

Ask the Experts | Easy 6 Part Boat Winterization Checklist



Well, the warm weather is fading fast and for many of us it's that time of year when we need to prepare our boats for winter storage. And so begins the long wait for spring, warm weather and another boating season.

Taking protective measures now will assure that your boat will be ready to get back on the water in a few months when you are. Boat Winterization doesn't have to be hard. Here is a checklist to help keep your 'baby' in good condition during winter hibernation. And for the lucky few that get to keep boating during the winter months, now is an excellent time to perform some of these same maintenance steps to keep your boat performing well.

Part 1 - Exterior

1. Thoroughly wash the motor and boat hull removing all stains, dirt or debris.
2. Cover the boat and painted motor surfaces with a fresh coating of wax.
3. Cover boat with a high-quality, breathable cover.
4. Remove the propeller and check thoroughly for damage. (Now is the time to replace or service a damaged propeller, NOT at the start of the next season.)
5. Clean the propeller shaft and apply a protective coating of grease.
6. If your boat is kept in the water, install a de-icing device.

Part 2 - Interior

7. Install a dehumidifier in cabins and enclosed areas to help prevent mildew growth.
8. Make sure bilges are clean and dry.
9. Remove bilge drain plug and make a note of where you have placed it. Consider attaching the plug to the steering wheel or other conspicuous location with a piece of string so you don't forget to reinstall it in the spring.

Part 3 - Electrical

10. Inspect and repair all electrical wiring and connections. Make sure nothing was damaged during the season's use.
11. Remove boat batteries and store in a cool dry place. Place batteries on a smart charger or charge them approximately once a month.

Part 4 - Engine

12. Change crankcase and gearcase oil while engine is warm and run the motor afterwards to distribute fresh oil throughout the power head.
13. Change oil filters.
14. Flush the engine with fresh water and drain.
15. Circulate Antifreeze through engine block and manifolds.
16. Drain vapor separator tank of fuel by drain screw (Fuel Injected Motors).
17. On carbureted outboard motors, drain the carburetor float bowls.
18. Change transmission fluid (Inboards).
19. Fog the engine by spraying fogging fluid into each of the carburetors or throttle body throats.
20. Remove hoses from raw water pump.
21. Replace spark plugs and spray fogging fluid into spark plug ports.
22. Perform a complete lubrication service on the boat and motor.
23. Apply grease to all external engine fittings.
24. Apply protective anti-corrosion film to engine's external parts.
25. Check the motor for loose, broken or missing fasteners. Tighten fasteners and make necessary repairs.

Part 5 - Fuel Systems

26. Fill permanently installed fuel tanks with fuel to prevent the formation of condensation.
27. Add appropriate amount of fuel stabilizer to fuel tanks.
28. Remove portable fuel tanks to safe, well-ventilated area. Drain plastic tanks and top-off metal tanks. Drain attached fuel lines.

Part 6 - Boat Trailer

29. Place the trailer on stands or blocks so the wheels are supported off the ground. Raise the bow higher than the stern to promote draining of rainwater or snow.
30. Remove trailer wheels to clean and repack the wheel bearings.

As with all boat repairs and maintenance, follow the instructions in your boat owner's manual, or in the appropriate Seloc manual.

If you have any additional questions about winterization maintenance, check out the iboats.com

Forums and ask our community of boaters what they do - or share your own ideas.

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