

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR BOATERS

After overseeing the removal of more than 8 million cubic yards of household and vegetative debris and sand from the streets, the State of New Jersey has initiated an intensive effort to remove Superstorm Sandy debris from our tidal waterways. The State hired three contractors with experience in disaster recovery, debris removal, vessel salvage and coastal restoration. They will remove debris including cars, buildings, docks, boardwalks, abandoned vessels, pilings, household items, trees, accumulated sand and many other materials from coastal and tidal waterways from Bergen County to Cape May and up the Delaware Bay to the Delaware Memorial Bridge in Salem County. The affected waters of the State have been divided into 11 zones (map: www.nj.gov/dep/special/hurricane-sandy/docs/waterway-debris-mgt-zones.pdf), and each contractor has been assigned to zones for debris removal. The State also hired a Project Manager to ensure that the debris removal work is on schedule, in compliance with laws and consistent with FEMA reimbursement requirements. The State is seeking Public Assistance Grants from FEMA to fund the waterway debris removal project.

WILL THERE BE A BOATING SEASON AT THE JERSEY SHORE AND ALONG THE COAST THIS SUMMER?

Of course we're going to have a boating season—this is New Jersey! Sandy was devastating, but the State is cleaning up our waterways. We're going to have a great shore season; you just need to be a little more careful than before Sandy. Governor Christie is committed to ensuring that coastal communities are open for tourism and recreation this summer. The State is removing debris and sand from its waterways throughout coastal New Jersey and our storm-impacted bays. Cleanup will likely continue into the fall. Not all waterway debris has been identified, and identified debris can shift around. Superstorm Sandy was extremely destructive and you may encounter hazards in the water, so use caution.

HOW WILL I KNOW WHERE IT IS SAFE TO TRAVEL ON THE WATER?

Waterway debris includes cars, buildings, docks, boardwalks, sunken or abandoned vessels, furniture, accumulated sand and many other materials from coastal and tidal waterways. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, New Jersey Department of Transportation, Marine Services Bureau of the New Jersey State Police, U.S. Coast Guard, Coast Guard Auxiliary and municipalities are working together to assess boating safety as cleanup progresses. Boaters should avoid any area marked as dangerous and be aware that there may be unmarked debris. Navigational and public safety announcements will be made as needed throughout the boating season.

WHAT SHOULD BOATERS BE AWARE OF?

Be aware of potential changes in conditions in our waterways since Sandy:

- Existing navigation charts and GPS data may not reflect actual conditions.
- Shifted channels, new shoals, altered bottom contours and changes in waterway depths.
- Floating or submerged debris and vegetation.

ARE THERE AREAS WHERE BOATERS SHOULD BE PARTICULARLY CAUTIOUS?

Boaters of all kinds—recreational, commercial, fishing, kayaks, canoes, sail boats and personal water crafts—should be careful when navigating through any of our waterways. This is particularly true of the bays behind our barrier islands, the bays in the northern and southern parts of the state that were impacted by Sandy (Delaware Bay, Raritan Bay, Newark Bay and Southern New York Bay), near coastal waterways and in shallower waterways. Check the latest “Local Notice to Mariners” information for New Jersey at www.navcen.uscg.gov.

Until we have completed the assessment of our waterways, we advise boaters:

- Stay in the navigation channels or deeper water.
- Proceed at lower speeds and use a lookout, as if piloting in uncharted waters.
- If you see an area marked to stay away from, stay away from it. Keep your eyes open for debris that might be out there but isn't marked.
- Stay clear of debris removal and dredging operations.
- Report any sightings of unmarked debris in the water or shoaling to **1-877-WARN-DEP**.
- Always wear a life jacket.

WILL IT BE SAFE TO USE PERSONAL WATER CRAFT IN THE BACK BAYS THIS SUMMER?

We advise operators of any small water craft, especially personal water craft that can access shallow areas, to be especially cautious. If possible stay in the State navigational channels. If you must travel outside these deeper areas, travel at lower speeds and be on the lookout for submerged debris.

HOW IS WATERWAY DEBRIS REMOVAL BEING PRIORITIZED?

Waterway debris includes cars, buildings, docks, boardwalks, abandoned vessels, pilings, household items, trees, accumulated sand and many other materials. Waterway debris removal began with floating and partially submerged debris. Contractors will continue to remove submerged debris from our State navigation channels and marinas, and from heavily impacted areas of our bays and streams. Removal of debris from other areas will follow.

WILL THERE BE A POSTED SCHEDULE OF DEBRIS REMOVAL ACTIVITIES SO WE KNOW WHAT AREAS TO AVOID WHEN BOATING?

For more information and updates on waterway debris removal, visit www.nj.gov/dep/special/hurricane-sandy/wwdebris.htm.

We also will be sending out progress updates through various boater groups and organizations as well as to local governments.

WHERE CAN BOATERS FIND INFORMATION ABOUT DEBRIS AREAS OR SAFE AREAS TO TRAVEL ON THE WATER?

Boaters can access Local Notices to Mariners (LNMs) for New Jersey at www.navcen.uscg.gov/?pageName=InmMain.

If you are interested in receiving email notifications of New Jersey LNMs, you can register at www.navcen.uscg.gov/leaveSite.php?http://cgls.uscg.mil/mailman/listinfo/fifth-cg-dlnm.

WHERE CAN BOATERS REPORT SIGHTINGS OF DEBRIS?

Boaters should call **1-877-WARN DEP** if they observe debris or shoaling while traveling on state waters.

Oil or chemicals in the water should be reported to the U.S. Coast Guard's National Response Center (NRC) at **800-424-8802**. Sources of such pollution may include the following debris that resulted from Superstorm Sandy.

- Sunken vessels with fuel still on board
- Floating or beached tanks and drums displaced by high tides
- Containers of household or commercial cleaners or chemicals washed into back bays and onto beaches
- Other debris that could contain oil or chemicals

