

2006 • Over a Decade with Dr. Gel • 2017



Ask Dr. Gel

by Dave Weakley



Dave Weakley is the owner of *American Boat Restoration* and has been helping Northeastern boaters keep their boats in fine trim and good repair for over 40 years.

"Email me or call me with your questions! I'll be happy to help you out"

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End-of-Season Rituals

Wrapping it up!

Shrink wrap- Shop around; there are many good mobile services available. Experience, quality of workmanship and materials is important. I have seen shrink wrap burned and melted on seats and repaired scorched gelcoat numerous times. Best to have white wrap! White will reflect sun light, keeping your boat cooler.

Before the boat is shrink wrapped be sure it is dry inside. Check the carpets, seats, bedding, etc. Protect your carpet if you are planning to have work done on your boat. Take out all canvas, store in cool dry place at home. Take out wet towels, dock and ski lines, and life jackets. If you have an anchor locker; pull out that wet anchor line – clean it and dry it. Clean your fenders and lines. Remove and clean anything that is damp or will smell.

Make sure the shrink wrap is vented. Install mildew control bags. You may want to place a product called "Damp Away Dehumidifier" on board. Also consider having a zipper access door so you can check on your boat from time to time.

Plan ahead, be first on the schedule to have shrink wrap done rather than last. Last could mean that your boat is filling up with leaves, ice and snow. Last year we did a repair on a boat that had to thaw for days and had a foot thick block of ice in the cabin and bilge. The motor cover was frozen to the floor. The 21' boat had a tongue weight in excess of 1000#; it was a struggle to haul with my dual wheel F-350.

Haul-Outs

It's a good idea to be present when your boat is taken out of the water if your boat requires a travel lift or hydraulic trailer. Lots of things can happen during lifting and moving. I have done many repairs as a result of improper boat moving and blocking.



Shrink wrapped
for Winter.

Here's a brief check list for a travel lift haul-out -

- What is the capacity of the lift?
- What is the overall condition of the lift and straps?
- Are there anti-chafe pads on the straps?
- How have haul-outs gone in the past?
- Has the yard ever dropped a boat?
- Be sure your boat is lifted at the proper lifting points (lift points are usually marked on the boat).
- What kind of recourse do you have if your boat is damaged?

As soon as the boat is safely out of the water and correctly blocked clean the hull inside and out. It's much easier to get the slime off while it is still wet before it gets hard like concrete. Be sure your drain plugs are removed. Make sure there are an adequate number of stands that are properly placed and enough blocking along the keel to carry the load. The bow should be slightly higher than the stern so

that water will run toward the drain holes. If any water should find it way into the boat during storage it will run out. Sounds elementary but you'd be surprised at how many boats I have seen with the bow down. Make every effort to prevent moisture as best as you can; it combined with heat is the perfect environment for mold, mildew and growing mushrooms.

If you trailer your boat, be sure your trailer is in good condition. Check the bunks for torn and rotted carpet. Any bolts protruding? Are the bunks and guide posts solid and secure? Make sure everything is in good operating condition including rollers, winch, tires, wheel bearings, brakes, etc. A defective winch or rotted winch line can leave your boat laying on its side on a boat launch or worse could cause personally injury.

Clean. Restore. Protect.

Cleaning the growth and slimy scum off your hull; it's an end of season ritual. Acid wash products such as "On-Off" work great to clean off all the ugly brown stains but the solution will also remove all the protecting sealer glaze and wax exposing the gelcoat to anything



Travel lift.

that might want to cling to it or absorb through the porous gelcoat. I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to reapply the sealer glaze and wax to best protect the gelcoat. In addition, sealing the gelcoat will help to prevent osmotic blisters. It is cheap insurance compared to the cost of repairing blisters. A hull with a good coat of sealer glaze and wax gives algae and other organisms less to adhere to!

Boats on a trailer; should be removed from the trailer in order to get the entire bottom cleaned and waxed. You are only able to do half a job unless this is done. It's a good opportunity to inspect the entire hull condition and clean the gelcoat hidden under the bunks where osmotic blistering can occur unnoticed. Seek a marine service facility to do this. You do not want to get the acid wash on you or your trailer!

Now is a perfect time to carefully inspect your entire boat. Are there any gelcoat, fiberglass and/or structural issues; cracks in the gelcoat, deep gashes into the fiberglass, airvoids, osmotic blisters, etc.? These types of problems will get worse if not addressed. Check and tighten all your hardware and fittings. Examine the sealant around cleats, hatch covers, windows, etc. Replace missing or dried out sealant. Schedule repairs off season; avoid waiting 'til spring.

Store your boat dry; protect it from damaging dampness. Ventilate it! Before you cover it or have it shrink wrapped remove anything wet or damp such as soggy lines, ski vests, towels, etc! Dampness and shrink wrap combined can create a greenhouse effect. We have also seen damp fabrics bleed color on to the upholstery and stains from pine needles and leaves.

Clean and vacuum out the boat – it'll smell better next season and you will avoid the possibility of rotting wood and staining on your seating, carpet and gelcoat.

Take the time to care for your investment! Before it is stored away clean, restore and protect it! Doing it now will reduce the time you'll need to spend cleaning the boat in the springtime or whenever you intend using it again!

Keep in mind where your boat will be stored. Will it be near a big rotted tree? In a barn or building that won't handle a snow load? Here again we have repaired many boats damaged by wind, snow and ice.

Prepping your boat for the off-season can be costly if not done properly; be sure to have reliable professionals work on your boat.

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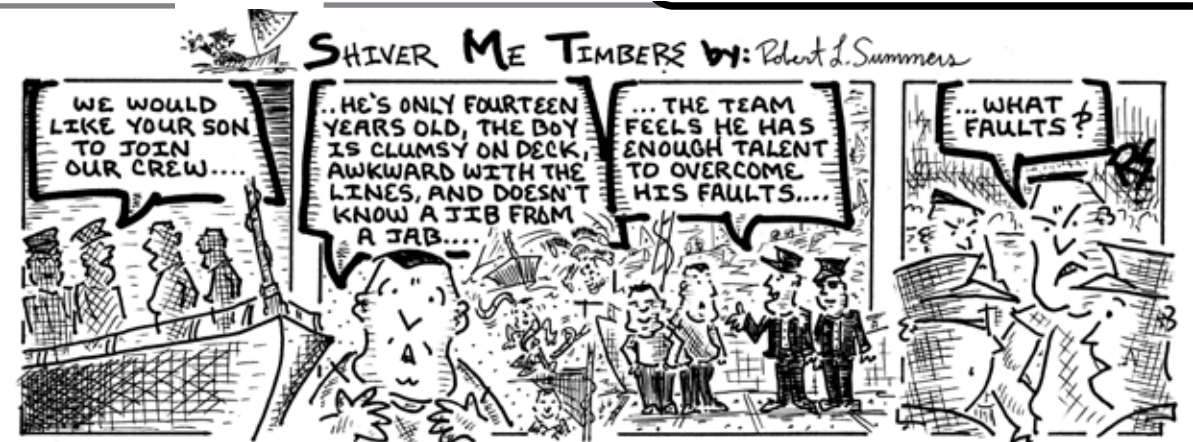
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