

Winter Maintenance

Fuel considerations for the winter months.

If you have winterized your boat and put it away until the spring you will only have to go through a decommissioning exercise before you are up and running in the spring.

There are some issues to consider if you leave your boat in the water over the winter months especially if it is gasoline powered.

1. Start it up regularly. Engines should be fired up every few weeks to keep the oil warmed up and circulated throughout the crankshaft, top end and various oil galleries.
2. Put on some extra lines and run it in gear. Get the engine up to running temperature.
3. When an engine is shut down and depending where it stops in its firing order either an exhaust or intake valves remains open in one or more cylinders. The cold moist sea air is not kind to the insides of engines especially if they are left sitting for long periods of time.
4. Keep your fuel tank full when you put your boat away. Even after a day trip. A partially full tank will allow condensate (water) to form on the inside of the fuel tank. The water will go to the lowest point in the tank, the bottom of the tank. The suction side of the fuel line pick up is in the bottom of the tank.
5. It is safe to add a small amount of methyl hydrate (isopropyl alcohol) to fuel in a gas tank. It will serve two purposes. It will mix with water making it a burnable product mixing with the gasoline.
6. On cold wet days it will prevent fuel from icing.
7. Another by-product of water is rust or crud that that will form in the bottom of your fuel tank. That is the last thing you want in your fuel system and the first thing that will stop you especially if you start bouncing around stirring up the sediment in the tank.
8. Fuel stabilizer should also be added if you do not go out too often during the winter. Gasoline is now aerated. It is good for about three months before it starts to break down and lose its volatility. Lighter chemicals quickly evaporate and the remaining heavier chemicals make the remaining gasoline a less volatile.
9. Remember to start your engine regularly over the winter months.

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Commander.