Shrink-wrap Recycling

The Michigan Clean Marina Program is working with marinas to recycle plastic shrink-wrap in the state of Michigan. Recycled shrink-wrap (low-density polyethylene or LDPE), is used to manufacture materials such as plastic bags, guardrail blocks, wheel chalks, lawn edging, plastic banners, decking and benches.

All marinas, yacht clubs, dry marinas and boat storage yards in Michigan are welcome to join this recycling effort, even if you are not currently participating in the Clean Marina Program. For more information about collection in your area, please contact the Michigan Clean Marina Recycling Program Coordinator.

Recycling Collection Service

As a result of the support from marinas participating in a pilot recycling effort, the Michigan Clean Marina Recycling Program, in partnership with Mondo Polymer Technologies, Inc., has expanded shrink-wrap collection services. Currently, we are offering collection service on a case-by-case basis in southern, lower Michigan. However, with continued support, collection service may eventually be available to both private and public marinas throughout the state.
Properly prepare the shrink-wrap by removing all non shrink-wrap materials, including: lumber, metal zippers, reusable vents, rope, and other items, such as batteries, soda cans, screws and nails.

- Reuse, if possible, doors, vents, lumber and rope.
- Recycle other materials, if possible, such as metals, paper and glass.

Maximize the amount of shrink-wrap that will fit in storage areas and reduce weight by rolling the shrink-wrap into a bundle up to five feet wide, similar to a rolled-up sleeping bag. Tie the rolled bundle with a strip of shrink-wrap or ribbon strapping.

- While rolling, please keep the shrink-wrap clean. Gravel, sand, and excess dirt make the recycling process more difficult and costly.

For collection, place rolled shrink-wrap in designated containers marked “SHRINK-WRAP ONLY.” And contact the program coordinator (see below).

- Contaminated and/or dirty shrink-wrap may disrupt the recycling process and decrease the value of the material. Thus, only shrink-wrap should be stored in this container or storage area.

Program Benefits

Marinas can reduce their waste disposal costs and support other businesses that process reusable materials to produce new, marketable products. Through your participation, thousands of pounds of plastic shrink-wrap can be diverted from solid waste facilities (landfills).

The 2007 pilot recycling effort in Michigan received an amazing response. The response from participating marinas resulted in the manufacture of over 15,000 pieces of reused plastics by Mondo Polymers in 2007. Each participating marina reduced their cost associated with waste collection by approximately $250. Through the combined efforts of shrink-wrap recycling programs in Michigan and Ohio, approximately 350,000 pounds of plastic wrap was diverted from landfills.

Alignment with State Solid Waste Principles and Goals

All communities generate some form of solid waste — some of which may be considered unusable garbage. Although, solid waste typically also consists of many materials that are recyclable or reusable, such as grass clippings, clothing, paper, bottles, cans, batteries and plastic.

The State of Michigan developed a sustainable approach to solid waste management outlined in the Michigan Solid Waste Policy. At the top of the list of guiding principles outlined in the Policy is the preference to first eliminate “waste generation” and instead reuse discarded materials for “beneficial purposes.” By participating in the Michigan Clean Marina Recycling Program, we are collectively working toward achieving the following goal of decreasing waste generation:

Strive to make continuous improvement toward full utilization of all solid waste streams, and as a step toward that end, establish a goal of utilizing 50 percent of Michigan’s municipal solid waste (MSW) stream by 2015, (Michigan Solid Waste Policy, 2007, p 12).

For more information about additional recycling programs in Michigan, and the Great Lakes, see:
- Michigan Department of Environmental Quality / Municipal Recycling Information and the Michigan Pollution Prevention Program (MP3)
- Michigan Chamber of Commerce / Official Policy Relating to a Comprehensive Statewide Recycling Program
- U.S. EPA / Region 5 Pollution Prevention

Recycled shrink-wrap is used to manufacture guard rail blocks, part of barrier systems on roadways. In 2007, 15,000 pieces of reused plastics were manufactured by Mondo Polymers.