

KEEPING PACE WITH THE EPA

Software tracks environmental compliance, letting a marina operator focus on the business end

By Rich Armstrong / Managing Editor

Time-strapped marina executives have lots of software choices to help them manage their operations. Staying compliant with ever-expanding environmental regulations is a whole different challenge.

Ted Sailer, an environmental consultant for 35 years (Sailer Environmental Inc., Madison, Conn.), saw a need for this kind of compliance software. He teamed with David Watson, a software consultant familiar with the marine trades, to launch ProEnvironmentWare (PEW) Inc. and develop ProComplianceWare (PCW), a Web-based environmental management system that helps managers stay in the good graces of government regulators — and free of the hefty fines they can levy.

Sailer says PCW is the only system of its kind. It electronically tracks deadlines for all required inspections, reporting, training and sampling. The system provides the ability to assign compliance tasks to office personnel and sends date-driven email reminders to ensure their timely completion. The software is adjusted as compliance rules evolve on the national and state levels.

“To date we have built environmental compliance systems for 75 marinas throughout the Northeast — Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Maine,” Sailer says. “Every system is customized to fit each yard’s needs. The idea is to do a little at a time and stay on top of compliance.”

Two of the yards — Mystic Shipyard, a marina and boatyard in Connecticut, and New England Boatworks, a marina and builder of high-end yachts in Portsmouth, R.I. — were early converts to PCW software. “We’ve had the system for a little over a year now, and we’re happy with it,” says Harry Hallgring, human resources/safety director at New England Boatworks. “There are many, many environmental deadlines we have to meet, and PCW is an awesome reminder system — truly the backbone of the system.”

Hallgring says the system is flexible, and NEB is in the process of transitioning from its mountain of environmental paperwork to digital formatting on the PEW site. “It already saves us money and will save us money for years to come,” he says. “We view it as a value-added complement.”

NEB knows well the power and persistence of the EPA, having agreed in May 2013 to pay a \$31,000 penalty and take the necessary steps to reduce its emissions of volatile organic compounds produced by paints and thinners used in its facility.



A marina employee performs storm water runoff testing in response to a reminder issued by software developed by environmental consultant Ted Sailer (left). Sailer says his system helps protect marina operators from the potentially costly risk of falling out of compliance.



Chris Evans is the marina manager at Reynolds’ Garage & Marine in Lyme, Conn., which bought into the system about a year ago.

“Basically, it eliminated all of my paperwork,” Evans says, gesturing toward a shelf lined with three-ring binders, each stuffed with paper on environmental testing. “And the bigger thing is the

automatic reminders that it’s time to get a task done. More importantly than time saved, if an EPA official walks in here looking for data, I’m really confident everything is accounted for.”

It’s a painful reality that marine trades associations around the country are trying to educate their members about today’s complex environmental landscape. Sailer and Watson remain hands-on owners and are on call to help clients get the most out of their system, visiting each yard yearly to see how well it is working for them.

Sailer Environmental goes to market with Sailer as president and Watson as vice president. Lawyer William Spencer is a partner and general counsel. The group started its search for the right software for boatyards by investigating what was in use in the power plant industry. “But that was just too expensive and complicated for the typical yard,” says Sailer.

Today yards can adopt PCW for \$250 a month. For that, all of a company’s environmental compliance requirements and documents can be assessed at any time through a secure login from a com-

puter, tablet or smartphone. There is no software to install for the cloud-based system.

The system provides environmental risk and compliance management, due diligence, energy efficiency and engineering services to organizations seeking to improve operations, lower costs, manage risk and exceed stakeholder expectations.

More than 800,000 facilities in the United States are regulated by the EPA, according to Sailer.

“The PCW system is only \$3,000 per year, but for some smaller marinas that represents more than they want to spend,” he says.

However, marinas have to consider “the extraordinary penalties the EPA can levy as a result of a surprise inspection in which the failure to have a storm water runoff system can sometimes be as high as \$100,000,” Sailer says. And there’s a contingency built into PCW that is “protection plus,” allowing a marina to remotely log on to its system even while EPA inspectors are on the premises.

Sailer says environmental management systems have become an imperative. They include overall practices, procedures and resources for developing and implementing — along with reviewing and maintaining — a company’s environmental policy.

“With regulations, permits, inspections and sampling requirements, it’s difficult for even the most skilled staff to stay in compliance,” Sailer says.

Even though he expects a “slow build” of business for his year-old service, “awareness of PCW is gaining daily in the industry,” he says. “We don’t doubt that there will come a time when each yard and builder will realize they must have a system like this. All it takes is for someone to get whacked one time.” ■