



# Preventing marina spills during fueling

## Spills Prevention, Preparedness & Response

### Why spill prevention matters

As little as a cup of spilled oil, diesel or gasoline can contaminate acres of water and prove deadly to marine life. Juvenile fish, shellfish larvae and other fragile and essential sea life are extremely sensitive to even small amounts of oil and other petroleum products. Small spills can permanently harm our waters and degrade the enjoyment and productivity of recreational and commercial boating.

### Best practice - preventing spills

- Provide a checklist of actions for transferring oil at your location.
- Put a fuel collar or absorbent pad wrapped around the nozzle to catch drips before they enter the water.
- Have the dock attendant or vessel owner hold the fuel nozzle at all times while fueling. Do not use automatic shut-off nozzles. Disable trigger locks (like automotive gas station nozzles have) because these create a higher risk of spilling. If self-serve, the vessel owner should NOT go below deck while fueling and should NOT take telephone calls.

### Best practices - training

- Provide annual training on safe oil handling practices, emergency shut-down, and spill response to all employees.
- Identify facility-specific tasks and procedures and train your employees on them.
- Keep records of all oil handling and spill response training.

### Things to do before fueling

- Check the hose and pipe condition both at the pump and from the storage tank. Don't use frayed or damaged hoses or jury-rigged equipment.
- Check the general condition of the oil transfer equipment. Look for leaks and/or sheens on the water.
- Check the general condition of dock structures and vessels nearby to determine stability.

### Things to talk to vessel operators about before fueling

- Location of fuel fills. Confirm with the vessel that it is indeed a fuel fill and not a water fill or even a rod holder.
- Type of fuel and vessel fuel capacity and amount of fuel onboard.
- Gallons per minute delivered at each pump. Every fuel dock is different and docks with higher rates could be at risk of an overfill.
- Location of the vessel's fuel vents.
- Vessel precaution for catching fuel that escapes from the vents. Vent bags or drip cups?
- Importance of slowing the oil transfer when the tank is near full.
- Communicate that the pump WILL NOT shut down automatically like at the gas station.
- Requirement to report all spills, even one drop. Prompt notification allows Ecology to partner with you on effective response actions to minimize response costs and limit environmental damage.

## If there is an oil spill

- Stop the oil transfer.
- Report all oil spills to water (even 1 drop) immediately to the Washington Emergency Management Division 1-800-OILS-911 and the U.S. Coast Guard 1-800-424-8802. The spiller is responsible for reporting the spill. There are consequences for not reporting a spill but there are no penalties for reporting a spill unnecessarily. When in doubt, make the report.
- Ensure there are no ignition sources and warn others not to smoke or use any fire or flame including heaters and stove tops.
- Identify the product spilled. Protect yourself and others from unnecessary risks. Always wear protective equipment like oil resistant gloves and glasses when performing oil spill cleanup.
  - If the spill is gasoline, ensure others leave the area so they are not in danger. Do not try to contain gasoline.
  - For spills other than gasoline, begin deploying boom to contain the spill and sorbent pads to collect as much oil as possible.



## Planning to prevent and respond to future spills

- Prepare a piping and electrical diagram of the dock fuel system and make it available to your employees. Clearly mark each connection, valve, and emergency shut-offs.
- Identify all possible sources of ignition. Think outside the box - consider what customers and visitors might do.
- Determine how the spill response equipment would safely be deployed for your transfer location.
- Determine what you will do with used sorbents and soiled equipment. Used sorbents cannot be thrown in the trash.

## More information

- Marinas and Small Fueling Facilities Class 4 Inspection Checklist: <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/documents/ecy070313.pdf>
- [Marinas with a Fueling Station Pamphlet\(10-08-002\)](#)
- [marina-handbook.pdf \(washington.edu\)](#)
- Reporting Oil Spills: <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/documents/2208011.pdf>



Sara Thompson  
Sara.Thompson@ecy.wa.gov  
360-280-5128



To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-407-6831 or email at [ecyadacoordinator@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:ecyadacoordinator@ecy.wa.gov), or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341