ABANDONED
BOATS, BARGES, BUOYS & DOCKS
in the
ISLANDS TRUST AREA
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

There are hundreds of thousands of pleasure craft and associated infrastructure – such as buoys and docks – in the Salish Sea region. Although most owners dispose of their vessels or infrastructure responsibly, abandoned boats, barges, buoys, and broken-up docks are still a common problem.

Dealing with this form of water-based debris can be complicated for volunteers trying to keep island beaches and waters clean. Depending on the situation, various agencies may be involved and figuring out which one has the power and responsibility can be confusing. This document answers the most common questions received by Islands Trust trustees and staff.
Who do I contact if a situation appears urgent, for example a wrecked or dilapidated boat is likely to sink or is leaking fuel or other substances?

Contact the **Coast Guard** at 1-800-889-8852 or your local Coast Guard Marine Communications and Traffic Service (MCTS): [http://www.ccg-gcc.gc.ca/Marine-Communications/Home](http://www.ccg-gcc.gc.ca/Marine-Communications/Home)

The Coast Guard can take measures to prevent, mitigate, or eliminate hazards posed by vessels or wrecks. They are also able to hold an owner liable. The Coast Guard will respond in a timely fashion to eliminate hazards and in many cases will remove the wrecked vessel.

Who do I contact about a wrecked boat on the beach or in the water that does not appear to be an immediate hazard?

You could contact the **Coast Guard** at 1-800-889-8852 and/or **Transport Canada** at 604-775-8867 or via email: NPPPAC-PPNPAC@tc.gc.ca

You could also contact the **Dead Boats Society** at: thedeadboatsociety@gmail.com

This volunteer group, led by John Roe, is applying for federal funds to remove abandoned and wrecked boats throughout the Islands Trust Area.

Within the **Capital Regional District (CRD)** you could also contact staff at 250-360-3030 or via an online form: www.crd.bc.ca/contact-us

For more information on the CRD abandoned boat program, see: [https://www.crd.bc.ca/service/community-clean-up-assistance-program/abandoned-boat-program](https://www.crd.bc.ca/service/community-clean-up-assistance-program/abandoned-boat-program)

I’m interested in removing an abandoned vessel or barge. How do I get permission and funding?

Do not remove a vessel or barge without prior permission from **Transport Canada**.

Under its **Abandoned Boat Program**, Transport Canada will provide funding for the removal of abandoned vessels to other levels of government, Indigenous communities and organizations, and for-profit and not-for-profit organizations. Individual boat owners are not eligible to access this funding. A related program is in place for commercial fishing harbours owned by the DFO.
Find out more about the Abandoned Boat Program here:

**Q**
We are doing a beach clean-up and there is lots of boat related debris. What should we do?

**A**
Check with your regional district to see what rules are in place regarding marine debris in your area.

If you are in the **CRD**, there is funding to handle the disposal of marine debris associated with the abandoned boats (e.g., docking, ropes, and miscellaneous flotsam and jetsam). The CRD also has a **Community Clean-Up Assistance Program** that supports groups that make visible environmental improvements to their community through organized clean-ups. See:
https://www.crd.bc.ca/service/community-clean-up-assistance-program;
www.myrecyclopedia.ca; or email CRD at: controlledwaste@crd.bc.ca

Depending on the size of your cleanup day, **Ocean Legacy** may be able to attend and collect plastic and Styrofoam debris for reuse. See: https://oceanlegacy.ca/

The non-profit organization **Surfrider** may be able to assist your community with the beach clean-up. See:
https://www.surfrider.org/programs/beach-cleanups

**BUOYS**

**Q**
What can I do if I see a buoy in a navigation channel or I’m worried a boat is at risk because it is moored to an insecure buoy?

**A**
Please contact **Transport Canada** at 604-775-8867 or via email: NPPPAC-PPNPAC@tc.gc.ca

**Q**
Why are there so many mooring buoys in the ocean?

**A**
Mooring buoys and other mooring systems are designated as “Minor Works” under the **Navigation Protection Act** and, as long as they comply with federal requirements, can be placed without notice to Transport Canada. However, the Private Buoy Regulations states that “when a private buoy does not meet legal standards the Minister may remove or order you to modify it to meet current standards.”


In February 2018, the Islands Trust Chair recommended to the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities that Transport Canada establish a program of review and approval of private mooring buoys. He also recommended that Transport Canada, along with other agencies, actively conduct enforcement of mooring buoys.
DOCKS

Somebody’s broken dock showed up on a local beach. Who can I call to take it away?

Please contact the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development office in your region:
https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/mof/rgdis.htm#wcr

Within the CRD staff at 250-360-3030 or via email:
www.crd.bc.ca/contact-us?r=info-line

For more information:
https://www.crd.bc.ca/service/community-clean-up-assistance-program/

BOAT LICENCING

I just bought a boat. Do I need a licence?

Yes. If the boat is a pleasure craft for your own recreational use there is no fee to get a licence at the present time. A pleasure craft licence is valid for 10 years.

More information and application form available here:

Please note that Transport Canada is currently exploring boat licensing and registration options that would help provide funding for abandoned vessel removals.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

What is the difference between a dilapidated, wrecked, or derelict boat/vessel?

The federal government uses the following definitions:

A Dilapidated Vessel is:
(a) significantly degraded or dismantled; or
(b) incapable of being used for safe navigation.

A Wreck is:
(a) a vessel, or part of a vessel, that is sunk, partially sunk, adrift, stranded or grounded, including on the shore; or
(b) equipment, stores, cargo or any other thing that is or was on board a vessel and that is sunk, partially sunk, adrift, stranded or grounded, including on the shore.

Derelict is not used by Transport Canada because under international marine law ‘derelict’ means the same thing as abandoned.