

ALASKA SEAPLANE PILOT BEST PRACTICES TO REDUCE THE SPREAD OF AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

Follow these steps to improve your flying safety while preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS)

Why? AIS can take over waterbodies and crowd out native species, harming native fish and wildlife populations

Planning a Flight

Familiarize yourself with AIS at destination water bodies, but recognize that not all water bodies are monitored for AIS— always assume a waterbody has AIS.

If you are departing from a waterbody that has confirmed high-risk AIS, thoroughly inspect your aircraft for AIS.

Before Entering the Aircraft

Inspect and remove any visible vegetation or other debris from the aircraft. Remove any plant growth on mooring lines and dispose of any plants properly (trash) upon returning to your base. Inspect the following for AIS:

- Floats
- Hulls
- Rudders
- Wires and Cables
- Mooring lines
- Wheel Wells
- Crossmembers
- Exterior paddle
- Your footwear and gear

Visually inspect submerged parts of the aircraft and run your hands, or use a brush, along the surfaces to check for and remove any AIS that may be attached. This is especially important if the aircraft has been moored on a lake for more than a few hours.

Pump as much water as possible out of bilge compartments using a pump with an invasive species filter (e.g., [Turbo Pump](#)). The removal of water from the float or bilge compartments prior to departure will limit the possibility of transporting microscopic AIS.

Before Takeoff

Just prior to takeoff, **raise and lower your water rudders several times to remove aquatic hitchhikers, which can cause cable stretch and affect steering.**

Avoid taxiing through aquatic plants. If you must taxi through aquatic plants, stop once in open water and manually clear vegetation from floats, hull, and rudders.



If you don't do anything else, cycle the water rudders several times before departing each water body.

After Takeoff

After takeoff at a safe altitude, if conditions permit, **raise and lower your water rudders numerous times while flying over the water body you are departing** to clear aquatic plants from the water rudders and cables. If aquatic plants remain visible on the plane, return and remove them.

Storage and Mooring

Thoroughly inspect your aircraft prior to flying to another waterbody. Dryland storage during an Alaskan winter will kill any AIS attached to your plane or in your float compartments. However, some AIS, such as *Elodea* spp., can survive overwintering in wet float compartments.

Report

Report any invasive species you see to the Alaska Invasive Species Hotline, 1-877-INVASIV (1-877-468-2748). You can also [report online](#), or [send an email](#).

Spread the Word and Protect Alaska's Natural Resources

Informed seaplane pilots can make a difference in preventing the spread of AIS. Talk with your colleagues and spread the word about the important steps seaplane pilots can take to minimize the spread of AIS and conserve Alaska's special places.

Expand your understanding of the types of AIS you might encounter in local and regional waterbodies by visiting the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Invasive Species [website](#).



Become a Certified AIS-Trained Seaplane Pilot!

Click on the QR code to watch a video created by the Washington Seaplane Pilot Association. After watching the video, take a short test, and earn your annual certificate to become an AIS-trained seaplane pilot. This certificate is recognized by all of the Pacific Northwest states.

