

Cruise Without Guilt

Our campaign against cruise ship pollution helps ensure that cruise ships visiting Casco Bay will disgorge only tourists and not their wastes. But what if you are traveling beyond our shores? Since there is no list of ships employing the best environmental practices, here are some actions you can take to have an environmentally friendly experience.

Before you go

1. Ask your travel agent to recommend an environmentally-responsible cruise line. Even if he or she can't, just asking creates awareness that consumers are interested in more than price and perks when booking a cruise.
2. Go to www.cruisejunkie.com and click on *Pollution and Environmental Violations and Fines, 1992 – 2007* to see if a ship you are considering has a history of violations.
3. Check on when the ship was built. The newest ships generally have more efficient wastewater treatment systems. If it's an older ship, it may state that the wastewater treatment system has been retrofitted. (See sidebar on Advanced Wastewater Treatment Systems.)
4. Go to the website of the cruise line you are considering. Look for a section on "Environmental Practices." If it discusses recycling and limiting use of water and chemicals, at least the cruise line is aware of the right thing to do.
5. Does the cruise line state that its ships do not discharge sewage and gray water, the wastewater from sink and galleys, until their ships are beyond 12 miles from shore?

Once onboard

1. Ask if the ship has an environmental officer who oversees energy conservation, recycling, and reducing the use of chemicals. If you are really an environmental junkie, ask for a tour of the waste disposal areas. It can be fascinating!
2. If you observe the crew dumping garbage or discharging wastes in or near port, take a photo and document the time, place, and activity. Report the incident to the environmental officer, if there is one. In addition, contact the EPA at <http://www.epa.gov/tips/>.
3. If you see some environmentally responsible practice, do compliment the crew and write a note to the cruise line afterwards.

After you get home

1. Inform the EPA if you witnessed questionable environmental practices during your voyage.
2. If you found an exemplary ship (in environmental practices), do let Friends of Casco Bay know. Call us at (207) 799-8574 or email us keeper@cascobay.org.

Portland Cruise Ship Update

The City of Portland's Transportation website reports that 32 cruise ships carrying 48,768 passengers visited Portland in 2007. So far, 32 cruise ships are scheduled to stop in Portland in 2008.

Advanced Wastewater Treatment Systems

The newest technology on cruise ships is the "advanced wastewater treatment system" (AWT). While this treatment option is better at removing bacteria and suspended solids than traditional marine sanitation devices (MSDs), it is not effective at removing nutrients and heavy metals. Nutrient pollution contributes to slime-coated mudflats, fish kills, marine mammal deaths, and clamflat closures. Still, advanced wastewater treatment systems are better than the older treatment systems that only are required to meet 1976 standards.

According to a February 3, 2008 report in the *Miami Herald*,

- **Royal Caribbean Cruises** has completed installing advanced wastewater technology on seven of nineteen vessels in its Royal Caribbean International fleet and should finish three more this year. It has committed to installing AWTs on all its ships.
- **Norwegian Cruise Line** said all 13 of its ships have the advanced systems, as will all new orders.
- Six of eight **Celebrity Cruises** vessels have the advanced technology. Its two Azamara Cruises ships will be retrofitted with the new technology once the line finds the right solution for these smaller ships.

- Only one of twenty-two ships of the **Carnival Cruise Lines** has the advanced systems, and the three under construction aren't slated to get it. Carnival's policy calls for no discharge within twelve nautical miles of a coast. **Carnival Corp** also operates ten other cruise ship brands, of which "slightly more than one third" has advanced wastewater technology, and it comes on most new ships.