



A Citizen's Guide to Boat and Vehicle Care

How we take care of our boats, personal watercrafts, mobile homes, cars, and other vehicles greatly influences the health of the Grand River and its tributaries. You can do your part to prevent pollution at the source by checking up on your marina and following a few simple tips at home.

Car Washing and Boat Cleaning

- Look for non-toxic and phosphate-free cleansers.
- Use alternative cleaners, such as baking soda and lemon juice. Avoid those with bleach, ammonia, lye, or petroleum distillates (see chart).



Product	Better Alternative
Bleach	Borax or hydrogen peroxide
Chrome cleaner	Apple cider vinegar to clean, baby oil to polish
Drain cleaner	Boiling water and plunger or plumber's snake
Engine cleaner	Steam clean the engine in a dedicated service area
Fiberglass stain remover	Baking soda paste, scrub pad, "elbow grease"
Paint stripper	Physically remove old paint without chemical use Avoid products containing methylene chloride, trichloroethylene, benzene, trichloroethyene, xylene, or toluene
Scouring powders	Baking soda and "elbow grease"
Window cleaner	Vinegar and lemon juice mixed in lukewarm water
Wood polish	Olive oil or almond oil for interior wood; use water-based or borax-based products

References: Marine Environmental Education Foundation's National Clean Boating Campaign 2000 Action Kit and Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's "Tips to Protect the Environment"

Fuel and Oil

- When fueling, avoid topping off! Remember that fuel expands as it warms up in your tank.
- Store fuel only in approved containers.
- Routinely check for and fix oil and fuel leaks.



Engine Care

- Keep boat and car engines properly tuned for efficient fuel consumption and clean exhaust.
- Use a drip pan when doing engine maintenance. Drippings left on the cement get washed into nearby drains and end up in our streams.



Sewage Control

- Use onshore restrooms when docked, and encourage everyone to use the facilities before casting off.
- Empty portable toilets only at pump-out stations or at home.
- Clean up after your pet to prevent pet waste from washing into storm drains.

Many marinas statewide have pump-outs and allow non-members to use them. Keep sewage out of storm drains and lakes!