

## **Impact of Power Washing Activities at Marinas and Boatyards**

Many marinas and boatyards in the UK that power wash boat hulls on site have little or no control measures in place to limit the discharge of pollutants resulting from their activities from flowing back in to inland and coastal waters or in to groundwater. These effluents can include traces of oil, copper oxide, paint pigments and other harmful substances that are mechanically and chemically displaced from the hull of a boat during the washing process. The Environment Agency and our regional water companies have a statutory responsibility to enforce controls on any business activity that produces wastewater, known as “trade effluent”. Failure to register the discharge of trade effluent, or to comply with restrictions put in place, is an offence and can result in significant fines to your business.

Commercial operators should also be aware of the European Water Framework Directive that was signed into law by all European Union countries in the year 2000. The Directive sets an initial timeframe for implementation of water improvement frameworks, which must be operational by the end of 2012, with the stringent objectives being achieved by the end of 2015. This legislation is shining the spotlight on many businesses that have an impact on our coastal and inland waterways and the marine leisure industry needs to be ahead of the curve to avoid uncosted and unplanned disruption resulting from statutory enforcement.

Another growing concern within the industry is the spread of non-native species to new water courses. Boats that spend periods away from their home marina, or visiting craft may be contaminated with aquatic life that could cause damage to the local environment if they are released into a virgin area through pressure washing of hulls. The resulting colonies can destroy local aquatic life and upset the sensitive ecosystem balance. Statutory Authorities are looking to enforce controls on the spread of non-native species and wash-down activities that can dislodge organisms from the hull and return them to non-native waters are increasingly of concern.

The problem encountered by the marine leisure industry at present is that solutions to control and limit pollution resulting from wash-down activities at marinas and boatyards is expensive and often requires significant groundworks, settlement tanks and filtration processes. These treatment facilities are often beyond the financial grasp of marine businesses. There have been attempts within the industry to develop more affordable solutions with varying levels of success. Many of the current proposals present operational difficulties and would be unlikely to meet the stringent water discharge requirements of current and forthcoming UK Legislation. Up until now, statutory enforcement of current Legislation within the marine leisure industry has been limited, as the market has failed to produce an affordable and effective solution that is easily implemented.

Marinas and boatyards will also be aware of the value of water to their business. Not only is much of the UK experiencing a water shortage, but the metered cost of water continues to rise and is likely to rise further as water becomes an increasingly valuable resource.

We all have a responsibility to minimise the impact of our commercial activities on the environment and the implementation of the final stages of the European Water Framework Directive, as well as increasingly stringent enforcement of UK legislation by water companies and The Environment Agency will require all marina and boatyard businesses to act to address this ongoing industry problem.

## **Industry Collaboration**

A commercial collaboration of industry leaders has been formed to develop an affordable and effective solution to marina wash-down activities. The solution branded FiltaBund provides a multi-stage treatment process incorporating innovative geotextile particle and oil separation technology, gravity separation, as well as chemical adsorption through activated carbon and limestone media followed by a final sand filtration stage. The collaboration's objective is to develop a compact and semi portable system that requires little or no

groundworks, that is cost effective, minimises water usage, achieves treatment levels acceptable to the UK Statutory Authorities and helps to control and contain the spread of non-native species to new water courses. The system also needs to accommodate all methods of lifting and transporting boats. This challenging task is near completion and a functioning prototype and demonstration facility is currently in operation at Tollesbury Marina on the Essex Coast.

Visit [www.FiltaBund.co.uk](http://www.FiltaBund.co.uk) for further information and for contact details, or to arrange a viewing of the facility located at Tollesbury Marina.

Authored by:

Nathan Hewitt CEng, BEng (Hons) MIFireE- FiltaBund Managing Director

Collaboration Members:

FiltaBund- [www.filtabund.co.uk](http://www.filtabund.co.uk)

Permavoid- [www.permavoid.co.uk](http://www.permavoid.co.uk)

SEL Environmental Limited- [www.selenvironmental.com](http://www.selenvironmental.com)

The Environmental Protection Group Ltd- [www.epg-ltd.co.uk](http://www.epg-ltd.co.uk)

Professor Alan Newman, Coventry University

Tollesbury Marina- [www.tollesbury-marina.co.uk](http://www.tollesbury-marina.co.uk)