

Getting ready for winter? As you enjoy the season's final weeks of sea and sunshine, start preparing to winterize your boat. Regardless of the engine type, the following key steps will ensure a smooth return to the water when springtime arrives!

#	TASK	HOW TO TIPS
1	REPLACE ENGINE OIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm up the engine while in water so more dirty oil will drain out and impurities will flush out more quickly. • Use quality oil and filters as recommended by your engine's manufacturer. • For outboard motors, change the oil and filter before storing.
2	FLUSH AND DRAIN COOLING WATER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For inboard and sterndrive engines: Flush the engine with clean water by using water muffs or a similar device to connect a garden hose to your cooling system. (Never run a water engine without water). Then flush until the engine reaches normal operating temperature. • Next, remove drain plugs. You may also need to remove the water pump hose to drain the remaining water. • For outboard engine maintenance, make sure all drain holes are open. Then start the engine and clean the cooling system by flushing it with fresh water. (Use water muffs or a similar device connected to a garden hose.) Flush for a few minutes.
3	STABILIZE FUEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add a high-quality marine fuel stabilizer to prevent fuel deterioration. • Fill the tank with fresh fuel to prevent corrosion-causing water condensation. Run the engine for a few minutes to get treated gas throughout the system—either when your boat's in the water or while using a fitting designed to run the engine with a garden hose.
4	REPLACE GEAR OIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drain the lower unit of old gear oil and replace it with a fresh supply. When changing the gear oil, be sure to check for moisture. • If water comes out first, or if you see milky or lumpy oil, this is an indication that your boat is experiencing moisture contamination and will need new seals before next season.
5	GREASE AND LUBRICATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find your engine's grease fittings (most will be located in the steering mechanism area), then use a quality marine lubricant to protect against rust, corrosion and oxidation. • Check your owner's manual to be sure you don't miss any critical areas that need to be greased before winter storage.
6	PROTECT INTERNAL ENGINE COMPONENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While in storage, engine oil can drain away. This exposes internal engine components to harsh elements in winter and can lead to corrosion and cylinder scuffing over time. • Use a fogging oil spray specially formulated to penetrate deep into the engine and coat parts with a protective layer of anti-corrosive compound.
7	REMOVE VALUABLES AND CLEAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove all valuables, including expensive electronics. It is best to insure your boat, even when it's not on the water. • Keeping your boat clean is always good in the long run. Inspect the boat's underside and wax it before storing it for the winter.
8	COVER AND STORE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The best option is dryland boat storage. If this is not feasible, at a minimum, you'll need to cover your boat with a durable cover. Another good option is to shrink-wrap your boat. • Make sure your boat insurance covers your winter storage approach.