

## 9 steps to winterize your boat to avoid serious damage and expenses



The onset of the first cold-weather foreshadows many exciting events in the life of every person. For owners of boats and yachts, the winter period is doubly special, because in rapidly changing weather conditions it is necessary to carefully follow the rules of caring for your favorite boat. The winter months are the most dangerous for your boat. Winter weather can cause serious damage (cracked hull, corrosion, broken electronics) if your boat is not ready for wintering. Winterizing is more than is about just filling in fuel stabilizer, draining engine water, and adding antifreeze. Think of it as a methodological process that runs through the whole boat.

Preservation for the winter period and timely maintenance are the key to the flawless operation of the vessel in the new season and the best way to extend its operational life. Depending on climatic conditions and technical capabilities, there are options for winter storage in the open air, under a canopy/tent, or inside the boathouse. The last option is the safest and allows you to start repairs and preparations for launching at an early stage. In a boathouse, yachts dry out faster, and this improves their technical condition.

There are several steps to take in order to prepare your boat for winter storage.

### **1. Engine: rinse and fill with fresh antifreeze**

Flush the engine with fresh water. Turn off the engine when flushing, making sure it does not overheat until the water runs clear. Clean all outboard gauges and store the engine in an upright position to drain the water completely. Even a small amount of water left in the engine can freeze and cause great damage.

Drain old antifreeze and refill with fresh. Be sure to choose an antifreeze that meets the engine manufacturer's specifications. It prevents engine parts from freezing and protects them from corrosion.

### **2. Engine: change the oil**

Water and acids can corrode the engine. Change the filter and blow it out with a strong blast of air so that no water remains. Then fill in with new oil.

### **3. Engine: use conservation oil**

Keep the engine running without starting it, and while it is spinning, spray preservative oil into the carburetor or through the spark plug hole, whichever is recommended in your instruction manual. This will protect the rotating engine parts during winter frosts.

### **4. Check drive belts**

Long periods of tension can cause drive belts to crack under load. Loosen or remove them completely before winterization.

### **5. Lubricate the steering gear**

Lubrication of the controls and controls ensures smooth driving at the start of the new season. Make sure all joints are well saturated with water repellent grease.

### **6. Take care of the battery**

Do not let your battery drain completely over the winter. Disconnect the battery and fill it to the top with distilled water. Recharge the battery from time to time so that it is fully operational when you launch the boat again.

### **7. Take care of the interior**

Remove electronics - they are sensitive to cold and moisture. Any organic material, including leather, canvas or fabric of any kind, must be removed as excess moisture can lead to mold and rot.

### **8. Antifreeze - add into the water system and sewerage**

Empty the water tanks and run antifreeze through the water pipes.

Ironically, it is the water that poses the greatest danger to your boat during the off-season. Frost damage is the biggest potential problem, but water in and on the boat can also contribute to mold and mildew in the winter and corrosion. When considering all these tasks, remember that your main goal is to keep out the water and moisture as much as possible.

### **9. Wash the case, apply wax, and cover with a protective cover.**

Wash the boat thoroughly inside and out. Cover the body with wax. The wax will prevent rusting, which is especially important if you are going to store your boat outside. The cover will protect the boat from dirt, dust, and mildew.

Fiberglass is built to withstand the ravages of the summer sun and salt water, so light snow shouldn't be a problem, right? Wrong. Ice build-up can split open hatches and window rails, causing leaks. So outdoor storage requires a proper boat cover.

A boat is a big investment, so you need to be sure to protect it. All the steps above are helpful, but they do not yet guarantee that your boat will survive the winter completely without consequences. You might consider storing your boat in a dedicated room.

To save time and effort, you can pass the boat to professionals who will take care of her. Many marinas offer this service today, including [Haven Kakumäe](#). Here you will find a modern full-service heated boathouse. Save your time and keep it safe. Get your boat in the same condition in the spring as it was before winter. Store it in the Haven Kakumäe heated boathouse.