

## Spring Start-up Checklist

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Spring has sprung and for millions of boaters in the U.S. that means it's time to take their boats out of winter storage and put them in the water. For many boaters, annual preparation and cleaning projects are necessary rites of spring that help prevent problems that could keep them off the water once the season is underway.

### Fuel System

Inspect the fuel system for leaks or damage and be sure to pay special attention to fuel hoses, connections and tank surfaces.

Evidence of a damaged fuel hose includes softness, brittleness or cracking.

Replace components when necessary and verify all fittings and clamps are properly secured.

Ensure the engine, exhaust and ventilation systems are all functioning properly.

Look before you pump. Don't fill your tank with fuel that contains more than 10% ethanol (E10) as it will damage your engine

### Belts, Cables & Hoses

Check belts, cables and hoses because they can become brittle and may crack during winter storage.

Belts should fit tightly around pulleys to prevent slipping.

A worn belt may leave a black residue near the pulley and will fit loosely.

Cracks or swells on the outer jacket of throttle, shift and steering control cables may be of internal corrosion and imminent failure

### Electric System

Inspect all electrical connections for clean, tight, corrosion free connections. Corroded connections can be dangerous

Remove corroded terminals and use a wire brush to clean them, along with all cable ends.

Charge your battery and have it tested to ensure it can hold a charge.

Electrical systems should be regularly inspected by a qualified technician.

### Fluid Levels

Check all fluid levels including engine oil, power steering, power trim reservoirs and coolant.

Be sure to change the engine oil, oil filter and drive lubricants if these tasks were not done prior to winterizing your boat.

### Propellers & Hulls

Inspect propellers for dings, pitting, cracks and distortion.

Damaged propellers can cause unwanted vibration and damage to your drive train.

Make sure the propeller is secured properly, and replace bearings when needed.

When inspecting the hull, look for blisters, distortions and cracks. Be sure to clean the hull, deck, and topsides using an environmentally safe cleaning solution.

Also, make sure the drain plug is securely in place before every launch.

### Safety Gear

Check your life jackets to ensure they are in good condition and that there are enough on board for all potential passengers.

Ensure that each individual has the correct size life jacket for their body weight.  
Be sure all onboard fire extinguishers are the correct class for your vessel, and are fully charged and stowed in the proper place.  
For any enclosed or semi-enclosed area, ensure you have at least one properly installed and working carbon monoxide detector  
Consider an EPIRB for situations of distress to ensure you can be found  
Take advantage of any safety inspections offered by the US Coast Guard (USCG), USCG Auxiliary or US Power Squadrons.  
Get the new boating year off to a great start. Ensure you'll enjoy another season of carefree boating and make your annual boat preparation more manageable.

## Semi-Annual Checklist

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### Fire Extinguishers

Do you have all required quantities and types of fire extinguishers?  
Have they been checked within the past year?  
Are serviceable units tagged by a licensed facility?  
Are units accessible?  
Is at least one accessible from the helm or cockpit?  
Are you and your crew familiar with their operation?

### Safety Equipment

Lifelines or rails in good condition.  
Stanchions or pulpit securely mounted.  
Hardware tight and sealed at deck.  
Grab rails secure and free of corrosion or snags that may catch your hands.  
Non-skid surfaces free from accumulated dirt or excess wear.  
For any enclosed or semi-enclosed area, ensure you have at least one properly installed and working carbon monoxide detector  
Consider an EPIRB for situations of distress to ensure you can be found

### Fuel System

Is the system properly grounded at the filter, tank, deck, pump, etc.?  
Is the fuel tank free from rust or contamination?  
No leaks from tank, hose or fittings.  
Hoses U.S.C.G. approved and free of cracking or stiffness with adequate slack to account for vibration.  
Is tank secured?  
Fuel shut-off valve on tank and at engine.  
Engine compartment and engine clean and free of oily rags or flammable materials.  
Blower switch at remote location.  
Is your fuel system protected from siphoning?  
TIP: Look before you pump. Don't fill your tank with fuel that contains more than 10% ethanol (E10) as it will damage your engine

## Ground Tackle

At least two anchors on board.  
Anchor and rode adequate for your boat and bottom conditions.  
Tackle properly secured.  
Length of chain at anchor.  
Thimble on rode and safety wired shackles.  
Chafing gear at chocks for extended stays or storm conditions.  
Anchor stowed for quick accessibility.

## Stoves

Labelled and designated for marine use.  
Properly ventilated to remove carbon-monoxide from cabin.  
Retainers or rails for pots and pans while underway.  
If built-in, properly insulated and free from combustible materials, CNG and LPG (propane).  
Stored in separate compartment from vessel's interior and engine room.  
Tightly secured shut-off valve at tank.  
Proper labelling and cautions in place at tank location.  
Hoses, lines and fittings of approved and inspected type.  
Compartment is ventilated overboard and below level of tank base.

## Electrical System

Wiring approved for marine applications.  
Is system neatly bundled and secured.  
Protected against chafing and strain.  
Adequate flex between bulkhead and engine connections.  
Clear of exhaust system and bilge.  
System is protected by circuit breakers or fuses.  
Grounds to Zincs if required.  
Wire terminals and connections sealed to prevent corrosion.

## Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)

In addition to your pre-departure inspection of PFDs check for wear or abrasion, weak or torn seams, secure straps and buckles. Some types of PFDs are equipped with inflation devices; check to be sure cartridges are secure and charged.

## Bilge Pumps

Will pump(s) adequately remove water in emergency? Do you have a manual backup? Are bilges clean and free to circulate (clear limber holes)? Do you check bilges frequently and not rely on automatic pumps?

## Corrosion Prevention

Through-hulls, props, shafts, bearings, rudder fittings, and exposed fastenings free of destructive corrosion.  
Zincs are adequate to provide protection.

Through-hulls are properly bonded.

Inspect the steering cables, engine control linkage and cables, engine mounts and gear case for corrosion.

These items are properly lubricated or painted to prevent undue corrosion.

#### Through-hulls

Strainers, intakes and exhaust or discharge fittings are free from restrictions such as barnacles, marine growth or debris.

Inspect sea valves for smooth operation.

Handles are attached to valves for quick closure.

Hoses are in good condition and free from cracking.

Double hose-clamps below the waterline.

Anti-siphon valve fitted to marine toilet.

Through-hull plugs are near fittings or attached to hose in case of emergency.

#### Batteries

Stored in non-corrosive, liquid tight, ventilated containers.

Non-conductive covers are fitted over posts.

Batteries are well secured.