

Tech Tips: It's Not Too Late (But Getting There Quickly)

OK. It's winter already! The boat is put away and you have done everything to get it ready for a freezing winter ashore. Or have you? With the rapid onset of bad weather this year is it possible that something was forgotten? Here's a checklist.

General stuff (should be obvious):

- Take the sails off, fold and bag them and store in a nice warm basement, get them washed if needed.
- Strip the running gear, standing rig and spars.
- Remove the anchor and rode so that you can clean out all the Maine mud in the chain locker.
- Drain the tanks and flush the hoses of all the fluids. Then pour in some marine/RV safe anti-freeze to displace any fluids trapped in low sections of the hoses.
- Remove all the food and other stuff that bugs and mice like to eat when you're not there.
- Take all the shoes, clothes, blankets, pillows and other things that will hold moisture and possibly mildew over the winter, home for a good washing.

Normal stuff (but not so obvious):

- Change the engine oil. Don't leave acids that are a product of combustion in your engine.
- Add fuel stabilizer to the fuel to cut down moisture absorption and prevent corrosion.
- Top off the fuel tank(s) to minimize the moisture that gets into the tank during temperature swings.
- Check the engine anti-freeze. It doesn't last forever. If more than 5 years old it could be creating corrosion problems for your cooling system.
- Shut down the engine while spraying fogging oil into the intake.
- Drain the salt water side of the engine's cooling system.
- Pull the impeller from the raw water pump. Lightly lubricate the interior of the pump.
- Drain the salt water side of the heat exchanger. Check the zinc.
- After the boat is out of the water open all the thru hull valves so that any water trapped inside the valve can drain out. Freezing water inside the valve can ruin it.
- Drain the salt water out of the muffler if you use a water lift-type muffler as most of us do.
- Put a rag or ball into the outboard end of the exhaust pipe. Stick a rag or ball into the air intake. This greatly reduces the amount of moisture that gets into the engine.
- Pour some marine/RV anti-freeze into the deck drains or any other place where water may accumulate and freeze.