



Something About Sewage Discharge In Our Waterways

As boat traffic grows in our waterways, no longer can its health be taken for granted. We all have to do our small part to preserve our waterways so that generations to come can enjoy what we have now. There is no doubt that there is growing awareness of the need to care for our water ecosystem. People are starting to be aware that the damage that can incur through improper sewage discharge is likely to be irreversible.

The effects of untreated sewage to the waterways

Untreated sewage is harmful to human and marine life. To put this in perspective, the amount of pathogens in untreated sewage from just one weekend boater, equals the amount of pathogens from the treated sewage of 10 000 people.



The legislation

The Australian Transport Operations(Marine Pollution) Act 1995

and Regulation 2008, with references to International Maritime Organisation(MARPOL) spell out how sewage must be handled by all sea vessels in Queensland coastal waters. The following are their highlights;

Discharge of sewage where no onboard treatment system is available - As long as there is a fixed toilet, sewer must pass through a macerator. It is recommended that sewage in a holding tank is discharged into an onshore facility. It is illegal to discharge untreated sewage anywhere in Queensland coastal waters for vessels with 16 or more persons. For vessels with less persons, discharge condition is a factor of the number of persons on board and location of the boat.

Discharge of sewage where there is onboard treatment system available - Grade A treated sewage(highest treatment) can be discharged anywhere except in Prohibited Discharge Waters, such as canals, marinas, boat harbours, the Nooza River and designated areas of state marine parks. Grade C treated sewage(lowest treatment) requires a more common and economical method of waste treatment. It can be discharged anywhere except Prohibited Discharge Waters and except within 926m of a person in the water, aquaculture fisheries resource or a reef.

Visit www.msq.qld.gov.au/Environment/Sewage.aspx for a comprehensive information of the legislation.

Act to preserve our waterways

If a boat is anywhere in Queensland's tidal waterways, the sewage legislation applies.

Should the boat operate in nil discharge waters most of the time, a proper sewage treatment system is recommended so that treated sewage can be released safely into the water.

This initiative achieves 2 outcomes, namely..

1. **Marine environment preservation** - Pollutants in the form of dangerous pathogens and nutrients are not introduced, or introduced at insignificant levels and can be dispersed harmlessly into the waterways. This is a sustainable water ecosystem.

2. **Peace of mind** - Doing the right thing ensures that substantial monetary penalty for non compliance is not imposed.

For further information, please call **07 5665 8166** or email info@allmarinesolutions.com.au.