

Laying up your inboard

Now that the summer has drawn to a close, some of us will be looking to winterise our engines

Note: Check the manufacturer's handbook for the specific requirements of your engine. Work on electrical systems and the handling of oils can be hazardous and cause injury. If in doubt, entrust the work to a competent person or authorised service dealer.

Step 1 Preparation

First, ensure that you have everything you require to prevent oil and fuel spillages - If possible, lay an oil absorbent sheet under the engine to absorb spills. Do not use detergents if there is any risk of their running into the water.

Find out where you can dispose of used oil, filters and oily rags before you start work. Check your nearest municipal site on www.oilbankline.org.uk. In marinas, you may have to ask the Dockmaster to unlock the hazardous waste container.

Make sure you have a funnel handy, and enough containers to contain the old oil you drain off.

Step 2 Getting to work

Drain water from water separator and top up fuel tank (this will minimise water contamination from condensation). Use an appropriate lay-up preservative in the fuel system.

Run the engine until warm, then stop. Check visually for leakages of fuel, lubricating oil, water or air. Conduct a quick check of the condition of pipe work and jubilee clips. Rectify if necessary.

Drain lubricating oil from sump. Ensure that you put it in a sealable container, ready to transport to oil disposal facilities.

Renew oil filter and refill sump with new oil or preserving oil. Remember, both the filter and used oil container are now classed as hazardous waste.

Check the fresh water circuit anti-freeze mixture strength - drain and replace if necessary. Make sure you collect and dispose of any old anti-freeze mixture into the sewerage system.

Run the engine for a short period to circulate oil and coolant.

Close sea cock and drain raw water cooling system. Refill with anti-freeze mix.

Remove raw water pump impeller (most are rubber). You will probably install a new one next year, but if storing, keep in a dark cupboard. Attach a label to starter key to remind you there is no impeller!

Remove injectors and spray preservative or lubricating oil into cylinders. Ideally, replace injectors using new seals.

Remove air cleaner and seal inlet pipe with waterproof tape.

Seal exhaust manifold. If the boat is left in the water, secure the exhaust to ensure that water cannot siphon back into the boat.

Disconnect and remove battery, and grease battery terminals. To extend battery life, store in a fully charged condition, ideally on wooden blocks.

Check transmission oil. You may wish to drain and refill and to renew the filter.

Loosen alternator and drive belts.

Lubricate linkages, but avoid using excess oil.

Step 3 Disposing of waste

Take oil to the waste oil sump and pour it in. There will usually be a separate container for your oil filters. Dispose of oily rags, and oily containers in the hazardous waste container.

Packaging can go in the general waste, as can old anti-freeze containers.

If you have drained off anti-freeze, this should go into the main sewerage system.

NB If you leave an oil absorbent blanket under your engine, this will identify the location of any leaks over the lay-up period.

Learn More

The RYA publishes a wide range of handbooks covering engine maintenance issues covering both inboards and outboards. There are also DVD and video guides, and the RYA Diesel Engine Course provides an excellent entry level qualification for those who need to know more about their engine.

For publications visit: <http://www.rya.org.uk/Shop/>