Yacht Maintenance Checklist

Good housekeeping is essential for trouble-free sailing, for keeping your boat afloat in optimum condition - and for avoiding unnecessary and expensive repair yard bills. But with multiple systems, parts and components to take care of, it can be all too easy for something important to fall off your radar.



1. Engine and fuel system

After heavy usage (such as a single, long trip)

- [ ] Check coolant and oil levels, and top up if necessary
- [ ] Check for, follow up and address any fluid leaks
- [ ] Check oil pads and replace as necessary
- [ ] If you have reached 100 hours of usage (or as per manufacturer's instructions), replace the oil and filter

Monthly routine

- [ ] As per manufacturer's guidance, apply WD40 to engine, components and control panel to prevent corrosion
- [ ] If the boat has not been used that month, start the engine and allow it to reach operating temperature
- [ ] Clean the water strainer

Annual checks

- [ ] Check engine belts for wear and tension. Replace as necessary.

- [ ] Check the fuel tank for rust and/or contamination
- [ ] Ensure the hoses are not cracked and provide enough slack to account for vibration
- [ ] Thoroughly inspect the tank, hose and fittings for evidence of leaks
- [ ] Prior to winter storage, check antifreeze level and replace as necessary. Fill the tank prior to storage as per manufacturer's instruction

2. Electrics

After heavy usage

- [ ] Test all batteries for capacity level. Replace if necessary
- [ ] Check that all wiring remains neatly bundled and secured and is well-clear of the exhaust system and bilge

Monthly routine

- [ ] Check all running and interior lights and replace bulbs where required
- [ ] Inspect bulkhead and engine connections to ensure there is adequate flex with no fraying
- [ ] Check that wire connections and terminals remained sealed, with no evidence of corrosion

Annual checks

- [ ] Check water level of battery
- [ ] Clean exterior bulb contact points and apply anti-corrosion spray

3. Preventing corrosion

Monthly routine

- [ ] Inspect the hull for evidence of corrosion such as leaks, blistered or peeling paintwork, deposits around stainless steel fixtures or whitish powder on an aluminium hull
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- [ ] Check steering cables, engine cables and connections and gear casings for corrosion

Annual checks

- [ ] Replace zincs (either annually or every six months as per manufacturer's instructions)

4. Hull maintenance

Monthly routine

- [ ] Inspect for hull, keel and rudder damage and arrange for any necessary repairs immediately. Treat any scratches or gelcoat damage as per manufacturer's instructions
- [ ] Check the condition of the teak and renew as necessary

Annual checks

- [ ] All yachts require an annual haul-out for anti-fouling, zinc replacement (and repainting, where necessary). Contact your maintenance engineer well in advance of your preferred haul-out time (usually winter) in order to arrange this

5. Bilge pumps and through-hulls

Monthly routine

- [ ] Even where using automatic pumps, inspect blges frequently to ensure they are clean and free to circulate
- [ ] Check through-hull strainers, intake and discharge components to ensure they are not blocked by debris or marine growth
- [ ] Ensure valve handles are securely attached to enable quick and smooth closure in an emergency
- [ ] Inspect plugs and hoses for cracking

6. Ensuring crew safety

- [ ] Pre-departure checks should include checking the presence and placement of all personal flotation devices, first aid kit and flares. These further checks should also be carried out on a monthly basis:
- [ ] Thoroughly inspect flotation devices for wear or abrasion. If inflation devices are incorporated into a PFD, ensure the cartridges are secure and charged.
- [ ] Check the use-by date on flares
- [ ] Ensure fire extinguishers are in their designated accessible positions, and that they have been professionally inspected and appropriately tagged as up to date
- [ ] Ensure lifelines or rails are in good condition
- [ ] Test to ensure CO and fire alarms are working
- [ ] Ensure you are up to date with galley stove inspection and servicing

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