

Coast Guard urges winterization of boats across the PNW

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The Coast Guard urges the public to winterize their vessel as winter approaches the Pacific Northwest.

Winterization is an important step, even if you live in a moderate region like the Pacific Northwest. Proper winterization will ensure your safety, prolong the longevity of your vessel, and help safeguard the maritime community and environment around you.

The Coast Guard frequently responds to sunken vessels and oil discharges at marinas due to poor winterization. Below are a few items to get you started but if you don't feel comfortable performing these items by yourself, we encourage you to reach out to your boat dealer or local marina for assistance:

Remove excess gear – Removing gear that has accumulated over the boating season will make room for cleaning and any necessary repairs. This should include an inspection of all safety gear and replacing any expired or defective gear, including life jackets, fire extinguishers, first aid kit, etc.

Drain the water – Properly dispose of any bilge water and drain any fresh water tanks, fittings and lines. During this time check all boat plugs and seals to ensure they are properly set and ready for winter. This is an important step to prevent water lines and tanks from cracking and preventing internal water damage, including mold.

Remove waste and materials – Use environmentally friendly chemicals when cleaning your vessel and remember to properly dispose of any chemicals, oils, and batteries. If you are not sure of where to dispose of these items, check with your marina or local authorities.

Whether you are going to keep your boat in the water for the winter or take it out, we encourage you to disconnect your batteries, shut and lock all doors and windows, and secure all covers.

Before departure, double check all moorings and ensure they are securely set. If the boat is taken out of the water, shrink wrapping the vessel is also an option. Sealing the vessel is extremely important in preventing capsizing due to heavy rainfall or icing.

Be advised that heat lamps pose a potential fire a danger due to improper size and wiring, poor grounding of extension cords, as well as placing too close to flammable materials.

As with all maintenance and repairs, consult your owner's manual for any special recommendations or concerns.