

Dealing With Trash During The Bermuda Race

The CCA is committed to stewardship of the oceans. One of several serious threats to our oceans is the amount of marine debris – trash, and plastic in particular – which can now be found in all oceans in even the remotest places on earth. To ensure that participants in the 2010 Bermuda Race do not contribute to this problem, the CCA Committee on the Environment of the Sea requests that participants in the race voluntarily adopt a leave-no-trace approach to dealing with trash by undertaking to carry out everything which is brought aboard, with the exception of biodegradable garbage, which may be discarded overboard an appropriate distance from shore, which under the Marpol Treaty is 12 miles. Everything else should be double bagged in plastic trash bags, stowed aboard and taken into port to be disposed of according to local regulations or practice. Crews are requested to supply their own trash bags.

Following this approach requires planning, particularly on smaller boats with limited storage space, but the Committee believes that it is a goal which should be achievable on all boats without undue burden. To assist in planning a leave-no-trash passage, the following are some suggestions which might be helpful. Many of them are no doubt already employed by race participants.

Purchasing Decisions:

1. Purchase foods which minimize the amount or layers of packaging.
2. Plan to minimize or eliminate the use of paper towels, napkins and plates.
3. Don't use plastic knives, forks and spoons or disposable plastic or paper cups.
4. Buy and use as much fresh fruit and vegetables as possible.
5. Where practical, buy food in larger containers and packages rather than purchasing the same quantities in multiple packages.
6. Avoid multiple small containers of snack foods or drinks which are individually wrapped.
7. Avoid individual containers of pastas, stews or other one pot dishes which are meant to be micro-waved and consumed by one person.
8. Minimize or avoid altogether plastic water bottles, especially small bottles intended for individual use.
9. Use powdered drink mixes to minimize the number of aluminum cans and plastic bottles taken aboard.

Actions Before Departure:

1. Remove as much of the packaging from packaged food, including plastic rings holding beverage cans together.
2. Remove paper labels from canned foods and label cans with an indelible marker.
3. Where possible, repack things such as cookies, energy bars, cereals and sweeteners in sturdy, reusable plastic containers or bags.
4. Cook and freeze dinners at home and store them in reusable plastic bags or containers.

Please be mindful that Bermuda is a small island which has waste disposal challenges not faced by most mainland locations. Therefore, regardless of the trash-carrying capacity of your boat, you are encouraged to minimize the amount of trash you generate which will have to be left in Bermuda.

Crews aboard participating yachts are encouraged to follow the leave-no-trace approach on passages from Bermuda to home ports after the race. Copies of this paper will be available in Bermuda for delivery crews.

Crews are reminded that U.S. law requires all boats 40' or longer to have a written waste management plan and to designate the person who is in charge of carrying it out.

Following the race, the Environment of the Sea Committee would be grateful for any feedback relating to the leave-no-trace approach to dealing with trash at sea, including additions to the planning suggestions set out above. Comments and suggestions should be sent to Bill Foss, Chairman of the Committee, at wsfoss@gmail.com.