

## Winter – Inspect, Repair, Replace

# Boating Tips

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Whether your boat is in the water or not, now is the time to give it a thorough inspection before the temperature turns colder. Winter is also a good time to schedule repairs enabling you to get back on the water quickly and effortlessly in the spring. Marine mechanics are seeking winter work so they might cut you a deal to keep their income flowing.

What are you looking for:

- Hull blisters indicating water intrusion underneath the gelcoat requiring drying and repair
- Cracks in the gelcoat possibly indicating underlying weakness in the structure or core
- Gelcoat dings that could allow water to get into the core, weakening the structure
- Loose or cracked hoses needing replacement
- Broken or failing through hull fittings to be replaced
- Broken or missing hose clamps to be added
- If an inboard engine, rust around the exhaust manifolds indicating leaks around seals or holes in the manifold from corrosion
- The odor of gasoline in the bilge indicating a possible fuel leak from fuel line or clamp the required immediate attention to prevent an explosion
- Milky coloration in the engine oil meaning that water is getting into the engine block requiring immediate attention by a qualified engine mechanic
- Corrosion on the battery's positive terminal that needs cleaned and the terminal tightened
- Loose top side fittings of the rails, cleats, windshield, hand holds, rod holders, etc., requiring retightening or possibly re-bedding
- Chafed line requiring replacement
- Mud, dirt or salt caked lines needing cleaning
- Loose anchor fittings that need tightened or replaced
- Non-functioning live bait well pump to repair or replace
- Sticking or loose lure drawers that need repair
- A jumble of lures in the lure drawer or tackle box to be reorganized
- Worn straps or cuts on personal flotation devices to be repaired or the PFD replaced
- If you have inflatable PFDs, inflate inspect for leaks or abrasions. Replace if necessary. Refold and replace the trigger and CO<sup>2</sup> bottle

- Loose bimini or hardtop fittings to be tightened or re-bedded.
- Torn bimini to be replaced
- Out drive will neither raise nor lower requiring repair or replacement of cylinders or hydraulic pump
- Bent or dings in a prop(s) requiring repair or replacement
- Loose rub rail needing tightening re re-bedding possibly replacement or upgrading
- Loose swim platform to tighten or repair
- Rust stains indicating that what is supposed to be 306 stainless steel is not, therefore should be replaced
- Inspect all electrical connections for corrosion and loose connections. Replace household connectors and twist lugs with the proper marine connectors
- Inspect electrical wires for breaks and chafing, Repair and secure as needed.

Once completed, inspect, repair and service your fishing gear for the coming season. There is nothing worse than a reel seizing when you have that big one on the line.

I realize this is a long list yet it's far from complete. However, it's time to inspect then repair, service or replace as needed when you and your marine mechanic have the time.

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