

## Spring into the Boating Season - Use This Pre-Launch Checklist from BoatU.S.

After winter's cold temperatures, heavy snows and high winds, boats need special care this spring. Time spent with this checklist today - can save time and money later!

### OUT OF THE WATER

- \_\_\_ Inspect and lubricate seacocks. Hoses and hose clamps should be inspected and replaced as necessary.
- \_\_\_ Replace deteriorated zincs.
- \_\_\_ Inspect prop(s) for dings, pitting and distortion. Make sure cotter pins are secure. Grip the prop and try moving the shaft – if it's loose, the outlass bearing may need to be replaced.
- \_\_\_ Check to make sure the rudderstock hasn't been bent.
- \_\_\_ Inspect the hull for blisters, distortions and stress cracks.
- \_\_\_ Make sure your engine intake sea strainer is free of corrosion and properly secured.
- \_\_\_ Check the engine shaft and rudder stuffing boxes for looseness. After the boat is launched, be sure to check these as well as through-hulls for leaks.
- \_\_\_ Use a hose to check for deck leaks at ports and hatches. Renew caulk or gaskets as necessary.
- \_\_\_ If equipped, ensure that stern drain plug is installed.

#### Outdrives and outboards:

- \_\_\_ Inspect rubber outdrive bellows for cracked, dried and/or deteriorated spots (look especially in the folds), and replace if suspect.
- \_\_\_ Check power steering and power trim oil levels. Replace worn-out zincs.
- \_\_\_ Inspect outer jacket of control cables. Cracks or swelling indicate corrosion and mean that the cable has to be replaced.
- \_\_\_ Inspect fuel lines, including fill and vent hoses, for softness, brittleness or cracking. Check all joints for leaks and make sure all lines are well supported with non-combustible clips or straps with smooth edges.

#### Engines and fuel systems:

- \_\_\_ Inspect fuel tanks, fuel pumps and filters for leaks. Clamps should be snug and free of rust. Clean fuel filters.
- \_\_\_ Inspect cooling hoses and fittings for stiffness, rot, leaks and/or cracking. Make sure they fit snugly and are double-clamped.
- \_\_\_ Every few years, remove and inspect exhaust manifold for corrosion.
- \_\_\_ Clean and tighten electrical connections, especially both ends of battery cables. Wire-brush battery terminals and fill cells with distilled water.
- \_\_\_ Inspect bilge blower hose for leaks.

#### Sailboat rigging:

- \_\_\_ Inspect fittings for cracks and rust. Inspect wire halyards and running backstays for "fishhooks" and rust.
- \_\_\_ Remove tape on turnbuckles and lubricate threads, preferably with Teflon. Replace old tape with fresh tape.
- \_\_\_ Recaulk through-deck chainplates as necessary (generally, once a decade).

### IN THE WATER

- \_\_\_ Check the engine shaft and rudder stuffing boxes for steady leaks and looseness.
- \_\_\_ Use a hose to check for deck leaks at ports and hatches. Renew caulks or gaskets as necessary.
- \_\_\_ If equipped, ensure that stern drain plug is installed.

#### Trailers:

- \_\_\_ Inspect tire treads and sidewalls for cracks or lack of tread and replace as necessary. Check air pressure. Don't forget the spare!
- \_\_\_ Inspect bearings and repack as necessary.
- \_\_\_ Test tail and back-up lights. Test winch to make sure it's working properly.
- \_\_\_ Inspect trailer frame for rust. Sand and paint to prevent further deterioration.

#### Miscellaneous:

- \_\_\_ Check expiration dates on flares and fire extinguishers.
- \_\_\_ Check stove and remote tanks for loose fittings and leaking hoses.
- \_\_\_ Inspect bilge pump and float switch to make sure it's working properly.
- \_\_\_ Inspect dock and anchor lines for chafing.
- \_\_\_ Update or replace old charts, waterway guides.
- \_\_\_ Check shore power cable connections for burns, which indicates the cable needs to be replaced.
- \_\_\_ Make sure your boating license and/or registration is up to date. Don't forget your trailer tags.
- \_\_\_ Review your boat insurance policy and update coverage if needed. Be sure you have fuel spill insurance coverage.