

BOAT TALK WITH

Alex Salomatoff



If you have a question for Master Mechanic and Owner of Alex's Marine Plus in New Windsor, NY, simply call Alex at 845-565-9199 or e-mail, AlexsMarine@aol.com

Q: Alex, my boat is on a trailer, it is my first boat and I am very excited to use it for Striper Season on the Hudson River shortly. What should I do to prepare?

(For much of our readership the answers are straight forward, however for a first time boat buyer and user below are some important and helpful hints.)

A: Check your battery. Bring it up to full charge.

Check your steering. Turn the engine back and forth with the engine in the down position. (Have someone else do this as you stand behind turning the engine and watch that everything is working properly.)

Next move the throttle back and forth. Is it smooth with no binding? (There are usually grease fittings on the steering cable and some throttles have grease fittings as well.)

Does the trim go up and down smoothly? ARE THERE ANY LEAKS? Is there a reservoir? Is it up to the level mark?

After doing the above, (ONLY IF YOU CONNECT YOUR ENGINE TO A WATER SUPPLY) you could run the engine on the trailer. Of course you must put the "ears" on the lower unit so that when the engine is turned on, water is drawn into the engine to cool it continuously. Be VERY careful, as there is usually a warning horn that will alert you if the engine gets to warm while running it with the ears on.

Now that you have done all the above, you should see that you have a complete Coast Guard safety kit. As part of that package, make sure that the flares are NOT EXPIRED! All flares have an expiration date on them and your flares must be "in date."

You must have a least one anchor on board. Life jackets for each individual on board is a must. Further if the boat is under 21 feet, each passenger must wear their life jacket at all times while on board up until May 1st. The object here is to reduce the number of individuals that may drown because of cold water.

The trailer that your boat is resting on is the most abused portion of the entire boating package. ***Wheel bearings are the number one problem as most***

individuals do not realize that the bearings must be greased, either by taking the wheels off and repacking the bearings or by installing bearing buddies.

A package of two or four the Bearing Buddies can be purchased at an auto parts store. You need to remove the cap from the outer wheel axle and by using a wooden block, tap on the Bearing Buddies tap until the are tight. Bearing Buddies are relatively inexpensive, and easy to maintain. You maintain them by taking a grease gun, attaching it to the nipple on the Bearing Buddy and pump grease in. The spring that you see will compress so that you know it is full. If you pump too much in, you will force the bearing buddy from the shaft. (It is only held on by friction). Also if you're really smart, you will look on the inside of the axle to see if the inner seal is leaking. If so, then it is time to remove the entire wheel assembly and replace the bearings and seals.

While you have the grease gun in hand, grease the trailer wench and any other parts that may need grease as well.

Also, check the tires. Are they inflated properly? Are they in good condition?

Lastly, keep in mind that every time you put your boat in the water that your trailer is degraded. Especially so if the water is salt water. Salt water will eat up electrical components, frames and anything else that accepts corrosion. There are individuals who always drop the boat in fresh water after being in salt water. It is so important to maintain your boat trailer and make sure to regularly touch up the bearing buddies with a shot of grease.

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