



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES



**DERELICT VESSEL
REMOVAL PROGRAM**

GUIDELINES

(JUNE 2026)

**GL 09-27.1 DERELICT VESSEL REMOVAL PROGRAM (DVRP) GUIDELINES FOR
PROGRAM STAFF AND AUTHORIZED PUBLIC ENTITIES****Contents**

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This document is a reference guideline for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Derelict Vessel Removal Program (DVRP) and other Authorized Public Entities (APE) using their authority under Chapter 79.100 Revised Code of Washington (RCW) to remove derelict or abandoned vessels. Abandoned and derelict vessels cause public nuisances and safety hazards. RCW 79.100 (Derelict Vessels) provides APEs with tools and funding for managing these vessels. The Derelict Vessel Removal Program is administered by DNR to implement this statute. The Derelict Vessel statute is not intended to be the only remedy available to an APE. It is not intended to limit or constrain the ability and authority of an APE to enact and enforce ordinances or other regulations relating to derelict and abandoned vessels, or to take any actions authorized by federal or state law in responding to derelict or abandoned vessels.

WHO IS CONSIDERED AN AUTHORIZED PUBLIC ENTITY UNDER CHAPTER 79.100 RCW?

- Washington State Department of Natural Resources
- Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission
- Port Districts
- Metropolitan Park Districts
- Town, City, or County Governments with ownership, management or jurisdiction over the aquatic lands

IMPLEMENTATION

This guideline supersedes all other guidance published regarding the authorities granted in statute to APEs and the DVRP.

Division and assistant division managers will ensure that all employees are aware of the Guidelines. DNR will maintain the Guidelines on file in locally maintained Policy Manuals. The Office of Policy Development and Management Systems, or comparable executive office, will ensure that Guidelines and a current index are available on the DNR SharePoint site.

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If a vessel is in immediate danger of sinking, breaking up or blocking navigational channels and the owner of the vessel cannot be located or is unwilling or unable to assume immediate responsibility for the vessel, any APE including their police, sheriff, fire department, shoreline enforcement, etc. may tow, beach or otherwise take temporary possession of the vessel (RCW 79.100.040(3)).

For pollution events or emergencies involving immediate threats to human health or safety, call 911 and/or the following agencies:

MARINE EMERGENCIES

For all marine emergencies in Puget Sound and in the Pacific Ocean north of Grays Harbor (N 47°-00'), staff should notify:

- **USCG Sector Puget Sound 24Hour Emergency Response at (206) 217-6001, or**

For marine emergencies in the Pacific Ocean south of Grays Harbor and on the Columbia, Snake and Salmon Rivers, staff should notify:

- **USCG Sector Columbia River Command Center (24-hour) at (833) 769-8724**

REPORTING AN OIL SPILL OR SPILL OF OTHER HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

All spills or releases of oil or other hazardous substances on water or land shall be reported to:

- **U.S. National Response Center at (800) 424-8802**
- **Washington State Department of Ecology 24-hour Spill Response Hotline at (800) 258-5990**

DNR's Derelict Vessel Removal Program is not a 24-hour response operation. To report an abandoned or derelict vessel please contact the program: 1111 Washington St SE, MS 47027

Olympia WA 98504-7027

(360) 902-2628

dvrp@dnr.wa.gov or www.dnr.wa.gov/vessel-reporting

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1. BACKGROUND**WHAT IS THE DERELICT VESSEL REMOVAL PROGRAM (DVRP)?**

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Derelict Vessel Removal Program (DVRP) began in 2002. Established in Chapter 79.100 Revised Code of Washington (RCW), the program facilitates the removal and the disposal of abandoned or derelict vessels across the state. The program provides guidance and funding to other Authorized Public Entities (defined in Section 79.100.010 RCW), and conducts DNR-led removals.

The DVRP web page provides more information on the program and has links to forms and applications. This site also provides information on the Derelict Vessel Removal Program account balance, notices, and postings. The DVRP regularly updates the website at: <https://www.dnr.wa.gov/derelict-vessels>

1.1 Basic Definitions from RCW 79.100.010

“Abandoned vessel” means a vessel that has been left, moored, or anchored in the same area without the express consent, or contrary to the rules of, the owner, manager, or lessee of the aquatic lands below or on which the vessel is located for either a period of more than 30 consecutive days or for more than a total of 90 days in any 365-day period, and the vessel's owner is: (a) Not known or cannot be located; or (b) known and located but is unwilling to take control of the vessel. For the purposes of this subsection (1) only, "in the same area" means within a radius of five miles of any location where the vessel was previously moored or anchored on aquatic lands.

“Derelict vessel” means a vessel that:

- a. Has been moored, anchored, or otherwise left in the waters of the state or on public property contrary to [RCW 79.02.300](https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=79.02.300)¹ or rules adopted by an Authorized Public Entity;
- b. Has been left on private property without authorization of the owner;
- c. Has been left for a period of seven consecutive days, and:
 - (i) Is sunk or in danger of sinking;
 - (ii) Is obstructing a waterway; or
 - (iii) Is endangering life or property; or

¹ <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=79.02.300>

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- d. Has been in violation of state registration requirements under RCW 88.02.550 for at least two full annual registration periods and is prioritized for removal by the department or by an Authorized Public Entity.

2. OVERVIEW – When a Vessel Has Been Reported.**2.1 If a vessel is reported as abandoned or derelict, gather as much information as possible on the vessel and its situation:**

- a. Location - waterbody, property ownership, nearest street address, accessibility
- b. Owner information: purported owner information and registered/documented owner information
- c. Vessel description: size, color, name, identification numbers, condition (beached, floating, sunk, moored, anchored)
- d. Is there a visible sheen in the water or potential for a spill? If yes, verify Ecology and USCG have been contacted and follow steps for an Emergency if necessary.
- e. Is the vessel a tribal fishing vessel? If yes, contact the tribal fisheries office in addition to the owner to see if they will have an interest in the vessel if the owner doesn't respond.

HELPFUL HINT - Vessels newer than 1976 should have a Hull Identification Number on the transom. This number can be used to identify ownership. The State registration sticker number can also be used to identify ownership.

2.2 Contact the owner:

- a. If the owner is known and CAN be located make contact by phone, mail, or in person as necessitated by the situation. If an immediate response is needed, you may be able to ask local police or sheriff's department to send an officer to the person's address.
- b. Is owner taking responsibility for the vessel?
 - 1. Yes: monitor the situation until the vessel is removed or the owner is no longer addressing the situation responsibly.
 - 2. No: report the vessel to DNR's DVRP via phone call 360-902-2628 or email dvrp@dnr.wa.gov. The Vessel of Concern Reporting Form or the Derelict & Abandoned Vessel Reporting App, DART, located on the DVRP website may be used and assist in deciding whether you will proceed to Custody Process (see Section 4).
 - 3. If the vessel is in immediate danger of sinking, breaking up, blocking navigation or posing an imminent threat to human health and safety, proceed to Emergency Removal (see Section 3).

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- c. If the owner is NOT known or cannot be located:
 - 1. Report the vessel to DNR's Derelict Vessel Removal Program using the Vessel of Concern Reporting Form or the Derelict & Abandoned Vessel Reporting App, [DART](#), located on the DVRP website and decide whether you will proceed to Custody Process (see Section 4).
 - 2. If the vessel is in immediate danger of sinking, breaking up, blocking navigation or posing an imminent threat to human health and safety proceed to Emergency Removal (see Section 3).

3. EMERGENCY REMOVALS under RCW 79.100.040(3)**3.1 Temporary Possession: Authority**

If a vessel is in immediate danger of sinking, breaking up, or blocking navigational channels, or poses an imminent threat to human health or safety, including a threat of environmental contamination, and the owner of the vessel cannot be located or is unwilling or unable to assume immediate responsibility for the vessel, any APE may tow, beach, or otherwise take temporary possession of the vessel.

Before taking temporary possession of the vessel, the authorized public entity must make reasonable attempts to consult with the Department of Natural Resources or the United States Coast Guard to ensure that other remedies are not available.

The basis for taking temporary possession of the vessel must be set out in writing by the APE within seven days of taking action and be submitted to the owner, if known, as soon thereafter as is reasonable.

If the APE has not already provided the required notice to the owner, immediately after taking possession of the vessel, the APE must initiate the notice provisions in subsection (1) of RCW 79.100.040 before using or disposing of the vessel as authorized in RCW 79.100.050. If the vessel condition was an emergency and the APE took temporary possession, use the notification templates for an emergency on DNR's website.

For permitting considerations see section 5.2

3.2 Emergency Contracting

- a. **Local agencies:** Local agencies should follow their own contracting requirements. APEs that are part of the Washington State Department of Enterprise Services (DES) purchasing network may also use the state's

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emergency contract available at [DES Contract Search](#)² under the Contract Title of “Emergency Response to Hazardous Materials” or “Vessel Removal, Disposal, or Salvage Services for Derelict Vessels”.

HELPFUL HINT: Under 79.100.030 (2) DNR may at its discretion assume the APE’s authority for a particular vessel after being requested to do so.

b. **State agencies:**

1. Can work with their own staff or other agency staff or through an Interagency Agreement.
2. If a Statewide Contract exists for the service you need, you must use it regardless of the dollar value of the work unless:
3. If a Statewide Contractor is not available for your emergency (either the contract does not exist or the contractor is busy), you may call a non-Statewide Contractor for the work.
4. Emergency work is exempt from the requirement for competitive bidding. However, the emergency must be reported to DES within 10 days of the occurrence.
5. If the vessel is larger than 100’ or if the removal is occurring close to the end of the financial biennium, (June 30 on odd years), check the [Derelict Vessel Removal Account's \(DVRA\) available funding](#)³ for reimbursement potential.
6. Once the vessel is secured, hauled out, or the emergency has otherwise been resolved, send the owner an Emergency Custody notification letter within 7 days. (Templates are available from DVRP’s website).

3.3 HELPFUL HINT: A list of current Ecology-permitted boatyards is available on the web page: Permitting and Reporting Information System ([Paris](#)) - [Permit Search](#)⁴. In the Permit Type drop-down box, select “Vessel Deconstruction GP.”

² <https://apps.des.wa.gov/DESContracts/>

³ <https://dnr.wa.gov/aquatics/recovering-derelict-vessels/derelict-vessel-inventory-and-funding/>

⁴ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/paris/PermitSearch.aspx/>

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4. CUSTODY PROCESS - (Contact DNR for most recent Custody Templates)**4.1 Reporting Form**

Send DNR a [Vessel of Concern Reporting Form](#)⁵ to get a DVRP number assigned to the vessel and added to the database by emailing dvrp@dnr.wa.gov or calling (360) 902-2628.

4.2 Custody Process

Follow the custody notice process described in RCW 79.100.040. Templates are available on [DNR's website, under Recovering Derelict Vessels](#). APEs not using DNR's forms should ensure that their custody notice meets the minimum content requirements laid out in the statute. The vessel owner may waive their right to the custody process, but this must be done in writing. APEs using their own waiver form should notify DNR. The custody notice requirements are:

- a. Post Custody Notice on the vessel for 15 days.
- b. Mail a custody letter, at least ten days prior to taking custody, to the last registered/documented owner(s), and lien holder(s) or secured interests on record.

HELPFUL HINT: If the vessel is registered with the DOL, information can be obtained from them or through local law enforcement. If the vessel is a documented vessel, order an Abstract of Title from the U. S. Coast Guard's National Vessel Documentation Center ([NVDC](#)⁶) and send custody letters to any listed lien holders.

- c. It is recommended, but not legally required, to also send the notice to any purported owners such as a previous owner that did not report a sale. Note that recreational vessels may be registered with the state and documented/titled with the U. S. Coast Guard—the DOL registration will state “no title issued” in those cases.
- d. Post Custody Notice to DNR's website. For agencies other than DNR this can be done by sending the notice to dvrp@dnr.wa.gov and requesting the website post. Verify that the notice was actually posted at [Notices of Intent](#)⁷
- e. If there is a report of sale on the DOL registration search, send a copy of the custody letter to the purchaser.

⁵ https://dnr.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2025-03/aqr_dv_vessels_concern_reporting_form_2023.pdf

⁶ <http://www.uscg.mil/nvdc/>

⁷ <https://dnr.wa.gov/aquatics/recovering-derelict-vessels/notices-intent/>

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4.3 Non-Emergency Custody Notices

For non-emergency vessel custody templates, be sure to select whether the “abandoned” or “derelict” definition is most appropriate. If the status is not clear, leave it as “abandoned or derelict”. The custody notices should all be substantially the same. If the custody date falls on a weekend or holiday, it is most legally conservative to push the date to the next business day.

4.4 Physical Possession

It is recommended that the APE take physical possession of the vessel on the custody date identified in the notice to the owner or as soon as possible thereafter to prevent legal confusion and to keep the condition of the vessel from deteriorating unless the APE has already taken temporary possession. Moving a floating vessel to a secure storage area, marina, or haul-out facility after taking custody while final arrangements are made for the vessel’s disposition will also allow better access to the vessel and assessment of its condition. Alternately, physical possession could include posting a notice on the vessel that custody has been obtained.

4.5 Special considerations: Vessels and Tribes

If the vessel is registered with a Tribe (indicated by a WN number with three numbers and three letters designating which tribe the vessel is registered with) and is *not* in a Tribal area, DNR can take action under the derelict vessel statutes, but the Tribal Fisheries office and/or Tribal law enforcement should be contacted to see if they want to play an active role in the action taken. This is particularly important if the vessel is a fishing vessel. Each Tribe keeps track of its own vessel registration and therefore ownership information is not available from the Department of Licensing (DOL). Instead this information will need to be obtained from the appropriate Tribal office. Tribal vessels display a registration decal that looks the same as a DOL decal but the decals are given to the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission for distribution to the Tribes.

If the vessel is owned by a non-tribal entity but is located in a Tribal area, DNR may have jurisdiction to take action against the vessel if it meets the definition of ‘abandoned’ or the portion of the ‘derelict’ definition under RCW 79.100.010(5)(b) or (c). DNR will need to get the Tribe’s permission. An APE should not attempt to remove the vessel.

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Considerations other than taking custody of the vessel may include, but are not limited to:

- Ticketing for anchorage violations or a trespass action under WAC 332-30-127;
- A “pre-custody” warning letter;
- Do you have the funding to remove the vessel and is it a priority for your agency;
- Verify that reimbursement funding is available by contacting DNR’s Derelict Vessel Removal Program Manager at (360) 902-2628 or dvrp@dnr.wa.gov.

5. REMOVAL AND DISPOSAL

After taking custody of a vessel the APE may use or dispose of the vessel in any appropriate and environmentally sound manner without further notice to any owners but must give preference to uses that derive some monetary benefit from the vessel, either in whole or in scrap. If no value can be derived from the vessel, the APE must give preference to the least costly, environmentally sound, reasonable disposal option. Any disposal operations must be consistent with the state solid waste disposal provisions provided for in chapter 70A.205 RCW.

Once an APE has taken custody the actions needed for removal of the vessel depend on the vessel’s location and condition but will generally include moving the vessel to a temporary holding location, assessing the condition of the vessel, and arranging for the sale or disposal of the vessel, including any permits needed. If the vessel is not going to get appreciably worse in its current location, it may be most cost-effective to do the assessment and make arrangements for disposal where it is. While a vessel can be disposed of at any time after the custody date, if an appeal is anticipated, it is best to hold onto the vessel until the end of the appeal period or until a pending appeal is completed. A vessel owner has thirty days after custody is reached to appeal the custody process with the Pollution Control and Hearings Board (PCHB) and serve a notice to the APE and the PCHB. If an appeal is filed, it is recommended to store the vessel until the appeal is resolved.

5.1 Removal Considerations

- Keep in mind height, weight, length, beam (breadth), draft (amount of vessel below the waterline) and condition of vessel when selecting where to take it. Haul-out or storage facilities and/or salvage companies must have capacity to address all of those elements.
- Small vessels with no keel can sit on the ground in a storage yard.

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- Sailboats should be stored on boat stands, unless the sailboat is very small and has a fully retractable keel or is likely to be demolished in place.
- When towing tall vessels to a facility, check the route for bridges that don't open, Government Lock closures, etc.
- Don't store deep draft vessels in shallow water (they may roll over at low tide and flood on the high tide).
- If the vessel is to be tied to a fixed pier (non-floating dock), make sure the vessel can't slide under the pier at low tide and be caught under the dock when the tide comes in. Make sure mooring lines can accommodate predicted tides (particularly high-highs and low-lows, which may happen at night when no one is around).
- If the vessel is less than 40' long, it may be taken to a dry storage location as long as it is not too wide or too tall (>14'9" combined height) to go on the roadways.
- If the vessel is floating soundly, leaving it at a marina tied to a location with power for pumping if needed or re-anchored in the bay could be the best option until disposition.
- Keels on sailboats and some other vessels (e.g., Ex-USCG rescue vessels) can be made of many different materials including concrete, lead, steel and in rare cases, bronze. Research on the make and model of the vessel to determine if the keel can be recycled.

5.2 Permitting Considerations

- Any fees or other costs associated with obtaining permits may be eligible for reimbursement from the DVRA.
- Towing vessels over a long distance, moving a derelict or salvaged vessel, or towing a vessel of unusual proportion may require Dead Ship Tow plans to be filed with the USCG Sector Puget Sound Waterways Management Division (DH13-PF-SectorPSWWM@uscg.mil) at least five (5) days in advance of the desired dead ship tow. Please consult with the USCG, especially for vessels fifty feet in length or more, or if they are in a derelict or salvaged state, or questionable integrity.
- Several permits may be required for removal of vessels that have been sunk in a location for a long time, including, but not limited to, a U. S. Army Corps permit (for dredge or fill), a Hydraulic Project Approval ([HPA](#)⁸), and an

⁸ <https://wdfw.wa.gov/licenses/environmental/hpa/>

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Ecology water quality permit. For more information, the [Office of Innovation and Regulatory Assistance](#)⁹ can help determine what permits may be necessary.

- If asbestos abatement is required prior to deconstruction, there are also clean air permits that will be required. Check the Department of Ecology's website to determine which Clean Air Agency oversees the area where the work is being completed in and what their requirements are at [Clean air agencies - Washington State Department of Ecology](#).¹⁰
- As per the Clean Water Act, vessels cannot be cut up in the water, on a barge, on a dry-dock, or at unpermitted sites on the upland unless that is the only way they can be removed. Review the Department of Ecology's Vessel Deconstruction General Permit website to see if a permit is required. [Vessel deconstruction general permit - Washington State Department of Ecology](#)¹¹ However, certain vessel emergency situations negate the need for this permit. Contact the Department of Ecology to verify.
- If the vessel is hard aground, sunk, or beached, an [HPA](#) may be required, particularly if the vessel will need to be cut up in place to remove it. It is the responsibility of the APE conducting the removal operation to ensure the HPA requirements of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife are met. WDFW biologists can issue an emergency HPA over the phone if needed. Biologist contacts can be found at this site [Areas of Responsibilities Map](#)¹² or by phoning (360) 902-2534. During non-business hours, the Emergency HPA Hotline is available at: (360) 902-2537.

5.3 Disposal

If a vessel is in poor condition, dispose of it to keep it from becoming a future problem. *See also Section 3.3, Emergency Contracting.*

The options for disposal are to get the boat whole to a landfill or hire a company to cut the vessel up. Potentially polluting items like paint, lead, PCBs, universal waste, refrigerant, solvents, household hazardous waste, and fuels need to be addressed prior to removal. APEs must test for asbestos or hire a company to test for asbestos prior to disposal of vessels that may contain it per [WAC 296-62-07712](#)¹³.

⁹ http://www.oria.wa.gov/site/alias_oria/368/default.aspx

¹⁰ <https://ecology.wa.gov/about-us/accountability-transparency/partnerships-committees/clean-air-agencies/>

¹¹ <https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/permits-certifications/vessel-deconstruction-general-permit/>

¹² <https://wdfw.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=4efa343ae87349298f7647d36ab7f919>

¹³ <https://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=296-62-07712/>

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HELPFUL HINT: Asbestos was used in former commercial and military vessels and some recreational vessels, particularly of models produced from 1979 or earlier, and is most often found in sealants, tiling, and exhaust wraps.

- a. Local agencies should follow their internal procedures for contract procurement. Local agencies that are part of the DES purchasing network may utilize existing state contracts.
- b. APEs can use their own staff for disposals or enter into Interagency Agreements for disposal. For state agencies, if a statewide contract exists for the services you need, it must be used unless verifiable documentation can be provided for not using the statewide contract (i.e. Cost, location, etc.). If a statewide contract does not exist or is not used, contracts under the direct buy limit ([\\$40,000 as of the date of this document](#)) can be procured. If the cost of removal is over \$40,000 the state agency must go out to bid for services.
- c. The Department of Enterprise Services has several Washington State contracts that may facilitate removal or disposal of vessels. Certain services are covered by mandatory-use state contracts (this is optional for local governments, but mandatory for state agencies). Details on these and other contracts are available at [DES Contract Search](#) ¹⁴

Relevant contracts include:

- VESSEL REMOVAL, DISPOSAL, OR SALVAGE SERVICES FOR DERELICT VESSELS: for the salvage, removal and disposal of derelict vessels in public owned waters and on public owned property. There are five categories of vessel type/size to choose from. This Contract was developed in conjunction with the Department of Natural Resources Derelict Vessel Removal Program (DVRP).
- DANGEROUS WASTE HANDLING AND DISPOSAL SERVICES: for collecting, packaging, removing, transporting, and disposing of hazardous wastes as regulated under Washington State Dangerous Waste Regulations, Chapter 173, and as otherwise defined herein.
- ANALYTICAL LABORATORY SERVICES: for General Chemistry, Metals, Organics, Bioassay, Microbiology, Filtration, Toxicity, Air Toxics, Herbicides & Pesticides, Radiochemistry, and Industrial Hygiene. It provides access to national testing facilities through contractors and subcontractors. Additionally, pricing for expedited testing services are available.
- ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTING SERVICES (EXCL. PROFESSIONAL LICENSE WORK) (Personal Service Contract) list of pre-qualified firms for

¹⁴ <https://apps.des.wa.gov/DESContracts/>

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eligible purchasers to purchase and utilize professional advice and expertise on an as-needed, task or project-oriented basis to supplement staff capabilities relative to the purchaser's needs and projects

5.4 Sale of a Vessel.

If the vessel is in poor condition, **it should not be sold**. If it is in marginal condition, it should not be sold without some sort of process to make sure that the vessel won't be re-abandoned.

- a. Vessels seized under RCW 79.100 do not become the property of the APE during the seizure. Transferring titles into the APE's name is not required. If the APE sells the vessel, the APE can write a letter stating how it acquired the vessel (samples available from DNR), and the new owner can take that letter and the bill of sale to the DOL for a new title. The APE must file [a Vessel Report of Sale form](#)¹⁵ with DOL. For commercial vessels that are documented there is a similar process, but the National Vessel Documentation Center (NVDC) will require more backup documentation, such as proof of compliance with the statute. Transfer of title by operation of state law is provided for in [46 CFR 67.91](#).
- b. If the APE offers the vessel at auction, a minimum bid, a letter of credit, or both may be required to discourage future re-abandonment of the vessel. Local agencies should follow their own internal process for public sales. For state agencies, vessels seized under Chapter 79.100 RCW are not State property and are not required to be sent to surplus through the Department of Enterprise Services [\(DES\) Surplus program](#)¹⁶, but that is a good option. Any APE may send a seized vessel to surplus if it is in good condition. APE staff would write up specifications, provide photos of the vessel (if available), and submit them to DES by emailing surplus@des.wa.gov or by calling 360-407-2270.
- c. Proceeds of Sale: The proceeds derived from the sale of the vessel, or any of its parts, must first be applied to the costs incurred by the APE that performed the removal. If the proceeds exceed the costs incurred by the APE, the remaining money will be applied to any liens registered against the vessel. If the proceeds of the sale exceed the costs incurred by the APE and any liens against the vessel, the remaining money will be deposited into the Derelict Vessel Removal Account (DVRA).

¹⁵ <http://www.dol.wa.gov/vehicleregistration/reportsaleboat.html/>

¹⁶ <https://des.wa.gov/services/dispose-surplus/about-surplus-storage/>

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- d. Sale of vessels over 35' and older than 40 years have special requirements in RCW 79.100.150, RCW 79.100.170, and WAC 332-08-122. These chapters apply when DNR seeks financial reimbursement from any person or entity that DNR determines has incurred secondary liability under RCW 79.100.150 for all reasonable and auditable costs associated with the removal and disposal of derelict or abandoned vessels. The department may pursue secondary liability if the prior owner(s) did not provide the department copies of a vessel inspection disclosure report, as specified in WAC 332-08-123, before transferring ownership of the vessel.

6. REIMBURSEMENT:

Following the removal of a vessel, the APE must attempt to obtain reimbursement from the owner of the vessel. If the owner of the vessel is not known or is unable to pay, up to one hundred (100%) percent of all reasonable and auditable costs associated with the removal of the vessel, may be reimbursed to the APE from existing DVRA funds.

In accordance with RCW 79.100.100(1)(c) funds in the account resulting from transfers from the general fund or from the deposit of funds from the watercraft excise tax as provided for under RCW 82.49.030 must be used to reimburse one hundred percent (100%) of costs and should be prioritized for the removal of large vessels. APEs should check with the DVRP prior to starting a removal project to see if funds are still available from the Watercraft Excise Tax, otherwise reimbursements will be distributed first on priority and then based evenly from percentage of what is left in the DVRA.

6.1 Reimbursable Expenses

- a. Funds from the DVRA shall be used to reimburse APEs up to one hundred percent (100%) of the total reasonable and auditable administrative, removal, disposal, and environmental damage costs of abandoned or derelict vessels when the previous owner is either unknown (after a reasonable search effort) or unable to pay as described in RCW 79.100.100(1).
- b. Reimbursement requests should be submitted within three months of the vessel being removed, unless legal proceedings or other extenuating circumstances prohibit the total cost from being known prior to that.

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c. Administrative Costs

All administrative costs associated with obtaining custody, removing or disposing of the abandoned or derelict vessel are considered eligible for reimbursement. All reimbursement requests require supporting documentation for all costs (see Appendix D). This includes, but is not limited to:

- Actual custody, removal and disposal costs,
- The cost of transporting the vessel to the disposal site,
- The cost of any storage (up to 3 months, unless there are extenuating circumstances) prior to disposal, salvage or sale,
- The cost of in-kind services,
- Use of existing staff or equipment, and
- The value of any volunteers used.

d. Environmental Damage Costs

All costs associated with environmental damages directly or indirectly caused by the abandoned or derelict vessel are eligible for reimbursement from the DVRA. However, the costs eligible for DVRA funds are limited to those costs not reimbursed through other grants or assistance programs.

e. Costs of Removing Hazardous Materials

Costs associated with the removal and disposal of hazardous materials are reimbursable. However, if the vessel poses a substantial pollution threat the APE should consult with the Washington Department of Ecology or if the threat is large enough, the United States Coast Guard to see if they will remove fuel or other potential pollutants.

f. Multiple Authorized Public Entities

For abandoned or derelict vessels located within the jurisdiction of multiple APEs, the APEs can join together and divide the cost of the removal operation amongst themselves.

g. An APE may request to have funds reserved for specific vessels, but the funds will be released if the case is not resolved and a reimbursement application is not received within three months.

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6.2 Reimbursement by Vessel Owner

The owner of an abandoned or derelict vessel is responsible for reimbursing an APE for all reasonable and auditable costs associated with the removal or disposal of the owner's vessel. These costs include, but are not limited to, costs incurred exercising the authority granted in chapter 79.100.030 RCW, all administrative costs incurred by the APE during the procedure as set forth in chapter 79.100.040 RCW, removal and disposal costs, and costs associated with environmental damages directly or indirectly caused by the vessel. Reimbursement for costs may be sought from an owner who is identified subsequent to the vessel's removal and disposal. An APE that has taken temporary possession of a vessel may require that all reasonable and auditable costs associated with the removal of the vessel be paid before the vessel is released to the owner.

6.3 Reimbursement from the Derelict Vessels Removal Account (DVRA)

The APE shall first bill a known owner. Reimbursement may not be made unless the APE has made reasonable efforts to identify and locate the party responsible for the vessel, or any person with secondary liability of the vessel. If the bill is not paid within thirty days, the APE can only then approach the DVRP for reimbursement. The other option is to prove that the owner is insolvent and has no assets to pursue.

Reasonable Search Effort - A documented search effort should be made to identify and locate the owner. Where the APE possessed information regarding the owner's identity or location, but failed to follow up on that information, the APE is not eligible for reimbursement from the DVRA.

6.4 Additional options for Port Moorage Facilities

The derelict vessel funding authorization statute (RCW 79.100.100(d)) refers broadly to RCW 53.08.320, which includes sub-sections that apply to vessels abandoned in a moorage facility.¹⁷ "Moorage facility operator" means any port district, city, town, metropolitan park district, or county which owns and/or operates a moorage facility". Under the port moorage statute, port rules can be developed to address when to move vessels ashore for storage if the vessel is "in the opinion of port personnel a nuisance, if the vessel is in danger of sinking or creating other damage, or is owing port charges."¹⁸ If the owner of a vessel that has been moved ashore is not known or

¹⁷ "Costs associated with removal and disposal of an abandoned or derelict vessel under the authority of RCW 53.08.320 also qualify for reimbursement..."

¹⁸ RCW 53.08.320(2)

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unable to reimburse the moorage facility for the costs of the procedure, the facility may seek reimbursement from the derelict vessel removal account.

DNR prioritizes funding for addressing vessels in the water that have been “abandoned” or have become “derelict” as those terms are defined in RCW 79.100. However, DNR will consider reimbursing port moorage facilities for disposal of vessels moved ashore and abandoned on land. Funding for vessels that fall under Category 6 on the Vessel of Concern Priority scheme (see Appendix A), will be held until the end of biennium and paid with remaining funds.

For Port Moorage Facilities to be eligible for reimbursement they must meet the insurance requirements in RCW 53.08.480. Port moorage facilities are required to be insured and to require their moorage tenants to be insured (except transient moorage). If a port moorage facility does not have insurance or does not require its moorage tenants to have insurance in accordance with RCW 53.08.480, it is not eligible for reimbursement from the DVRA, regardless of the statute used to seize the vessel. A facility’s ineligibility for funding through the DVRA does not diminish its authority to seize vessels under RCW 79.100 or RCW 53.08.

6.5 Funding Requests

The oldest applications of highest priority will be reimbursed first. The estimated fund balance and the estimated funds available for removal will be adjusted and posted quarterly on the [Derelict Vessel Inventory and Funding](#) ¹⁹ web page.

DNR will first reimburse vessels that have pre-approved funding (see Section 6.1(g)), then in order of the vessel of concern priority categories (see Appendix A). Category 6 vessels (those seized under RCW 53.08 and located in a boat storage yard), will be given the lowest priority and reimbursement will be held until the end of the biennium in order to reimburse other applications a shared percentage of what remains in the DVRA.

At the end of each biennium when the DVRA balance approaches exhaustion, the DVRP will hold any approved and unpaid reimbursement applications until the end of the biennium. At the end of the biennium, the remaining funds will be split between the applications on an equal percentage basis. That could mean that the remaining applicants could receive less than 100% of their reimbursement request.

¹⁹ <https://dnr.wa.gov/aquatics/recovering-derelict-vessels/derelict-vessel-inventory-and-funding/>

GL 09-27.1 **DERELICT VESSEL REMOVAL PROGRAM (DVRP) GUIDELINES FOR PROGRAM STAFF AND AUTHORIZED PUBLIC ENTITIES****7. REQUESTING DNR TO ASSUME PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES OF ANOTHER AUTHORIZED PUBLIC ENTITY**

An APE has primary responsibility to remove a derelict or abandoned vessel when the APE is the owner, lessee, or operator of the moorage facility or the aquatic lands where the vessel is located. If the APE is unwilling or unable to exercise its authority, it may request that DNR assume the APE's authority for the vessel.

To request that DNR assume the APE's authority for a vessel, the APE must make the request in writing to DNR. DNR may, at its discretion, assume the APE's authority for a particular vessel after being requested to do so. The criteria DNR will use to determine whether or not it will assume an APE's authority for a vessel include, but are not limited to:

7.1 Threat to State Owned Aquatic Lands

To request that DNR assume the APE's authority for a vessel, the APE needs to show that the vessel poses a threat to State Owned Aquatic Lands.

7.2 Ability of the Primary Authorized Public Entity to Fund the Removal

For a vessel on lands not owned by the state (e.g., privately owned tidelands or county-owned aquatic lands), primary APEs that do not have the financial ability to fund the removal but are willing to partner and/or share costs, may use this as a reason to request DNR take responsibility for the removal of a vessel. Primary APEs with the ability to fund a vessel removal will be required to demonstrate that other conditions exist that would justify DNR assuming responsibility for the removal of a vessel.

7.3 Technical Complexity of the Removal

If the technical complexity of a removal operation exceeds the ability of the primary APE to perform the operation, it may request DNR assume responsibility for the removal. Factors adding to the technical complexity of a removal include, but are not limited to, extensive permitting, sensitive environmental conditions, coordination between multiple entities and agencies, large quantities of hazardous materials, and complex legal considerations.

7.4 Availability of DVRA Funds

DNR will determine if DVRA funds or other funds are available for reimbursement of project costs. In a case where DVRA funds are not available but can be secured through an assurance of future funds, DNR may accept primary responsibility for the removal of the vessel.

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DNR will take into consideration whether a public or private entity owns the aquatic lands where the vessel is located. Ownership will be considered to ensure that DVRA funds and the resources of DNR are committed to providing the maximum benefit possible to the citizens of the state.

8. COLLECTIONS

DNR will attempt to collect debts from the vessel owner in cases where DNR was the lead agency and where DNR reimbursed an APE for a vessel removal. DNR may seek cost recovery directly, in court, or through a collection agency. DVRP staff will follow the collections procedure established by the DNR Financial Management Division. Attempts to collect, including default letters, phone calls, etc., should be well documented in the vessel's file.

9. DOCUMENTING INSPECTIONS FOR LARGER, OLDER VESSELS.

The 2013 Washington State Legislature passed House Bill 1245 into law which required owners of vessels that are older than 40 years and longer than 65' (which was later reduced to 35') to conduct a marine survey of their vessels prior to sale and to provide the surveys to both the prospective buyers and DNR. The law amended RCW 79.100.060 and 79.100.150 of the Derelict Vessels Act. It recognized that larger older vessels pose a higher risk of becoming derelict and threatening Washington State's marine and freshwater environment, public safety, and navigation.

Effective June 11, 2020, the Washington State Legislature passed Second Substitute Senate Bill 6528 into law amending [RCW 79.100.150](https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=79.100.150)²⁰ which lowered the large vessel inspection length requirement from 65' to 35' to capture a larger portion of high-risk vessels. It also added a clarifying state with respect to seaworthiness, "... as defined by agency rule," to help with multiple industry definition conflicts. The intent, along with the rule changes and an increased public education and outreach program, is that it will lead to increased compliance and fewer non-seaworthy vessel ownership transfers.

The law directed DNR to develop administrative rules that specify procedures and standards for these vessel inspections. DNR conducted a formal public rulemaking process which resulted in the Board of Natural Resources adopting additions to WAC 332-08 on May 6, 2014. The rules took effect on July 1, 2014. As part of the rule implementation DNR will maintain records of inspection as provided by the owners of these vessels.

²⁰ <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=79.100.150>

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A vessel must be inspected prior to sale or transfer if it is:

More than 35' in length and more than 40 years old; and either:

- registered or required to be registered under chapter 88.02 RCW; or
- listed or required to be registered under chapter 94.40 RCW.

9.2 Entities Responsible for Providing DNR with Inspection Documentation

Before transferring ownership of the vessel, the seller/transferor must provide DNR with a copy of the vessel inspection report and the Vessel Inspection

Acknowledgement Form with original, notarized signatures of the seller/transferor and the buyer/transferee acknowledging receipt of the vessel inspection disclosure report. (see RCW 79.100.15 and WAC 332-08-123). The [Vessel Inspection Acknowledgement Form](#) is available on DNR's Derelict Vessel web page.

9.3 Minimum Criteria for Vessel Inspections

Vessel inspection disclosure reports must document the condition, valuation, suitability of the vessel for service, and, if applicable, an estimate as to the anticipated cost of repairs necessary to return the vessel to seaworthiness. Current U.S. Coast Guard certificates of inspection are acceptable forms of vessel condition determination. The vessel inspection disclosure report may be prepared for either the owner, lien holder, buyer/transferee, vessel broker, or associated financial and insurance provider(s) for the vessel. Vessel inspections must be prepared by a professional marine surveyor who is a third party to the transaction. The vessel inspection must be completed within thirty (30) days prior to the seller/transferor transferring ownership of the vessel.

9.4 Procedure for Vessel Inspection Documentation

The seller/transferor must file a vessel inspection disclosure report and supporting documentation at the following address:

DNR Aquatic Resources Division Derelict Vessel Removal Program
1111 Washington Street SE; MS 47027
Olympia, WA 98504-7027

or dvrp@dnr.wa.gov

DNR will accept hard copies or electronic copies of a vessel inspection disclosure report and completed Acknowledgement Form from sellers/transferors. DNR will transmit either a hard copy or electronic notice of receipt to the seller/transferor within ten (10) business days of receiving the vessel inspection disclosure

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documentation. DNR-issued notices of receipt do not constitute concurrence that the vessel inspection disclosure documentation meets the minimum criteria for a vessel inspection disclosure report, specified in WAC 332-08-123 or that the documentation was received prior to ownership transfer of the vessel. DNR will maintain records of vessel inspection disclosure documentation for future determination of potential secondary liability.

DNR may pursue secondary liability under RCW 79.100.150 for costs associated with removal and disposal of a derelict or abandoned vessel if the prior owner(s) did not provide the department copies of a vessel inspection disclosure report, as specified in WAC 332-08-122, before transferring ownership of the vessel.

DNR will notify a prior owner of a vessel, determined to be derelict or abandoned, that they have secondary liability when cost recovery is sought, if:

- An APE has taken, or is in the process of taking, custody of the derelict or abandoned vessel;
- The current owner cannot be identified or is financially insolvent;
- The department does not have correctly completed vessel inspection disclosure documentation on record for the derelict or abandoned vessel; and
- A vessel over 65' was transferred after July 1, 2014, or a vessel over 35' and 40 years or older was transferred after June 11, 2020.

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10. DNR INTERNAL INFORMATION**10.1 Permitting**

- a. DNR has a programmatic HPA, which allows for DNR's removal of vessels under many different circumstances. However, some types of removals are not included in this HPA, such as vessels that are in eelgrass beds, sand lance/surf smelt habitat, or on contaminated sediment sites. In these instances, it is necessary to obtain an individual HPA or emergency HPA for the removal. Review the DNR HPA; look up eelgrass, herring and surf smelt habitat layers in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping or consult with the DNR science section. The DNR HPA does not cover in-water or on-beach demolition of vessels.
- b. Does the DNR Programmatic HPA apply to the current removal?
 - No - consult with the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and apply for either an Emergency HPA (can be issued verbally over the phone) or a Project HPA.
 - Yes - send the WDFW area biologist an email noting: 1) the removal name, 2) the date of the removal, 3) the name of the contractor doing the removal, 4) how the removal will be conducted.

10.2 DNR internal disposal

- a. For vessels that will fit on the DNR flatbed trailer and do not have substantial fuel or any other hazardous materials (usually cabin cruisers less than 35'):
 - Contact DNR Heavy Haul truck driver (Equipment Services) to arrange pick up. This will require a DVRP employee to arrange haul out, get the exact height and width measurements of the vessel, and work with the truck driver to secure all debris. Engineering Division staff at the DNR Compound will need to pull the engine block, fuel tanks, batteries, and fire extinguishers. DVRP has a portable drive-on containment diaper at the Compound for deployment under the semi while work is being done on the vessel and a fuel containment barrel storage locker. If there is more than minor residual fuel in the tanks, do not consider this option. The DNR truck driver will arrange pilot cars if needed.

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RCW 79.100.010	Definitions
RCW 79.100	Derelict vessels
RCW 79.105.430	Private recreational docks — Mooring buoys
RCW 53.08.310, .320, .480	Port Moorage facilities — Definitions
RCW 88.26	Private Moorage Facilities
RCW 79A.65	Commission Moorage Facilities
RCW 79A.60	Regulation of Recreational Vessels
RCW 88.02.420	Moorage providers — Long-term moorage — Required information
RCW 88.02.500	Certificate of title system — Intent
RCW 46.12.655	Release of owner from liability
RCW 79.02.300	Trespass, waste, damages — Prosecutions
RCW 88.26.020	Securing vessels — Notice — Moving vessels ashore — Regaining possession — Abandoned vessels — Public sale
WAC 332-52-155	Anchorage
WAC 308-93-275	Abandoned vessels
WAC 332-30-122	Aquatic land use authorization
WAC 332-30-127	Unauthorized use and occupancy of state-owned aquatic lands
WAC 332-30-171	Residential uses on state-owned aquatic lands
GL 09-5.1	Resolving Unauthorized Uses of State-owned Aquatic Lands

[Department of Ecology Boatyards Currently Permitted](#)

[Department of Natural Resources Derelict Vessel Removal Program website](#)

- [Vessel Turn-in Program](#)

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DVRP keeps an [inventory](#) of “vessels of concern” that are ranked by priority for DVRA funding based on the following criteria (lowest number = highest priority):

Severity of potential threats to human health and safety and the environment will be evaluated based on many factors, including, but not limited to:

- Condition of the vessel
- Condition of its anchoring or mooring system
- Size of the vessel
- Proximity to navigation channels
- Anticipated weather conditions
- General potential for harmful encounters with people or property
- The toxicity or hazard potential of the hazardous substance(s) on board the vessel
- Location of the vessel, particularly its proximity to potentially sensitive areas or populations
- Potential as an attractive nuisance
- Owner’s involvement with the vessel, including factors such as proper registration, actions taken or not taken, and owner’s ability to take care of the vessel or lack thereof

Priority 1	Emergencies	Vessels that are in danger of sinking, breaking up or blocking navigational channels, or that present environmental risks such as leaking fuel or other hazardous substances. Category includes, but is not limited to, vessels that meet the temporary possession criteria or that will meet those criteria if owner stops taking or fails to take action. Examples include vessels adrift, sinking, dragging anchor, badly anchored/moored, pumps barely keeping up with water intake, beached and breaking up, sunk in a navigation channel, presenting environmental risk such as leaking fuel or other hazardous materials, etc.
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Priority 2	Non-emergency existing threats to human health, safety and environment	Vessels, floating or sunken, that pose an existing or probable future—but not immediate—threat to human health, safety and the environment. These vessels are likely to become Priority 1 vessels after a minor change in circumstances. Examples include vessels sunk near a boat launch; vessels beached near a public access area; vessels abandoned and unattended in an area of high current or vessel traffic; vessels that need to be pumped continuously to stay afloat and are not tied to shore power; vessels sunk where they may be a hazard to small vessel navigation (e.g., sunk just under the surface); vessels in advanced state of deterioration and/or dismantled - particularly those with fuel on board.
Priority 3	Vessels impacting habitat and not already covered in prior category	Any vessel, floating or sunken, that doesn't meet one of the previous categories but still poses a direct threat to any of the elements of the natural environment, including vessels that impact: • Any plant or wildlife species listed on a state or federal endangered, threatened, proposed, sensitive, candidate, concern or monitor list. • Essential Habitats where listed species have primary association, such as spawning areas. • Any other plant or animal species protected by local, state, or federal agency. • Aquaculture practices and/or farming of food fish, shellfish, and other aquatic plants and animals in fresh water, brackish water or saltwater areas. • Marine protected areas, restoration areas or aquatic reserves. (A vessel can potentially impact these areas without being located within its boundaries.) Examples include vessels near shellfish beds or public beaches, sunk or abandoned in or near a marine reserve, aground on surf smelt or sand lance habitat, creating barriers to fish passage, etc.
Priority 4	Minor navigation or economic impact	Vessels, floating or sunken, that don't meet one of the previous categories but pose an economic impact, such as: blocking a marina slip, a public park buoy or guest dock; or vessels in trespass in a planned buoy field, or at a private mooring buoy, etc.

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Priority 5	Other abandoned or derelict vessels	Vessels that meet the definition of abandoned or derelict, but do not satisfy any of the criteria listed above. These vessels may be sunk at depth; floating but well-kept, and attended vessels in trespass, etc.
Priority 6	Vessels abandoned in boatyards	Vessel seized under RCW 53.08.320 seeking reimbursement from DVRA when the vessel was abandoned in a boatyard.

These criteria were updated based on changes made during the 2013 Washington State Legislative session.

Reimbursement of Vessel Removal Expenditures by Priority

DNR is directed by [statute](#)²¹ to create informal guidelines for prioritizing removal projects for reimbursement purposes when the Derelict Vessel Removal Account is to be used. When funding is limited, expenditures for removing higher priority vessels are generally reimbursed first, when compared with other projects applying for reimbursement within the same timeframe. DNR may reimburse Authorized Public Entities for removal of derelict or abandoned vessels of lower priority than other vessels when DNR determines that adequate funds will remain in the Derelict Vessel Removal Account. Examples of when DNR may approve removal of lower priority vessels include, but are not limited to, removal of several vessels in the same geographic area for more efficient/cost effective removals, and removal of lower priority vessels to avert emergencies.

Vessel inventory and removal lists

These lists change frequently but are updated on the website quarterly. For up-to-date information please contact the [Derelict Vessel Removal Program](#) at dvrp@dnr.wa.gov.

- **Derelict or Abandoned Vessels: Inventory of Vessels of Concern**
List of vessels that DNR has identified as potentially derelict or abandoned. Vessels are listed in order of priority; however, as explained above, this order doesn't necessarily correspond with the order of removal.
- **Derelict or Abandoned Vessels: Removals Completed**
List of all the vessels that the Derelict Vessel Removal Program has removed since the program began. The Project ID numbers on these lists consist of a two-digit county code, the year the vessel was reported and the order in which the vessel was reported to DNR. For example, PI26-008 would be the eighth vessel reported and meets the definition of abandoned or derelict, in Pierce County in 2026.

²¹ <https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=79.100>

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The VTiP ([RCW 79.100.160](https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=79.100.160)²²) is a part of the DVRP's prevention efforts to help prevent boats from becoming derelict or abandoned and to keep pollution out of our marine habitats. The purpose of the program is to allow vessel owners the opportunity to voluntarily turn in their vessels for free disposal, if they qualify. This assists the DVRP in properly disposing of vessels before they may become derelict or abandoned in the near future.

If a vessel owner does not qualify or is unable to wait for a removal date, here are some other options:

- Take the vessel to the landfill. Most landfills will require the removal of oil, fuel, batteries and any refrigerators before acceptance. Proof of ownership may also be required. Call the local landfill and see what their requirements are before taking the vessel there. If there is no boat trailer to haul the boat, find a local tow company with a flatbed truck that could transport the vessel or contact a boat transport company that can load from the water if needed.
- For vessels on land, rent a dumpster and dismantle the vessel with a chainsaw or Sawzall after draining, removing and legally disposing of any hazardous materials properly. Engines and boat trailers can be recycled with a metal recycler. Note that cutting up a vessel on a beach is not legal in Washington state without appropriate permits.
- Snohomish County's Solid Waste Environmental Cleanup Team (ECUP) offers a service for the recycling and disposal of unwanted boats, boat trailers, campers, and travel trailers. Here is a link to the Junk Vehicle and Boat/RV Disposal Program: [Snohomish County Junk Boat Disposal Program](https://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/546/Junk-VehicleBoatRV-Disposal/)²³
- If the vessel doesn't run and is on the water, hire someone to tow the boat to a local boatyard or boat ramp for haul out. Some boatyards will dismantle your boat or a private contractor can be hired.
- If the vessel is sold or donated, make sure to file a Report of Sale with the Department of Licensing and keep a copy for records. Make sure to have both the buyer and seller sign a Bill of Sale with the new owner's signature, printed name, address and phone number and

²² <https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=79.100.160/>

²³ <https://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/546/Junk-VehicleBoatRV-Disposal/>

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keep a copy. (If the prior owner does not have proof of sale, they could be held liable for all expenses associated with the removal and disposal should the new owner abandon it). DNR recommends that the bill of sale be kept until verified with Department of Licensing that the new owner has titled the vessel in their name. The prior owner can consider meeting the buyer at a licensing office and witness them putting the vessel in their name.

Will DNR pay the owner for a vessel?

No. But if it qualifies for the VTiP, the disposal is free.

Funding for the Vessel Turn-in Program comes from the Derelict Vessel Removal Account, and Vessel Turn-in Program applications will be based on the same prioritization used by the Derelict Vessel Removal Program.

VTiP Eligibility:

- Owner(s) must be a Washington State resident or business.
- Submit a completed [Vessel Turn In Application](#)²⁴ signed with the notarized Affidavit of Insufficient Resources and mail it to DNR or email it to dvrp@dnr.wa.gov.
- Owner(s) must provide current photos of the inside and outside of the vessel.
- Owner(s) must provide proof of ownership with the application for vessel (i.e., a copy of current title, registration, US Coast Guard documentation, or [Affidavit of Loss & Release of Interest](#)²⁵
- If the vessel was abandoned on private property, the property owner may submit a [Junk Vehicle Affidavit](#)²⁶ in lieu of proof of ownership.
- If the vessel was inherited through a death, proof of ownership includes a copy of the Death Certificate and Will or [Affidavit of Inheritance](#)²⁷, showing the title was legally passed down.
- If an applicant is acting on behalf of the vessel's owner, they will need to show proof of Power of Attorney in order to sign for them.
- Private Marinas who have seized a vessel will need to submit the proper documentation showing they followed RCW 88.26.020, or a federal seizure process, in order to obtain legal title/ownership of the vessel.
- Private Marinas will also be required to submit proof of Insurance as required by RCW 88.26.030
- Vessel should be 45' or less in length overall. Vessels over 45' in length will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

²⁴ https://dnr.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2025-05/aqr_vtip_app.pdf

²⁵ <https://dol.wa.gov/forms/view/420040/>

²⁶ <https://dol.wa.gov/forms/view/420549/>

²⁷ <https://dol.wa.gov/forms/view/420041/>

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- Vessel must have minimal or no value and is in an advanced state of disrepair.
- Owner(s) has insufficient resources or financial means to properly dispose of the vessel.
- Vessel must be floating if it is on the water and can NOT be abandoned or derelict, as defined in RCW 79.100.010
- Remove all trash and loose items. Vessel must be evaluated by DNR before it is approved.
- DNR staff require 2-3 weeks to process and respond to any application. If there is an urgent need to remove the vessel quickly, list that on the application and the reason why.

If the vessel has been accepted

- DNR may require the owner to bring the vessel to a drop-off location.
- Owner must remove any items they want to save prior to the arranged pick-up for disposal.

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PROGRAM STAFF AND AUTHORIZED PUBLIC ENTITIES****APPENDIX C****TRIBAL NATIONS**

The DVRP is not available to the Tribes for many reasons but the main reasons are:

An APE is defined in the statute, RCW 79.100.010. The Tribes are not identified as an APE for the following reasons:

- They are not open to legal claims or liability as required by the statute
- They should not be lumped together in any agreements. They would prefer to have individual agreements by individual Tribal Nations)
- The Tribes do not pay into the Derelict Vessel Removal Account. They do not pay the state to register tribal vessels and they are exempt from paying the Watercraft Excise Tax both of which are the main sources of funds for the program.

DNR can partner with Tribal Nations in the removal of derelict and abandoned vessels through the use of Federal funds.

The DVRP has worked with Tribal Nations in the past to remove vessels through the Vessel Turn-in Program. Because DNR has to work within the statute 79.100, a Tribal Nation will need to remove the vessel from the water before the VTiP can take it into the program. Prior to being removed from the water the vessel is considered to be derelict and cannot be entered into the VTiP. Once the Tribal Nation gains the legal right to do the removal through their own ordinances and can provide documentation, the VTiP can pay for its disposal.

Some questions and answers:

1. If the vessel owner gives permission, do the jurisdictional constraints of Tribal lands still apply?
 - Yes, but it also depends. If the owner gives permission for the removal and the vessel can be defined as derelict or abandoned in accordance with the RCW 70.100, then the VTiP cannot be used. If on the other hand the owner gives permission and the vessel is floating or in a boat yard, they can turn it into the VTiP for free disposal.
2. For example, if a vessel owner on Tribal property says it's permissible to remove the vessel, could another entity do the removal?
 - Jurisdiction still plays a part in this example. Other than the VTiP, RCW 79.100 cannot operate on Tribal Lands.
3. Would that entity still need to be an APE to be assured legal protection under RCW 79.100?
 - The VTiP is voluntary and initiated by the vessel owner so no liability protection is needed. If gaining the legal right to remove a vessel through tribal laws is in question, then one would need to refer to that individual Tribe for answers. The VTiP does not

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have a liability clause, so it will not protect whoever seeks the legal authority to remove private property. For example: if a private property owner has a vessel on their property that does not belong to them, they have to go through the State's private property laws to get the legal right to do the removal/disposal. State's private property laws may or may not offer immunity, so it is recommended to consult a lawyer.

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PROGRAM STAFF AND AUTHORIZED PUBLIC ENTITIES****APPENDIX D****REIMBURSEMENT APPLICATION CHECKLIST**

The [Derelict Vessel Removal Project Application for Reimbursement form](#) can be found on the DNR Derelict Vessel web page.

1. Boat Posting (vessel custody notice)
2. Owner letter with mail receipts
3. Proof of Ownership, if applicable
4. Return to sender/ undeliverable receipts
5. Newspaper legal notice affidavit (53.08 only)
6. Auction Notice (53.08 only)
7. Proof of Insurance for Port and Vessel owner (53.08 only)
8. Email for Web Posting request (79.100 only)
9. Vessel deconstruction and disposal weight tickets
10. Any other receipts
11. Accurate account for administrative costs
12. Proof of cost recovery from the owner or insurance company

Custody Process Dates

13. Date of Boat Post
14. Date of Web Post request (79.100 only)
15. Date of Owner letter Sent
16. Date of Legal Ad (53.08 only)
17. Date of Custody
18. Date of Disposal