

The Basics of... Boat Heads

Anyone who spends a day on a boat with a head has the dubious pleasure of using the "on-board facilities." Whether you are on a 16 foot outboard or a 40 foot ketch, the call of nature is a regular part of our boating experience.

Boats are not required to have toilets. However, you need to remember that it is against federal law to discharge untreated sewage from a boat when you are anywhere on inland waters or bays, or within 3 miles offshore in coastal waters.

Flip this card for *the scoop on poop!*



The BoatU.S. Foundation is a national nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that helps boaters be safer and better stewards of the environment.

**Part of *The Basics of...*
Boater Education Series**

Printed 9/03

Recycled Paper

Boat Heads: What's best for me?

Portable Toilets

Many boaters choose to have a portable toilet on board. This toilet does not require any plumbing, and is compact enough for smaller boats. But remember, to keep the water clean (and to stay legal) you must empty portable toilets at onshore facilities, never into the water.

Installed Heads

Another choice is an installed head. According to U.S. Coast Guard regulations, if you have an installed toilet on your boat, you must have a USCG-certified Type I, II, or III Marine Sanitation Device (MSD) attached to that toilet.

MSD's: What's your type?

Type I MSD's are treatment systems (like a Lectra-San) that send the waste to a holding tank or through a "Y-valve" to legally discharge treated waste overboard. They are legal on vessels less than 65 feet. They are not legal to use in a No Discharge Area.

Type II MSD's are similar to Type I's, but take up a little more power and space, and provide more treatment. They can be hooked up to a holding tank or through a "Y-valve" to legally discharge treated waste overboard. These are typically installed in bigger boats or ships, and are not legal to use in a No Discharge Area.

Type III MSD's are the least complicated, and least expensive of the MSD options. The most common Type III is a holding tank. This can legally be emptied via an onshore pumpout station or, when you are more than 3 miles offshore, overboard through a "Y-valve."

More Scoop on Poop

Pumpout Stations

Look for this symbol posted at marinas to find an onshore **pumpout station** for your holding tank.



No Discharge Areas

On inland lakes and other No Discharge Areas you can use a Type III installed toilet with a holding tank, a portable toilet or just use onshore facilities.



880 S. Pickett Street
Alexandria, VA 22304
1-800-336-BOAT

For more information:
www.boatus.com/foundation
cleanwater@boatus.com