



Alternatives To Copper-Based Paints

As concerns continue to spread about the risks of elevated concentrations of copper in aquatic environments, safer options are being explored and tested. Many are receiving strong reviews and support within the boating community. The following details a few alternatives that provide commercially available products that are copper free.

Zinc

Similar to copper in many ways, zinc paints contain many of the same qualities and characteristics as traditional copper paints. Booster biocides are often added to combat fouling growth. Concerns do exist about the potential toxic effects of increased zinc concentrations in aquatic environments. Zinc is an even heavier metal than copper and may be subject to future regulations.

Epoxy

A non-toxic option with excellent foul-release characteristics. Provides a slippery surface that allows growth to be easily cleared with proper cleaning habits. Frequency of cleanings does increase and application and maintenance costs are initially more expensive. Does not need to be reapplied as often so cost savings are usually realized in the long-term.

Silicone

Slippery coating that can improve vessel speed and reduce fuel consumption. Coatings generally damage more easily than other options. Proper cleaning and maintenance are important for ensuring longevity of the product. Most fouling can be removed by operating the vessel at high speeds. Available in various compositions including silicone-rubber, silicone-epoxy, and siloxane. All have water-repellant properties.

For more information regarding the Newport Bay Copper Reduction Program, contact Ray Hiemstra at 714-850-1965 or ray@coastkeeper.org.

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