



NAUTICAL NOTES

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Put a little spring into your step with these Safe and Up-to-Date Boating Tips!

Bunker Down. Boat Bunkers (boatbunkers.com) offers an effective approach to protecting a boat at the waterline and below. The company creates flotation collars that function as in-water mooring stations. They cradle the hull at the waterline, with an under-shield that cloaks the hull, depriving prospective pests of oxygen and food, thus keeping barnacles and other marine life at bay.

Multi Task. Many boaters make sure they have a tube of Chapstick aboard to protect their lips against sun and wind. But surprisingly, its use doesn't stop there. Chapstick can also protect against frustrating snags. Try using the lip balm as a corrosion-battling lube for snaps and zippers on your boat cover, Bimini or isinglass.

Become One With Your Boat. This is one we have mentioned before. Although it sounds like a Chinese proverb, becoming one with your boat is the easiest way to keeping your boat in its best condition. Know the sounds, smells and feel of your boat. If you hear, smell or feel something different, check it out before a large problem arises. For example, a new clicking might be a pump running dry, a slight burning rubber smell may be a loose belt, and a new vibration, could mean a ding in the prop.

Add a Filter. Gasoline blended with ethanol instead of MTBE may be good news for the environment, but it can be bad news for boating. Ethanol grabs moisture from the air, and can dissolve varnish and other materials in your fuel storage and delivery system. Either effect can bring your engine to an early end. Yamaha offers two add-on filters to catch the bad stuff: a mini-10 filter and a 10-micron filter. The first is for outboards up to 115 hp, the second for bigger motors. When the filter plugs up, simply switch it out for a new one.

Cover Up. Boat covers have several arguments in their favor. They keep the sun's rays from prematurely aging upholstery, prevent bugs and debris from collecting during storage, and they keep rain from filling the bilge. Maintenance is reduced, as is wear and tear. If you plan to tow your boat with the cover on, make sure the manufacturer has designed it for that — at highway speeds, it's always best to remove the cover.

Avoid Overfilling. Gas expands in heat. If your tank is too full, gas will seep over the top causing stickers to peel or other related damage. Many boats fall victim to this blunder every summer. Best bet? Stop pumping at the first click of the pump, and always have a clean rag handy.

Ban Bare Feet. Good housekeeping makes for good boating. Simply ask that no guest wear their shoes on deck. Declaring a "ground rule" will help you avoid unwanted scuffs and scrapes. If you plan on making any stops along your cruise, keep a bin or designated area for everybody's shoes close to the boat's boarding point. The less traffic, the better.

Light Up Your Life. Balky trailer lights are a common impairment. Bulbs fail and wiring corrodes. A great solution is to replace and upgrade your lights with an LED system. LEDs (light-emitting diodes) are brighter, use less power and last longer than conventional bulbs. You can find submersible LED taillight kits, starting at \$64.99, online.

Keep It Clean. A clean hull will not only move through the water more easily, but will also handle better, lowering your fuel costs. Cleanliness matters on the interior as well. To avoid attracting bees, flies and other nuisances, it's always better to clean up spills right away. A number of effective interior cleaning products are available, but an affordable alternative and, ultimately the cleaning method of choice by most boaters, are Baby wipes.



L I F E J A C K E T ✓ - L I S T

Boating season is kicking into gear and you're bound for the big blue. According to the United States Coast Guard, USCG-approved life jackets are required on all recreational boats so before you board, make sure you and your family members are equipped with the right safety gear by asking the following questions...

- Do I have USCG approved life jackets?
- Have I selected the proper life jacket for my boating activity?
- Is my life jacket the right size according to the label, and does it fit correctly?
- Have I trial-tested my life jacket?
- Does my life jacket keep my chin above the water and allow me to breathe easily?
- If my life jacket is an inflatable, have I checked the status of the inflator and make sure that the CO2 cylinder is not punctured?
- If my life jacket is an inflatable, have I checked it for leaks in the last two months?
- Are my passengers' life jackets suitable and do they fit the same requirements listed above?

ENVIRONMENTAL WATCH: Flame-retardant Chemicals Found In U.S. Coastal Waters

Thousands of new chemicals are engineered around the world each year and as a result, foreign concoctions of agro-chemicals, pharmaceuticals, personal care products, and a wide range of industrial products have been leaked into our environment without any solid knowledge of their consequences. Scientists of today appropriately label these chemicals as "Chemicals of Emerging Concern" or CEC's.

A recent report from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shows that polybrominated diphenyl ethers or PBDEs (a CEC commonly used in flame retardants), are contaminating U.S. coastal waters at greater levels than a decade ago. The first national assessment by NOAA's National Status & Trends Program reports several regions, including the northern Mid-Atlantic, central Gulf of Mexico, Southern California, Pacific Northwest and the Great lakes have elevated PBDE concentrations. Furthermore, PBDE concentrations are positively correlated with human population density along the U.S. coastline.

Levels of contamination are highest around urban areas such as New York and Los Angeles, but the chemicals are also present in remote and relatively pristine areas, including the coasts of Maine and Alaska.

And so, the question arises: What do we do? Maine was one

of the first states to restrict the sale of consumer products containing PBDEs because the chemicals have shown up in sediment or shellfish in all U.S. coastal waters, including mussels collected along the Maine coast, according to the report. So far, laboratory tests have been able to prove the chemicals to be toxic to animals; any further concern is yet to be determined.

NOAA's report is intended to support research and local monitoring, and to assist resource managers and policy makers tasked with making regulatory decisions about these contaminants. If you have any questions about the report or the NOAA NS&T Program, please do not hesitate to write:

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