

ANNUAL GUIDE TO MARINE SERVICES

The Ice May Cometh...

We're looking winter in the eye. If it's anything like last year, we'd better be prepared.

More than once last winter, boats groaned under the weight of three-to-four feet of snow on deck or piling up on awnings and winter covers. It wasn't pretty. Meltwater managed to seep into gas tanks or saturated fittings that usually stay relatively dry in the open air, but not so much when they're buried under a lofty pile of steadily melting snow. Come the next freeze, pop goes the whatever, and suddenly your nice dry cabin interior has a source of running water.

While winter covers will probably be a hot commodity this year, there's more to winterizing your boat than just wrapping it up tight. Winterizing is one of those must-do chores that must-be-done before the mercury drops too far. Here on the Bay we're fortunate to have such a long boating season. Warm weekends start early and extend well into the fall. If the last few years are any measure, Bay boaters can cruise well into November, when warm water temperatures mitigate the chillier air. But don't let Indian summer lull you into thinking that winter chills are still far away.

Taking precautions with your engine is a big part of winterizing, but now's the time to take note of what else needs to be done to your boat to get or keep it in Bristol condition. Put another coat of oil or Cetol on the teak, and take care of all those nagging repairs that you never quite got around to during the season—or make arrangements to have them taken care of (no one said you have to do it all yourself). Pay particular attention to what could indicate faulty wiring (that pesky blinking light!) and have a professional check it out.

As part of the end-of-the-season buttoning down process, toss out old flares and recharge fire extinguishers. Take off any electronics that might make a tempting target for thieves. Clean out your boat's galley shelves and empty hanging lockers and drawers. Strip your boat of sails, covers, awnings, dodgers, Biminis—anything, in short, that could mildew in the winter's damp or deteriorate through exposure to the elements. Look for cracked grommets, broken seams, worn hardware and frayed lines. Now is the time to have them cleaned and repaired. New detergents and cleaning techniques can make your old canvas look like new and add years to its use.

Remember that a well maintained boat keeps its value; nothing spells deterioration faster than neglect heading into the toughest season of all. For all the hours of pleasure your boat gives, it's worth the few hours it takes to button her up against Old Man Winter.

SERVICE AND MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

✓ ENGINE

- Change primary oil and oil filter(s)
- Change primary and/or secondary fuel filter(s)
- Change transmission oil
- Check belts and hoses; replace if worn
- Check coolant levels
- Check engine zincs, motor mounts
- Check exhaust system for leaks

✓ GENERATOR

- Change primary oil and oil filter(s)
- Change primary and/or secondary fuel filter(s)
- Check belts and hoses; replace if worn
- Check connections to batteries and main distribution panel

✓ ELECTRICAL

- Check all wiring and connections; look for corrosion and replace worn, pinched or frayed wires
- Check batteries' condition and cable connections
- Check battery charger and connections
- Distribution panel should be opened, connections inspected and cleaned to avoid resistance
- Inspect shore electric cable for evidence of resistance or corrosion
- Electrical should meet ABYC standards

✓ ELECTRONICS

- Remove portable electronics for storage at home
- Test radios and other equipment

✓ HULL

- Inspect all through-hulls and through-hull hoses for dry rot and leaks
- Inspect bonding system for corrosion
- Examine and probably replace all zincs on hull, shaft, prop, etc.
- Clean and paint bottom
- Inspect deck fittings and hardware (cleats, handrails, etc.); reseal, re-bed or refasten if loose or leaking
- Inspect seals on all openings such as port lights, windows, doors; reseal to watertight

✓ STEERING GEAR

- Inspect hydraulic lines; top off if needed
- Check rudder posts and mechanical elements for corrosion or wear

✓ RUNNING GEAR

- Inspect stuffing box(es), repack if needed

- Inspect cutless bearings on shaft and rudder bearings for wear; replace if needed subject to play
- Check props, shafts, trim tabs, stabilizers for damage or wear; repair or replace as needed

✓ FUEL SYSTEM

- Check hoses and deck fill for leaks
- Check for moisture or sediment
- Check tanks, hoses, fittings for corrosion

✓ SAFETY

- Check fire extinguisher for charge and replace if necessary
- Halon systems should be certified annually (required for most insurance)
- Check all bilge pumps
- Inspect life raft and verify certification with a qualified inspection station
- Review flare kit expiration dates

✓ LINES AND RIGGING

- Inspect all lines for frayed or worn areas; replace if needed
- Lightly lubricate turnbuckles
- Check all shackles and blocks for wear and replace as necessary
- Check tension and connections of rigging and lifelines
- Loosen rigging for winter storage
- Arrange for a rigging inspection (sometimes offered at no charge)

✓ COMFORT

- Inspect air conditioner(s); recharge if needed
- Inspect canvas, Biminis, etc. for frayed or worn areas or missing or damaged fasteners; replace or repair

✓ SAILS

- Inspect for worn or frayed areas; repair or patch as required
- Wash sails to remove salt
- Check condition or tension controls (leech lines, etc.)
- Remove from the boat and store in a dry place at home

✓ WATER SYSTEM

- Check pressure-water system, all fittings and hoses should be double-clamped to withstand the pressure

✓ GENERAL MAINTENANCE

- Inspect all hose clamps for corrosion and replace if any is found

✓ OTHER

