

# Law Prohibits the Transport of Aquatic Plants and Aquatic Invasive Species in Vermont

Invasive species such as Eurasian watermilfoil and zebra mussels are typically spread by “hitchhiking” on boat trailers, propellers and fishing gear that isn’t cleaned, or in bilge water, bait buckets, or livewells that aren’t drained before moving to a different water body. It often takes only a tiny fragment of an invasive plant, sometimes less than an inch, to start a whole new infestation.

On July 1, 2010, Vermont’s 22-year-old law prohibiting the transport of important aquatic invasive species changed. Previously, the law prohibited the transport of the invasive plants Eurasian watermilfoil and water chestnut. As of July 1, Vermont’s invasive species transport law now **prohibits the transport of all aquatic plants or aquatic plant parts** on the outside of a vehicle boat, personal watercraft, trailer or other equipment.

The law defines an aquatic plant as “...a plant that naturally grows in water, saturated soils or seasonally saturated soils, including algae and submerged, floating leafed, floating, or emergent plants.”



**CLEAN BOATS  
CLEAN WATERS**

**No More Free Rides**

Under Vermont Law, you may be fined up to \$1000 for transporting any aquatic plant or plant fragment, zebra mussels or quagga mussels. So carefully inspect and clean your boat and trailer every time you take them out of the water.

**WATERCRAFT CHECK POINTS**

Hitch Live Well Transom Well  
Rollers Axle Lower Unit/Propeller

**When you leave a body of water:**

- Clean** off any mud, plants (even small fragments), and animals from boats, trailers and equipment. If possible wash at home or at a car wash.
- Drain** boat and equipment away from water.
- Dry** anything that comes into contact with water.

**Never release plants, fish or animals into a body of water unless they came out of that body of water.**

The law change means both the public and those who enforce the law will not have to know how to distinguish one type of aquatic plant from another.

Vermont’s invasive species transport law also will continue to prohibit the transport of two animal species, zebra mussels and quagga mussels.

The full law is available [here](#).

A person who violates this law may be subject to a penalty of up to \$1,000 per violation (Vermont Statutes Annotated Title 23, Chapter 29 § 3317. Penalties).

## More information

- Click [here](#) for the full text of Vermont’s aquatic invasive species transport law.
- For more information on aquatic invasive species, contact:



Vermont Watershed Management  
Division at 802-828-1115 or  
<https://dec.vermont.gov/watershed>