



# Sitka Tribe of Alaska

## Brownfields Program

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### Anti-fouling paint can be foul



Spring is here and summer is coming. With the change of seasons, some people may be preparing to repaint the bottom of their boat with anti-fouling paint. If you are planning to do this, it's important to take some precautions to protect both yourself and the environment.

Anti-fouling paint contains biocides and other toxins. Biocides are chemicals that kill life- which is used to keep barnacles, mussels, etc. from growing on the bottom of your boat. The primary additive used in anti-fouling paint is cuprous oxide, which is a form of copper that is a neurotoxin. Historically, other heavy metals have been used, as well as Tributyltin which has now been banned. The toxic chemicals may not be at concentrations high enough to kill a human, but they can negatively impact your health. Shipyards where anti-fouling paint is scraped or sandblasted can accumulate these toxins on the ground and in the surrounding area.

Tributyltin was banned in some countries starting in the 1980s and was banned internationally in 2008. TBT is a hormone disruptor, an obesogen (which means it causes organisms to gain weight), and it bioaccumulates from small organisms to large organisms. Tributyltin has been found to cause deformities in shellfish and in large mammals like bottlenose dolphins and sea otters, where it has been linked to vulnerability to infections.

These toxins can enter your body through your skin or mucous membranes like your eyes. When you are scraping, sand-blasting, or painting, you need to use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to protect yourself from toxins, like safety glasses or other eye protection, face masks to prevent inhalation of particles, and suits or clothing to protect your skin. To protect the environment, use drop clothes and tents to contain the particles from scraping or sandblasting, and then dispose of these properly to prevent the toxins from washing into the ground or ocean.

For more information, please contact Helen Dangel, email [helen.dangel@sitkatriben-sns.gov](mailto:helen.dangel@sitkatriben-sns.gov) or visit the STA Brownfields webpage at <http://www.sitkatriben-sns.gov/pages/brownfield>.

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