

BISCAYNE BAY CITIZEN'S ACTION GUIDE

A Project of the Biscayne Bay Marine Health Summit Steering Committee



Tips to keep Biscayne Bay Clean

By the Miami-Dade County Regulatory Economic Resources

The health of Biscayne Bay, our ecological gem, depends on a harmonious and mutually beneficial relationship between it and the people who live and visit here. Biscayne Bay care starts with you and goes everywhere you do. Whether this is at home, on land, or in the water, every action you take can hurt or help Biscayne Bay.

Garbage and impaired water quality kills. When trash is discarded in an irresponsible manner, it can cause tremendous harm to the environment, especially marine ecosystems. Biscayne Bay is often an endpoint for trash regardless or in the water. With many new and contributing factors, water quality has decreased. Impaired water quality can trigger seagrass die-offs and fish kills in Biscayne Bay.



We all need to:

- Minimize surface water pollution, whether it comes from spills, fertilizers or pesticides
- Avoid litter on land and in the water
- [Be aware of and address fuel releases and other sources of nonpoint source pollution](#)
- Avoid disposable materials that often make up the bulk of marine debris

By adopting the below practices, you can help our county become better for all.

Caring for Biscayne Bay at Home

HOW CAN YOU HELP BISCAYNNE BAY?

TAKE ACTION NOW

Biscayne Bay

Biscayne Bay is a sub-tropical shallow estuary that is home to two state aquatic preserves, a critical wildlife area, a national park and national marine sanctuary. Due to its unique habitat, Biscayne Bay is designated an aquatic park and conservation area by Miami-Dade County. Cradled by the mainland to the west and barrier islands to the east, its 428 square miles continue to be a source of sustenance and economic vitality, while also providing for countless recreational opportunities enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. Its spectacular natural beauty is widely recognized and enjoyed by nearly 2.8 million residents and millions of visitors every year.
Source: Biscayne Bay Task Force Report

- Reduce your use of single-use plastics
- Reduce your use of fertilizers, pesticides, & hazardous materials
- Pick up your pet's waste
- Use reef-safe sunscreen
- Participate in local clean ups
- Practice responsible boating - slow down and don't litter
- Only flush toilet paper down the toilet
- Do not litter

Bague+ GROUP

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

WE MUST ALL WORK TOGETHER TO SAVE BISCAYNNE BAY

- Avoid using plastic and single-use items whenever possible. Even properly disposed-of items can accidentally end up in Biscayne Bay.
- Never allow discharges to enter any surface waters (including cans, bottles, cleaners, sewage, fertilizers, paper products, paint chips, swimming pool backwash).
- Never pour paints, solvents, oils or other hazardous materials down the sink or on the ground because they can affect water quality in the Bay.
- Don't flush chemicals, plastic tampon applicators, baby wipes, etc. Only toilet paper should be flushed down the toilet.
- Compost your yard clippings or bag and properly dispose of them. Don't allow them to enter storm drains or waterways where they can contribute to harmful algae blooms.
- Fertilizer best practices: if needed, apply fertilizer more frequently and in smaller applications, avoid fertilization during the wet season; select a fertilizer that has at least one-fourth of the nitrogen in a slow-release water insoluble form; and minimize when you fertilize, most plants don't need it.
- Plant trees! But choose native, salt and drought-tolerant ones such as buttonwood, black ironwood and orange geiger that don't require extensive fertilization and irrigation.
- Choose the least toxic pesticides and household products available.

Biscayne Bay Protection on Land

- Never litter. Always dispose of in trash in its proper place and encourage others to do the same.
- Avoid using plastic or Styrofoam utensils, containers, straws, etc.
- Bring your own reusable bags when you go shopping.
- Keep dumpsters away from surface waters.
- Don't be "fuelish"! Automotive leaks mean more gasoline, motor oil and metal parts in stormwater runoff.
- Maintain your vehicle so leaks are promptly repaired.
- Recycle motor oil. Call the Florida Department of Environmental Protection at 1-800-741-4DEP for the recycling location nearest you.
- Never dump antifreeze or motor oil into storm drains, ditches or on the ground.
- Be sure to conserve water and use biodegradable, low-phosphate soap when washing your car.
- Carpool and use public transportation whenever possible.
- Do pick up after your pet and properly dispose of their droppings. Dog waste is a significant source of germs and nutrients that can contaminate bay waters.



Biscayne Bay Stewardship on the Water



- Only use reef-safe sunscreen. Ingredients in some sunscreens interrupt the reproduction cycles of seagrasses and corals. Tiny amounts have been shown to be devastating, and reef-safe sunscreen is better for you and the corals.
- Don't throw anything in the water that you don't take out again, except for bait.
- Report derelict vessels, abandoned fishing gear, casitas and other bulky marine debris you may see in the Bay.
- While boating, secure and store trash on board and dispose of it on land.
- Never dispose of monofilament fishing line in the water.
- Remove boats from water when making repairs.
- If you see fuel coming from your boat and entering the water or dripping on the ground, address the leak immediately
- Use absorbent materials designed to clean oil from your boat bilge water and properly dispose of used absorbents.
- Always abide by boating speed limits and be aware of your surroundings while boating to avoid injuring marine life and damaging the bay bottom.
- Biscayne Bay is a protected resource; make sure you understand local, state and federal protection standards for recreating on Biscayne Bay.



A Special Thank You to Miami-Dade County for providing the content of this first edition of our [Biscayne Bay Citizens' Action Guide](#)



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<https://www.miamidade.gov/environment/biscayne-bay-clean.asp>

