assist with the cleaning and disposal of any oily water. Don't think just because there is only a little bit of oil it is okay. For small amounts of oil, use bilge pads to soak the oil up, place the used pads in a sealed bucket and bring it to the marina office for disposal.

Our marina has a pump out facility at the fuel wharf to deal with your effluent tank. The pump out facility connects to the general sewerage lines and is therefore not for oily water waste. Please contact the Marina Office for assistance.

## **Seagrass, Marine Life & Foreshore Protection**

The lake waters have an abundance of marine and bird life. Seagrass is fragile and can be inadvertently harmed by human activities in and around our shorelines and marinas. Seagrasses are underwater plants that live in protected bays and other shallow coastal waters. Because they require sunlight to grow, most seagrasses are found in clear shallow waters. These grass-like plants form small patchy beds that develop over many decades into large contiguous beds, known as meadows, which in good quality water with minimal disturbances, grow lush and thick.

Healthy seagrass beds reduce wave action during storms; improve water clarity by trapping sediments, stabilise the bottom, provide food for many marine animals and are vital nursery habitats for fish, crustaceans, seahorses and shellfish. Our opportunities for enjoying a healthy lake are enhanced by protecting seagrasses.

## What You Can Do:

- Do not anchor in seagrass
- Avoid walking through seagrass
- If you wish to travel over seagrass, please row or paddle over it
- Be aware of prop wash. Do not stir up the bottom which increases turbidity and is damaging to the seagrass
- If you run aground, pole or walk your boat to deeper water. Never try to motor your way out. This will cause extensive damage to seagrass and may harm your motor/s. Know the times for your low and high tides and always watch ahead

We can all use common sense and consideration, and behave sensibly to help protect these valuable underwater plants.

### Boat Wash – Source *RMS NSW Maritime Safety Rules*.

Boat wash is the turbulence created by your boat as it moves through the water. Wash size and influence is affected by the amount of water your boat displaces, the boats speed, its' planing attitude and other factors such as water depth.

This means that a large cruiser moving through the water at 8 knots will displace a large amount of wash - big enough to capsize small dinghies, damage moored boats and contribute to foreshore erosion. A high performance ski boat, however, will create almost no wash when it is planing.

“NO WASH” signs and low speed signs are placed in areas where wash from vessels can cause damage, injury or annoyance to other vessels, the shoreline or people. Every vessel operator must comply with these signs.

The way you achieve this will depend on the type of boat you are driving, however if in doubt about your vessel’s wash it is recommended that you take the following action:

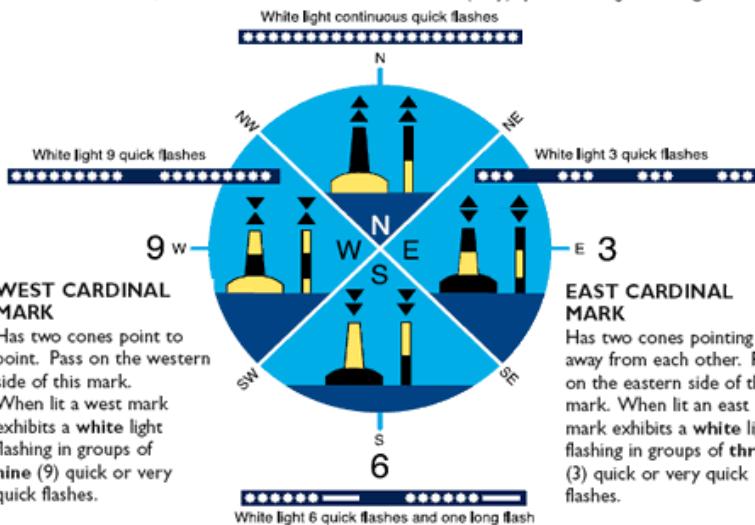
- as you approach the restricted area, reduce speed
- at the start of the NO WASH zone, take your engine(s) out of gear
- put the engine(s) back in gear and proceed with the engines giving just enough speed to provide you with steering control
- Look behind you occasionally, to see if your boat is creating wash. If it is, slow down to a speed just above idle.

When you see a “NO WASH” sign or a speed limit sign, do not automatically assume that you can travel at the maximum speed indicated. It may be necessary for you to travel at a slower speed to ensure your boat is not creating wash. The marina and immediate environs are a “No Wash” Zone.



### NORTH CARDINAL MARK

Has two cones pointing up. Pass on the northern side of this mark.  
When lit, a north marker exhibits a continuous (very) quick flashing white light.



### WEST CARDINAL MARK

Has two cones point to point. Pass on the western side of this mark.  
When lit a west mark exhibits a white light flashing in groups of nine (9) quick or very quick flashes.

### EAST CARDINAL MARK

Has two cones pointing away from each other. Pass on the eastern side of this mark. When lit an east mark exhibits a white light flashing in groups of three (3) quick or very quick flashes.

### SOUTH CARDINAL MARK

Has two cones both pointing down. Pass on the southern side of this mark. When lit a south mark exhibits a white light flashing in groups of six (6) quick or very quick flashes followed by a long flash.

Source - RMS NSW Maritime Boating Handbook



## Threats to Marine Life

- ✗ Plastic bags and other waste mistaken for jellyfish
- ✗ Cigarette butts
- ✗ Fishing line and hooks
- ✗ Boat and propeller collision
- ✗ Entanglement and drowning in nets, ropes, floats and traps
- ✗ Habitat destruction, poor water quality and seagrass depletion
- ✗ Deliberate acts of cruelty
- ✗ Disease
- ✗ Feeding fish or birds
- ✗ Cleaning fish in the marina basin

## What You Can Do

- ✓ Appropriately dispose of your rubbish
- ✓ Collect litter on or adjacent to the lake
- ✓ Avoid anchoring and traveling over seagrass beds
- ✓ Report people engaging in illegal netting or trapping
- ✓ Assist coastal health projects (e.g. seagrass monitoring)
- ✓ Join your regional animal rescue and care group
- ✓ Report sick or injured marine life

Green, Loggerhead and Flatback turtles are known to occur in Lake Macquarie. All marine turtles are protected by law and most are classified as a threatened species under NSW and Commonwealth legislation. Empire Marina Lake Macquarie encourages all who use the waterway to be aware of and respect marine wildlife. Sightings of marine turtles can be reported to the Native Animal Trust Fund 0418 628 483 or National Parks and Wildlife Service - Lakes Area office on 02) 4972 9000 or through the website <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/savingourspeciesapp/project.aspx?ProfileID=10901>

# Summary

- **Be Aware**

Protect your environment by using ecofriendly cleaning products, less chemicals used in our marinas will help to prevent any build-up of toxins.

- **Read the Waters**

Wear polarised sunglasses when boating to reduce surface glare to help you see shallow areas and seagrass beds. Polarised sunglasses can also help you see and avoid any underwater hazards and marine life.

- **Know your Boating Signs and Markers**

Operate your boat in marked channels to prevent running aground and damaging your boat and seagrass beds. Know the correct side to stay on when approaching channel markers and navigational marks. Learn the shapes and markings of navigational markers and signs warning boaters of dangerous shallows and areas where boats are prohibited by law. Always observe speed signage.

- **Know your Depth and Draft**

When in doubt about the depth, slow down and idle. If you are leaving a muddy trail behind your boat, you are probably cutting seagrass. Tilt or stop your engine if necessary. If you run aground, pole or walk your boat to deeper water. Never try to motor your way out. This will cause extensive damage to seagrass and may harm your motor. Know the times for your low and high tides.

- **Be on the Lookout**

When your boat is underway, always keep a sharp lookout ahead of you and be aware of your surroundings. This will keep you and your passengers' safe, as well as keep seagrass and marine animals out of danger.

- **Be Considerate**

Never pump your oily bilge water or effluent out into the lake. Remove it properly to our onsite facilities. Empire Marina Lake Macquarie has a Pump out facility for your sewerage situated at the fuel wharf. It is good practice to Pump out after each trip.

- **Study your Charts**

Use navigational charts, fishing maps, or local boating guides to become familiar with waterways. These nautical charts alert you to shallow areas so you don't run aground and damage seagrass. (**Know before you go.**)

# Recycled Waste Management

Empire Marina Lake Macquarie provides recycling facilities for all waste generated at the marina. The bins are clearly signed for the type of waste accepted. We provide special containment for old batteries, oily rags, bilge mats and waste water. Please see the marina office if you have any special requirements or need assistance to remove your waste appropriately.

Emergency spill equipment is available on each marina arm, the fuel wharf and from the marina office. Used absorbent materials need to be disposed of correctly and should not be placed in the general waste bins.

## Recycling Bins located on foreshore at the Main Gangway Entrances.



## Waste Water, Bilge Mat, Rag Disposal & Battery Recycling located behind Workshops



## Battery Disposal located Behind Workshops



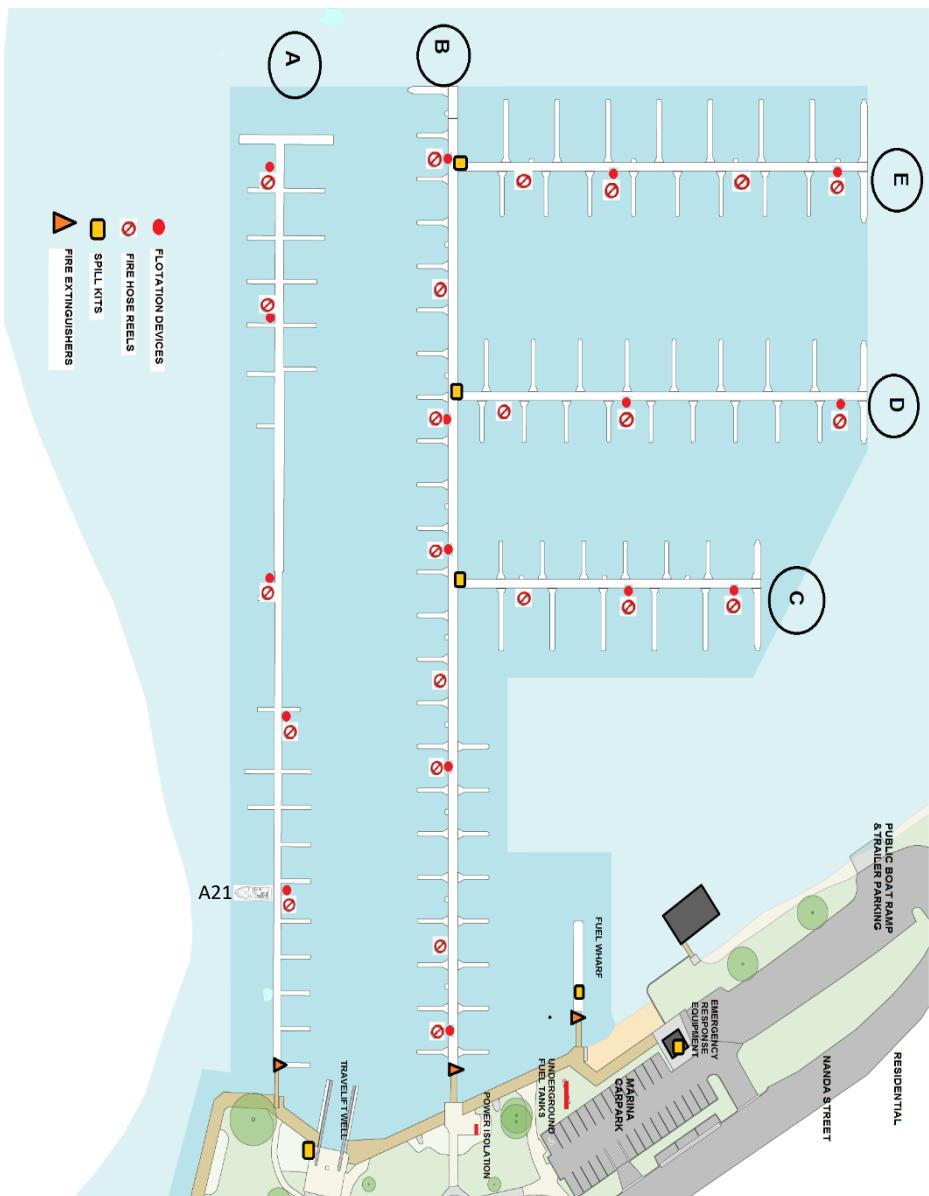
## Pump out – Sewerage Waste located @ Fuel Wharf



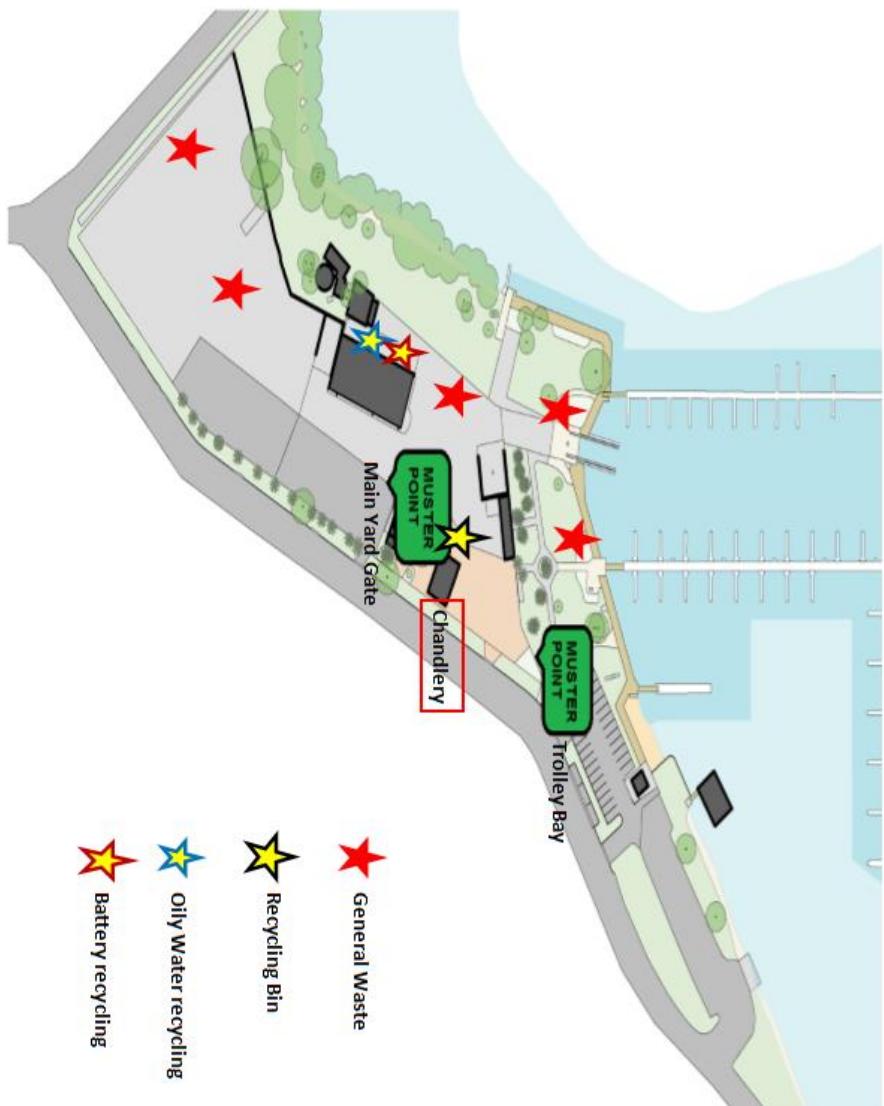
## Electrical Requirements

Unlike household electrical wiring, the wiring and equipment on board your vessel resides in a corrosive marine environment that requires regular inspection and maintenance. Every time you connect to shore power, take a good look at the lead and fittings. If you see any evidence of damage, corrosion or arcing please notify the marina office immediately. We will organise our electrician to investigate and rectify any problem. Always turn off the breaker on the pedestal before removing or plugging in your power lead. This will prevent any arcing of the power socket. When connecting the plug and socket make sure the locking ring is always secured to ensure protection from the weather. Always ensure the power lead is arranged so it will permit normal movement of the boat at the berth without placing undue stress on the shore power lead and pedestal through rubbing or chafing. Please arrange the lead in such a way that it cannot present a trip hazard to others walking the marina and that it cannot drape into the water. Please do not coil the lead around the power pedestal. **Remember it is a contract requirement that you have your lead tagged and tested annually and that it is in good order.**

# Marina Spill Kit Locations



## General Waste & Recycling Locations



# Links & Info

## Emergency Contacts



[MARINE RESCUE](#)

[LAKE MACQUARIE](#)

4971 3498

[POLICE /FIRE/AMBULANCE](#)

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[RMS – 13 12 36](#)

[Australian Search & Rescue](#)

[Maritime – 1800 641 792](#)

[WILDLIFE RESCUE](#)

[WIRES – 1300 094 737](#)

[Hunter – 0418 628 483](#)

[Boating Safety Officer](#)

Lake Mac – 0448 742 236

## Local Contacts



[EPA Environment Line – 13 15 55](#)

[LMCC - 4921 0333](#)

[SWANSEA BRIDGE - 4971 3498](#)

[EMPIRE MARINA LAKE MACQUARIE](#)

4958 3333 8.00 am – 5.00 pm 7 days

[Dockmaster – 0418 214 274](#)

[Fuel - 8.30am – 4.30pm - 4958 3333](#)

[General Manager – 0439 556 885](#)

[After Hours – 0439 556 885](#)

## Empire Marina Facilities



[Café – 0438 014 426](#)

[Endeavour Marine – 4958 4588](#)

[Coastal Shipwright Service – 4965 8038](#)

[JSE Marine Electrical – 0418 432 805](#)



Fish Friendly Accreditation



## Contact Us:

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Marmong Point NSW 2284

P 4958 3333

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Or [dockmasterlm@@empiremarinas.com.au](mailto:dockmasterlm@@empiremarinas.com.au)

W [empiremarinalakemacquarie.com.au](http://empiremarinalakemacquarie.com.au)

