



GAME AND FISH NEWS

No time like the present to prepare your watercraft for boating season

8 tips for ensuring your watercraft is ready for another year



PHOENIX — The official start of the boating season is nearly upon us and many Arizonans are getting ready to pull their favorite watercraft out from storage in preparation for more fun on the water.

To ensure the season is hiccup-free, the Arizona Game and Fish Department recommends that all watercraft owners thoroughly inspect their vessel to help prevent problems that could keep them off the water. To ensure you encounter only smooth sailing, watercraft owners should conduct the following inspections:

1. Registration

Make sure your boating registration is current. Those needing to renew their watercraft registration can do so 24/7 by visiting www.azgfd.gov and clicking on "Boat Renewals" or at their closest AZGFD regional office.

2. Fuel system

Check the system for any leaks or damages. Give special attention to any fuel lines and connections. Damaged fuel hoses could either be cracked, brittle or soft. Also ensure the engine exhaust and ventilation systems are functioning properly. Before starting your engine, open

the engine cover and smell for the presence of fuel vapor. Leave the engine cover off when first starting so you can inspect for proper functioning of the engine.

3. Belts, cables and hoses

As with fuel lines, inspect all belts, cables and hoses that may have been damaged while in storage. Inactive items can become brittle and may crack. Ensure belts are fitted tightly and that there are no cracks on the outer jacket of the throttle, shift and steering control cables.

4. Electric system

Inspect all electrical connections to ensure they are clean, tight and corrosion free. All electrical systems should be regularly inspected by a qualified technician.

5. Fluid levels

Check all fluid levels including engine oil, power steering, power trim reservoirs and engine coolant. Also be sure to change the engine oil, oil filter and drive lubricants.

6. Propellers and hulls

Ensure propellers are free of dings, pitting, cracks and distortion, and that they are secured properly. On the hull, inspect for blisters, distortions and cracks. Also make sure the vessel's drain plug is in place before launching.

7. Safety gear

Check to ensure all life jackets are still in good condition, that they are the right size and fit for your passengers. On average in Arizona, life jackets should be replaced every five years. Remember that state law requires anyone 12 and under must wear a life jacket at all times when the vessel is underway and there should be one life jacket aboard for every passenger.

Don't forget that a throwable flotation device – usually a cushion with handles or a ring buoy – is required for all watercraft longer than 16 feet, except for canoes and kayaks. Also check to ensure the fire extinguisher is fully charged and stowed in the proper location.

8. Take a safety course

The department offers free courses in Phoenix and Lake Havasu City every month to provide water users the information and tips needed to stay safe while on the water. For more information on boating safety or to register for a hands-on or online safety course, visit www.azgfd.gov/boating and click "Boating Safety Education."

Arizona hunting and fishing licenses are a great value. You can get combination hunting and fishing licenses for a family of four for less than the price of one night in a motel. Great Outdoors, Great Value!

The Arizona Game and Fish Department prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, religion, or disability in its programs and activities. If anyone believes that they have been discriminated against in any of the AZGFD's programs or activities, including its employment practices, the individual may file a complaint alleging discrimination directly with the Director's Office, 5000 W. Carefree Highway, Phoenix, AZ 85086-5000, (602) 942-3000, or with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Attn: Civil Rights Coordinator for Public Access, 5275 Leesburg Pike, MS:WSFR, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803. Persons with a disability may request a reasonable accommodation or this document in an alternative format by contacting the Director's Office as listed above.

Arizona Game & Fish Dept. · 5000 W. Carefree Hwy, Phoenix, AZ 85086

(602) 942-3000 · www.azgfd.gov

