



HUB PRIVATE CLIENT

SPRING BOAT LAY-UP REFERENCE GUIDE

Spring has arrived, signaling the onset of boating season. If your vessel was in winter storage, there are essential tasks to complete before hitting the water. Below are recommendations to ensure your boat is primed for a smooth and secure launch, promising a season of enjoyment and safety.

Spring presents the perfect opportunity for a thorough safety evaluation. Follow this boat safety checklist to help prioritize safety.

- Start by inspecting the life jackets, flares, and first-aid kit to ensure the safety of yourself and your fellow boaters while aboard your vessel. Verify the functionality of the horn, running lights, anchor light, and searchlight.
- Ensure that the boat's registration or documentation is up to date, and that all necessary documents, including a copy of your insurance policy with contact details for claims, are kept on board.
- Initiate a maintenance "to-do list" noting tasks requiring attention before the season's end.
- Conduct an inventory of all equipment and amenities on board, updating it as needed throughout the season. Include a list of personal belongings aboard, which could prove valuable in the event of loss.
- Replace any missing, damaged, or expired items, including fire extinguishers.

BEFORE LAUNCH:

- **Examine the hull:** Always allow yard employees to handle the movement of stands and blocking while inspecting the hull. Thoroughly check all through-hull fittings both above and below the waterline, ensuring their clarity.
- **Zincs:** Remove sacrificial zinc anodes from the hull and underwater metal components before painting. Clean the attaching metal surfaces until they shine, then replace the zincs.

- **Transducers and running gear:** Inspect underwater transducers for depth sounders, fish finders, and knot meters. Assess propellers and shafts for any signs of damage or misalignment. Check swim step supports, trim tabs, thruster grates, and boarding ladders.
- **Rudders and steering:** Examine the rudders and inspect the struts supporting the prop shafts. Verify the condition of shaft bearings for any signs of wear.
- **Outdrive precautions:** Pay close attention to the flexible rubber bellows between the drive and the transom, as they deteriorate over time. Failed bellows are a leading cause of outdrive-powered boat sinkings. Inspect the lower unit for oil leaks and change the oil if necessary.
- **Plug check:** Remove any plugs from exhaust ports in the hull used to deter critters. Ensure the hull's drain plug is securely in place and tightened before launching.

INSIDE THE VESSEL:

- **Inner hull fittings and steering:** Ensure smooth operation of all seacocks and inspect strainers. Test the knot meter paddle, if detachable, by spinning it while monitoring the gauge for functionality. Assess hydraulic and/or mechanical components of the steering gear.
- **Clamps and hoses:** Examine hoses connected to pumps, seacocks, and through-hulls. Replace any hoses showing signs of being soft, bulging, cracked, or damaged. Verify the condition of hose clamps, ensuring they are rust-free and in good condition.
- **Bilge pumps and high water alarms:** Lift float switches while inspecting the bilges to confirm proper operation of bilge pumps and high water alarms.
- **Engine and batteries:** Check and replace zincs and impellers in engine and generator cooling systems. Inspect all V-belts and examine mufflers and exhaust lines for leaks or deterioration, including hose clamps. Clean battery terminals and ensure batteries are fully charged.
- **Leak and pest inspection:** Check all deck hardware for loose or degraded sealant, considering a garden hose test for leaks. Inspect bilges, wiring, and soft materials for signs of rodents and insects, servicing or replacing as necessary.
- **Test water-tightness:** Utilize a hose to assess the water-tightness of deck hatches and access ports leading into below-deck spaces.

DURING THE LAUNCH:

- **Ensure proper launching:** Boatyards can become quite hectic as the weather warms, with multiple boats launched per hour. During busy periods, yard employees might not thoroughly check for leaks after launching. It's advisable for you or someone familiar with the boat to be present during the launch.
- **Engine and bilge:** Immediately upon launching, inspect below deck for any signs of leaks. Confirm the seawater intake seacock for the engine is open. With the engine running, observe exhaust water flow and monitor the temperature gauge to ensure the cooling system is functioning correctly.
- **For sailboats:** If your sailboat's mast was removed for winter storage, the yard typically re-installs it once the boat is in the water. Ensure all turnbuckles are securely fastened with cotter pins after the rigging has been adjusted.

BEFORE THE MAIDEN VOYAGE:

- **Ensure readiness:** With the boat secured in its mooring or slip, take the time to thoroughly inspect everything before embarking on your first cruise. Begin with the foredeck and progress aft before proceeding below deck.
- **Anchors and mooring lines:** Confirm the anchor and rode are properly secured and ready for use. Verify the functionality of the windlass if present. Assess the condition of mooring lines, fenders, and, if applicable, the mooring bridle.
- **Deck safety:** Ensure pulpits, wire lifelines, stanchions, and ladders are securely in place and in good condition. Test the running and anchor lights for proper operation.
- **Rig deck canvas and leak check:** Set up deck canvas and secure windows, portlights, and hatches. Afterward, conduct a thorough washing and promptly check below deck for any signs of leaks.
- **Shore power inspection:** Before connecting to shore power, inspect the cord ends and the boat-mounted receptacle for any indications of heat damage.
- **Electrical and mechanical systems:** Start engines and generators and allow them to warm up adequately. Check battery voltage; a 12-volt system typically charges at around 14 volts. Inspect fuel, cooling, and exhaust systems for any leaks.
- **Water tanks and water heater:** If the domestic water and waste systems were winterized, they'll require draining, flushing, and securing any disconnected fittings.
- **LPG/CNG Gas System check:** For propane systems, ignite a burner on the stove, then close all valves and check for leaks.
- **Engine oil change:** It's advisable to change the oil and filters before the season, even if done last fall.

Contact a [HUB Private Client Risk Advisor](#) for more information about [watercraft insurance](#) and to find the appropriate policy to protect your vessel.

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