The Complete Checklist for Winterizing Your Boat



You've enjoyed many summer rays and lake days. But as this boating season comes to a close, it's important to get your boat ready for the winter months ahead. Caring for your boat through the freezing winter temps is just as important as caring for it in the summer months. So, to help, we've prepared a "winterizing a boat checklist."

Because boats and engines differ, it's important to check the owner's manuals for instructions first. Then, review these steps to winterize a boat.

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

- Filling the fuel tank – but leaving enough room for expansion.
- Then treating the fuel with a stabilizer. (Run the engine for about 10 minutes to confirm it's circulating throughout the entire engine.)
- Next, seal the fuel valves.
- Complete this part of the process by changing the oil and any filters.

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

- Flush the engine with fresh water. Then, let it all drain.
- Wash the engine with soap and water. Rinse thoroughly.
- Remove the battery and store it in a safe, dry spot. (Note: The battery should be fully charged before being stored.)
- Fog the engine cylinders with an aerosol fogging solution.
- Lubricate the engine's grease fittings.

- Flush the cooling system by draining any remaining coolant.
- Then run a less toxic propylene glycol antifreeze through the cooling system.

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 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 prepping 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.

Our comprehensive watercraft coverage can give you peace of mind all year long. Talk to an agent about a policy, and then use our spring boating checklist when you're ready to enjoy the open water again.