Ready to winterize your boat? Follow this step-by-step checklist.



As boating season winds down, it's important to winterize your boat and get it ready for the freezing months ahead. Did you know? Caring for your boat through cold conditions can be just as important as caring for it in the summer months, and a little maintenance now can prevent costly repairs later. Follow this checklist to properly winterize your boat this season.

1. Adjust fuel and liquid levels. A simple way to begin getting your boat ready for winter is by:

- Filling the fuel tank. Ensure you're leaving enough room for expansion.
- Treating the fuel with a stabilizer. Run the engine for about 10 minutes to confirm it's circulating throughout the entire engine.
- Sealing the fuel valves.
- Changing the oil and any filters.

2. Prep the engine for storage. Tending to the engine now will keep it in better shape for the next boating season. Start winterizing the engine by:

- Flushing it with fresh water. Then, let it all drain.
- Washing the engine with soap and water. Rinse thoroughly.
- Removing the battery and storing it in a safe, dry spot. Note: The battery should be fully charged before being stored.
- Fogging the engine cylinders with an aerosol fogging solution.
- Lubricating the engine's grease fittings.
- Flushing the cooling system by draining any remaining coolant. Afterward, run a less toxic propylene glycol antifreeze through it.

3. Clean, wax, and repair. With your boat out of the water, you can easily inspect it from top to bottom. Start by:

- Removing any valuables from inside of the boat.
- Cleaning the inside of the boat, removing any food or drink.
- Bringing home any cushions and life jackets and storing them in a climate-controlled environment. Consider purchasing a dehumidifier for the storage area to pull excess moisture from the air, which could help prevent mildew.
- Washing the boat, removing any plant life or barnacles, then waxing the outside of the boat.
- Checking the boat for any damage that should be repaired.

4. Store it, lock it, and check it. After preparing your boat for storage, you're finally ready to store it. Some helpful tips include:

- Covering your boat at the storage location.
- Locking your boat and leaving a key with the marina manager, if applicable.
- Checking on your boat periodically or having the marina staff check it and report to you.

A final step to follow as you winterize your boat? Review your watercraft coverage to ensure you're protected for all the fun summer activities ahead. Talk to a local, independent agent today. Then, use our spring boating checklist when you're ready to enjoy the open water again. Until next season!

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