



Important Information

From the USVI DPNR & U.S. Coast Guard

USVI DPNR has set December 1, 2017 as a deadline for owners of vessels displaced by recent hurricanes to let us know of their intent for salvaging/removing their vessels, or risk DPNR taking possession of the vessel and options for disposition. All owners of vessels displaced by recent hurricanes should call the Vessel Owner Notification Hotline at (340) 423-6353 or email us at USVIDPNR@gmail.com and provide the following information:

Vessel Registration #

Current Owner Name

Vessel Location

Date of removal

Salvage contractor/owner contact information

DPNR/Coast Guard decal target number (if your vessel was marked)

The USVI DPNR & U.S. Coast Guard assume no responsibility for the safety of the salvage operations. This responsibility rests solely with the vessel owners /operators. If a boat owner takes no action and your vessel remains a threat to the environment, any oil and or hazardous substances will be removed and a determination will be made at that time as to the disposition of the vessel. This determination will be based upon the vessel's location and applicable territory laws permitting to the vessel's removal.

St John National Park Service

For vessels displaced on St John NPS land, please email caribbean_recovery@nps.gov

Best Practices for Removal of Vessels

Vessel owners are encouraged to hire a professional salvage company to recover their vessels in order to provide the safest method possible for their vessel and the environment.

Open Water and Nearshore Operations

- Removal operations should take place during the day
- Perform site visits and work from waterways, paved surfaces or existing roadways whenever possible to minimize impacts to sensitive habitats.
- Select vehicles and equipment that are least likely to disturb soil/sediments and keep loading to a minimum to reduce ground pressure on unpaved surfaces.

- Remove all equipment & materials deployed to facilitate removal operations at conclusion of operations.
- Do not block major egress points in channels, passes and bays during assessment and/or recovery operations
- Vessels should anchor in bare sand bottom during all in-water response operations.
- When operating motor vessels over seagrass, coral or hard-bottom areas, be careful to avoid propeller scarring or washing.
- Use floating lines for anchoring & vessel removal operations to prevent line sweeping of coral, seagrass and sea bed.
- If a vessel will be towed, the selected extraction path should ensure that no additional groundings or damage to sensitive habitats will take place as a result of the recovery.
- Incidental dredging and/or filling associated with removal may require approval from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and/or the USVI Department of Planning and Natural Resources.
- Marine debris removal operations should be conducted at sufficient tide and water depths to minimize risk to sensitive habitats, including coral reefs and seagrasses.
- Minimize ground-disturbing activities to as small an area as feasible to complete the task.

WILDLIFE

- Watch for and avoid sea turtles, manatees, dolphins, whales or other animals.
- Maintain a minimum distance of 300 feet from any observed animals.
- Stop operations immediately if an endangered or other protected species is observed within a 50-foot radius of equipment
- When sea turtles, manatees, dolphins, whale or other animals are sighted while a vessel is underway, attempt to remain parallel to the animal's course.
- Avoid excessive speed or abrupt changes in direction until they have left the area.
- Reduce speed to 10 knots or less when sea turtles, manatees, dolphins, sawfish, sturgeon, whales or other animals are observed, when safety permits.
- Avoid all bird nesting or aggregation areas.
- Removal operations should avoid marked sea turtle or bird nests and stay low on the beach to minimize contact with unmarked nests. In the event that nesting turtles, birds, or hatchlings are sighted, cease removal operations in the area.
- Remove all trash or anything that would attract wildlife to work areas.
- Any killed or injured fish or wildlife observed should be reported to the appropriate Wildlife Agency for proper determination and action.

Emergency Notification:

Anyone witnessing an oil spill, chemical release or maritime security incident should call the National Response Center Hotline at 1-800-424-8802. To report violations or injured wildlife, call 1-800-404-3922.