

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Regulation: FAQs about 9 NYCRR Section 377.1

Q: What is the definition of “watercraft”?

A: A watercraft is defined as every powered and non-powered means of transportation on the water whether designed for or used for that purpose.

Q: What is the reason for this regulation?

A: The regulation was written to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) via overland transport. Research has shown that overland transport is one of the primary causes of new aquatic invasive species infestations on inland water bodies. Due to the potential for environmental degradation in addition to the high cost of controlling AIS once they are established, the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (Parks) , at all of its facilities, prohibits the launching or attempt to launch a watercraft unless the watercraft is drained and visible plant or animal life attached to it or to its trailer or associated equipment have been removed. The same requirements apply to watercraft prior to leaving the site.

Q: Does the regulation cover rowboats, canoes, kayaks, and other non-mechanically propelled watercraft?

A: The regulation covers all watercraft, including all non-mechanically propelled watercraft.

Q: Where should I drain my watercraft?

A: Preferably, the watercraft should be drained prior to arrival at a Park site; however, Park staff or signage will indicate the appropriate location for draining if an operator has forgotten to do it. Generally, the bilge, bait bucket, and livewell should be drained in a location that is upland from the water body, where the drained water will be absorbed by vegetation and not flow into the water body.

When retrieving the watercraft from the launch site after use, it is acceptable to drain the bilge and other water-holding compartments at the launch. It is presumable that any water in the watercraft at that time is from the same water body.

Q: Does the “drain” requirement apply to water associated with sanitary systems or drinking water?

A: No. The compartments that must be drained include the bait bucket, live well, bilge and ballast tank.

Q: Does this regulation require a hot water decontamination of my watercraft?

A: No. The regulation requires that prior to launching or leaving from a Park site, the operator inspect the watercraft and remove all visible plant or animal matter. Removal may be by hand; hot water and high pressure are not required.

Q: Where should I dispose of plant or animal matter that I remove from my watercraft?

A: Many Park sites now feature designated AIS disposal stations for plant and animal material. These stations are for plant and animal material only and do not serve as receptacles for other waste. If such a station does not exist at a particular site the AIS may be disposed of in the normal trash receptacles.

Q: What if there are zebra mussels on my watercraft and I cannot remove them at the launch site?

A: Zebra mussels are extremely difficult to remove from the underside of watercraft without a high-pressure hose. Parks will provide a watercraft transport permit for AIS in the event that the operator cannot remove plant or animal matter that is affixed to the watercraft. This will allow the operator to leave the launch site and transport the watercraft to a storage or cleaning facility where the plant or animal material can be removed. The operator should download the appropriate form ([click here](#)) and fill it out before transporting any watercraft with plant or animal matter attached. This is a self-administered permit system.

Operators are expected to remove the plant or animal material before the next launching.

Q: What should I do if I wish to bring live bait to a waterbody?

A: The operator should drain off the water that the bait was purchased or caught in, and replenish the bait bucket or livewell with water from the site that he or she is about to fish in.

Q: What should I do with unused bait?

*A: Unused bait should never be dumped into a water body that it was not caught in. Please visit the NYS DEC publication for guidance on disposal of bait fish:
http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/fish_marine_pdf/baitfishofny.pdf.*

Q: Who will be enforcing the regulations?

A: Park employees will inform the public of the regulations through public education and encourage voluntary compliance during the 2015 boating season. In future years, the State Park Police and State Environmental Conservation Police have the authority to enforce the regulations by issuing tickets to violators.