

**Before You Launch:**

- Hose clamps should be inspected and replaced as necessary. Double clamp below-waterline connections, including all hose and fuel lines with marine-rated stainless hose clamps and keeping seacocks closed when you are away are wise moves.
- Inspect cooling hoses for stiffness, rot, leaks and cracking. Make sure they fit snugly.
- Replace deteriorated sacrificial anodes.
- 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 cutless bearing (on inboard drive systems) may need to be replaced.
- Check the rudderstock to ensure it hasn't been bent.
- Inspect the hull for blisters, distortions and stress cracks.
- Make sure your engine intake sea strainer is not cracked or bent from ice, free of corrosion, and is clean and properly secured.

- With inboards, check the engine shaft and rudder stuffing boxes for looseness. A stuffing box should only leak when the prop shaft is turning and needs to be inspected routinely.
- Inspect and lubricate seacocks.
- Use a garden hose to check for deck leaks at ports and hatches. Renew caulk or gaskets as necessary.
- Inspect bilge pump and float switch to make sure they're working properly.
- Check stove and remote tanks for loose fittings and leaking hoses.
- Inspect dock and anchor lines for chafing.
- If equipped, ensure that the stern drain plug is installed.
- After the boat is launched, be sure to check all thru-hulls for leaks.

Engines and Fuel Systems:

- 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 noncombustible clips or straps with smooth edges.
- Inspect fuel tanks, fuel pumps and filters for leaks. Ensure portable tanks and lines are completely drained of stale fuel before filling with new fuel. Clamps should be snug and free of rust. Clean or replace fuel filters.
- Every few years, remove and inspect exhaust manifolds for corrosion.
- Charge battery. Clean and tighten electrical connections, especially both ends of battery cables. Wire-brush battery terminals and fill cells with distilled water (if applicable).
- Inspect bilge blower hose for leaks.

Engine 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 anodes that are more than half worn away.
- Inspect outer jacket of control cables. Cracks or swelling indicate corrosion and mean that the cable must be replaced.

Sailboat Rigging:

- Inspect swage fittings for cracks and heavy rust (some discoloration is acceptable). 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.
- If you suspect the core around a chainplate is damp, remove the chainplate to inspect and make repairs.

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 wheel bearings and repack as necessary.
- Test all lights and winch to make sure they're working properly. Inspect hitch chains.
- Inspect trailer frame for rust. Sand and paint to prevent further deterioration.
- Inspect brakes and brake fluid reservoir.

Safety:

- Check expiration dates on flares. Inspect fire extinguishers. Replace if over 12 years old. Over 40 million Kidde extinguishers with plastic handles were recalled on Nov. 2, 2017 (learn more at BoatUS.com/extinguisher-recall).
- Make sure you have properly sized and wearable life jackets in good condition for each passenger, including kids. Check inflatable life jacket cylinders.
- Test smoke, carbon monoxide, fume and bilge alarms.
- Check running lights and spare bulb inventory.
- Update paper charts, chart plotter software.
- Replenish first aid kit items that may have been used last season.
- Be sure to get a free vessel safety check from the US Coast Guard Auxiliary or US Power Squadrons. Find out more at SafetySeal.net.

For the Dock:

- Check both ends of the shore power cable connections for burns, which indicate the cable and/or boat's shore power inlet or the dock's receptacle must be replaced.
- Test ground-fault protection on your boat and private dock, and know how to prevent Electric Shock Drowning by going to BoatUS.com/ESD

The Paperwork:

- Make sure your boat registration is up to date. Don't forget your trailer tags.
- Review your boat insurance policy and update coverage if needed. BoatUS provides free quotes at BoatUS.com/Insurance. Provide a copy to your marina or club.
- If applicable, ensure your BoatUS Towing Membership is in good standing. Login to BoatUS.com/Account to check your Membership status or join at BoatUS.com