



Abandoned & Derelict Vessel Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Who do I contact in case of emergency?

For emergency situations, **please contact 911 and the U.S. Coast Guard** at 206-217-6001 or Channel 16 VHF-FM.

Where can I report derelict, abandoned or at-risk vessels?

Please report any vessels of concern using WA Department of Natural Resources' [Derelict & Abandoned Reporting Tool \(DART\)](#). You can also report via [Kitsap1](#) at +1 (360) 337-5777.

Who responds to oil spills?

The U.S. Coast Guard and WA Department of Ecology respond to reports of oil spills. Spills of oil or other hazardous materials must be reported.

To report an oil spill call:

U.S. National Response Center
800-424-8802

What is the difference between abandoned and derelict?

An **abandoned vessel** is a boat that has been left in the same spot or general area (within five miles) without permission for over 30 days in a row or more than 90 days in any 365-day period. The boat is considered abandoned if the owner is either unknown or unreachable or known but refuses to take responsibility for it.

A **derelict vessel** is a boat whose owner is known and in control of it, but the boat has been left in public waters or on public land without following the rules, left on private property without permission, or left for seven consecutive days and is either sinking (or at risk of sinking), blocking a waterway, or posing a danger to people or property.

Why are abandoned and derelict boats bad?

Abandoned and derelict vessels pose significant problems, including environmental hazards, threats to human health and safety, navigation risks, economic burdens, and legal liabilities. These vessels often contain hazardous substances such as oil, fuel, and other pollutants that can leak, harming marine ecosystems and water quality. Dragging anchors/chains and grounding or sunken vessels can damage eelgrass, kelp, and other marine vegetation and habitats such as forage fish spawning beds. Additionally, they obstruct waterways, potentially drifting into shipping lanes and navigation routes, increasing the risk of accidents.

How is vessel removal prioritized?

Due to limited funding and capacity, vessel removals are prioritized based on threats to human health and safety, navigation hazards, and environmental impact, ensuring the most at-risk vessels are removed.

Additional information about vessel prioritization is available here: [Derelict Vessel Inventory and Funding Page](#)

How is abandoned and derelict vessel removal funded?

Vessel owners are legally responsible for costs associated with removal of derelict, abandoned, and sunken vessels.

When public funds are used to remove vessels, the Authorized Public Entities (APE) must pursue payment from the vessel owner.

Removal of abandoned and derelict vessels in WA by APEs is funded primarily through the Derelict Vessel Removal Account (DVRA) managed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Limited funds are allocated every two years, with priority given to vessels posing the greatest environmental, safety, and navigation threats. Public moorage facilities may request DVRA reimbursement after removing abandoned vessels, while private facilities must contract with an APE to access funds. If a vessel has salvage value, proceeds help offset costs, with any surplus returning to the DVRA.

State and federal grant funds are sometimes used to fund operating costs for APEs or to cover the initial cost of vessel removal, prior to reimbursement from the vessel owner or DVRA. Development of the Kitsap County Derelict Vessel Removal Program was funded with a National Estuary Program grant through the Environmental Protection Agency, distributed by the WA Habitat Strategic Initiative Leads (WDFW and DNR).

How is vessel removal prioritized?

Vessel owners are legally responsible for removing their vessels and covering all removal and disposal costs.

On public tidelands: Authorized public entities (APEs) --such as the Department of Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife, port districts, and local governments-- have the authority to remove and dispose of derelict vessels.

Additional information on how to dispose of an abandoned or derelict vessel for authorized public entities available here:

[How to Dispose of an Abandoned or Derelict Boat - Public](#)

On private tidelands and moorage: If the vessel does not belong to you, contact your local Abandoned and Derelict Vessel Program for assistance with its removal. To remove an abandoned vessel you don't own, you'll need to work with law enforcement to try to locate the last registered owner. If the owner cannot be found, you must follow the Lost and Found Property process outlined in RCW 63.21 to obtain legal custody of the vessel. Additionally, you may be required to complete a Junk Vehicle Affidavit through your county.

Additional information on how to dispose of an abandoned or derelict vessel for private entities available here:

[How to Dispose of an Abandoned or Derelict Boat - Private](#)

Is financial assistance available?

Vessel owners looking to dispose of their vessel may qualify to surrender it at no cost through the WA Department of Natural Resources' Vessel Turn-In Program (VTIP).

Additional information on DNR's VTIP:

[About the Vessel Turn-In Program](#)

[VTIP Eligibility](#)

[VTIP Application](#)

Can I remove an abandoned vessel I do not own?

To remove an abandoned vessel you do not own, you will need to contact law enforcement to attempt to track down the owner. If the last registered owner is not found, you must follow the Lost and Found Property process in RCW 63.21 to gain legal custody of the vessel and you may need to complete a Junk Vehicle Affidavit through your county.

A Hydraulic Project Approval ([HPA Permit](#)) is required through WDFW to remove sunken or beached vessels.

Vessels typically cannot be cut up on the beach. Deconstructing a vessel requires a [Boatyard General Permit](#).

More information here:

[How to Dispose of an Abandoned or Derelict Boat - Private](#)

Can I remove an abandoned vessel I do not own?

Vessel owners are legally responsible for removing their vessels and covering all removal and disposal costs.

The jurisdiction that owns the property or right of way (e.g. county, city, state) can also remove dumped vessels from public property and rights of way. These vessels are not eligible for reimbursement from the Derelict Vessel Removal Account (DVRA).

Why does it look like nothing is happening to all these abandoned and derelict vessels in Kitsap?

It can be frustrating to see dozens of abandoned and derelict vessels on our Puget Sound shoreline, and sometimes it may feel like nothing is happening.

Although the WA Department of Natural Resources and other authorized public entities (APEs) are removing vessels, more vessels are abandoned every day. Prevention through education and tools such as the Vessel Turn-In Program (VTIP), are critical to helping us keep up with this problem. Please help us share information to prevent vessels from becoming abandoned and derelict.

Due to limited funding and capacity, vessel removals are prioritized based on threats to human health and safety, navigation hazards, and environmental impact, ensuring the most at-risk vessels are removed first.

Additional information about vessel prioritization is available here: [Derelict Vessel Inventory and Funding](#)

Who has authority to remove abandoned and derelict vessels?

Vessel owners, including property owners who obtain legal custody to a vessel following the process in [RCW 63.21](#), have the authority to remove abandoned and/or derelict vessels if permits are obtained.

Authorized public entities also have the authority to remove abandoned and derelict vessels.

According to [RCW 79.100](#), an "Authorized public entity" includes any of the following: The Department of Natural Resources; the Department of Fish and Wildlife; the Parks and Recreation Commission; a metropolitan park district; a port district; and any city, town, or county with ownership, management, or jurisdiction over the aquatic lands where an abandoned or derelict vessel is located.

Authorized public entities, including counties, state agencies, and cities, are not required to remove abandoned/derelict vessels, although they have the authority to do so.

To learn more about our program, access resources, or report derelict or abandoned vessels, please visit

our website or scan the QR code:

bit.ly/KitsapADV

