

The Complete Checklist for Winterizing Your Boat



Summer has officially ended, which means it's almost time to say goodbye to your boat for the season. But... there's more to do than just smile and wave.

Getting your boat ready for winter requires quite a few steps — all done to keep it in the best condition possible. Through freezing temperatures and fearful weather, winter can wreak havoc, but not if your boat is properly protected.

Because boats and engines differ, start by checking your owner's manual for any winterizing instructions. Then, feel free to consult **our official checklist for winterizing your boat**.

- Inspect the boat for any damage that should be repaired.
- Fill the fuel tank, but leave enough room for expansion.
- Treat the fuel with a stabilizer. Then, run the engine for about 10 minutes to confirm it's circulating throughout the entire engine.
- Seal the fuel valves.
- Change the oil and any filters.
- Flush the engine with fresh water. Then, let it all drain.
- Wash the engine with soap and water. Rinse thoroughly.
- Fog the engine cylinders with an aerosol fogging solution.
- Lubricate the engine's grease fittings.
- Drain any remaining coolant and run a non-toxic antifreeze through the cooling system.
- Remove any valuables from inside of the boat.
- Remove any food or drink.
- Bring home any cushions, and store them in a climate-controlled environment.
- Consider purchasing a dehumidifier to pull excess moisture from the air, which could help prevent mildew.

- Remove the battery, and plan to store it in a safe, dry spot. (Note: The battery should be fully charged when put away.)
- Clean the boat inside and out, removing any plant life or barnacles.
- Lock your boat (and leave a key with the marina manager, if applicable).
- Cover and store your boat.
- Check your boat periodically, or have the marina check it and report to you.
- Talk to your insurance agent about coverage for your boat. Make sure your policy outlines everything that's necessary to keep it protected through the off-season.

All set? Now, save our spring boating checklist for the future.