

## Useful General Tips for Caring for your Boat



### **Polishing the Gel Coat:**

Always wash the salt water from the hull as soon as practicable. This also applies to the exterior of the motor and the trailer, particularly the trailer brakes. Carrying a hose on the boat so this can be done at a ramp is a good idea.

The amount of polishing required will depend on the way that your boat is stored. The gel coat of a permanently moored boat will deteriorate more quickly. Polishing once a year with a fine cut polish should restore and protect the finish. If the surface has become dull an extra cut polish will be required and should be followed by a fine cut polish. Follow the instructions on the polish product, particularly regarding recommended cloths and avoid contacting the chine tapes with the solvent liquid.

### **Polishing Stainless Steel:**

Over time slight brown staining can appear on rails. This can be easily removed by polishing with a general-purpose metal polish.

### **Perspex Care:**

Always hose the perspex before cleaning with a clean grit-free wet (saturated) cloth. Wiping dry will cause fine scratch lines on the surface. Scratching can be removed by carefully polishing the whole screen or window with a perspex polish.

### **Canopy and Cover Care:**

Wash covers regularly using warm water and mild detergent. Zips can be lubricated with silicon spray, candle wax or surf wax. Press-studs should also be lubricated with Vaseline. If this is not done press-studs will gradually become harder to use.

### **Teak Care:**

Use only teak oil applied with a dry cloth. Teak on new boats will need oiling 2 or 3 times in the first three months until the wood saturates. Weathered teak needs to be sanded with a medium and then fine paper prior to application of 2 or 3 coats of oil. Particularly badly weathered teak may need to be treated with teak restorer prior to sanding and oiling. Do not varnish, as the oil in the teak will only cause it to peel off.

### **Fabric and Carpet Care:**

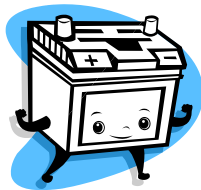


Cushion covers can be spot cleaned with a quality wool wash. Bad soiling may require the removal and professional cleaning of the cover. Wool wash or a general carpet cleaner can also be used to wash carpets. Always ensure adequate ventilation for drying. Having a stiff brush and dustpan on board to pick up crumbs etc will reduce the need for washing carpets.

### **Motor Care:**

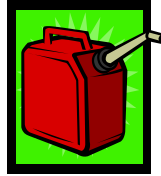
Read and follow the owner's handbook provided by the motor manufacturer. Between services you can care for your motor by washing off salt water before storage. Spraying twice a year under the cowl with a water displacer such as CRC or WD40 will also help. Outboard's can also be polished to preserve finish. Regularly check the condition of your propeller. Bent blades, chips etc will compromise your motor's performance.

### **Battery Care:**



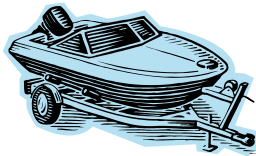
Regularly examine about every three months is recommended. Keep terminals clean and coat them with Vaseline, ensure fastenings are firm and check water levels (depending on the battery type). Never disconnect the terminals when the motor is running as alternator diode damage may result.

### **Fuelling:**



Check motor manufacture's handbook for the correct fuel type to use. Be careful not to overfill as escaped petrol can damage tapes. If this occurs wash the area immediately with water. Make sure the seal in the cap is in good condition and that the cap is replaced and tightened. As with motor vehicles make sure naked flames such as from a stove or cigarette are definitely out when fuelling.

### **Trailer Maintenance:**



Always wash salt water from brakes before storage. Test that the brakes are functioning each time the unit is towed and seek professional advice if not working. Check tyre inflation regularly and carry a spare wheel. Before a long trip and at regular intervals wheels should be removed, the studs greased and the brakes and bearings serviced.

### **Safety Gear:**



Minimum safety requirements for a 5-8m boat are listed in the Waterways Safety Boating Handbook. It includes an approved life jacket per person, a paddle or oars, a bucket (Min. 9lts) and line or bilge pump (Min. 45 lts) waterproof torch (after sunset or before sunset), an anchor and line, a fire extinguisher, 2 litres of fresh water per person, a compass and appropriate maps or charts. These are minimum requirements, other useful items might include a basic spare parts and tool kit, an EPIRB or first aid kit, a sharp knife and a whistle. These suggestions and others are listed in the Safe Boating Handbook.

Make sure that you have the right gear and that it is well maintained. Children's jackets need to be the right size. Check that your compass works, that your flares have not expired and that they are stored in a dry location. Know how to

use your marine radio. It's a good idea to join the Coast Guard or Coastal Patrol and regularly call in to make sure that you are being heard. Remove all rope from your anchor locker at least once a year and restack it. Try to let rope fall naturally into the locker, avoiding kink's and twists.

### **General Usage Tips:**



Read books, including Safe Boating Handbook on boating safety and handling and take an experienced friend on your first few trips.

Plan your day or weekend out carefully. Always check the weather forecast before leaving and don't go if the weather pattern is unstable. If you're venturing into a new area, acquire charts of the area and check depths relative to the tide so you don't get stranded. Observe maximum passenger loading guidelines. These are for calm waters so substantially reduce load for open or offshore conditions.

If caught in rough conditions make sure everyone is wearing a life jacket and is in the cockpit of the boat, not the cabin. Close all hatches and secure the anchor and other heavy items. Balance the load in the boat, as the boat will ride more softly on an even keel. Advise all passengers to remain seated and to hold on while travelling. Similar rules apply when crossing surf bars. See your Safe Boating Handbook for comprehensive advice about going out and coming in over a bar.

When anchoring try to establish bottom condition before putting down CQR or sand anchor. Anchoring problems are often associated with not letting out enough rope. Allow enough rope for the anchor to dig in. Make sure your anchor has at least 3m of chain, preferably 5-6m. Avoid anchoring up in channels or areas of high volume usage.

Accelerate and decelerate smoothly, always warning passengers of likely changes in speed or direction. Bring the boat smartly onto the plane then pull back the throttle to optimum cruising speed, usually about 3000-4000 RMP. Keep in mind that the last quarter of the throttle doubles fuel consumption. You will also need to get to know the idiosyncrasies of your fuel gauge as they generally have a lower accuracy than those fitted to cars. Be aware of your wash and its effect on others. Greatest wash is usually generated at about 8 – 10 knots. Either keep the boat on the plane, 15 – 20 knots or drop down to 4 – 5 knots when passing moored craft and in a no wash zone. Some other probably familiar, tips include always ensuring that you have comprehensive and third party insurance and always being aware of the level of alcohol consumed by yourself and your passengers.