



## Boating Damage, Safety, and Theft Messaging

### What are the key causes of boat damage?

- Some of the most common causes of boat damage include striking a submerged or floating object; weather; and collision with a fixed object, such as a dock.

### What are the first steps involved in determining whether a damaged boat can/should be restored?

- The first step is to establish the damaged boat's value, compare it with likely repair costs and determine whether repairs are economical.

### What are some common mistakes boat owners make when it comes to boat insurance?

- Notify your insurer when a boat, trailer or motor is replaced. Provide identifying information in connection with any replacements.
- Remember to include the value of boating equipment and accessories when insuring your boat.
- Consider adding optional personal property coverage to your insurance to cover personal property on a boat.

### What are the key causes of boat damage?

- Loss data provided by State Farm indicates the most common cause of boat damage is striking a submerged or floating object, representing 31.1% of all losses submitted to State Farm for the U.S. in 2014. Followed by wind/hail 13.4%, and collision with a fixed object (dock, etc.) 7.6%. Collisions with another watercraft represent only a small percentage of losses.
- Collision with submerged objects and the complete sinking of a boat are the most common causes of boats being deemed a total loss. The primary non-weather related causes of boats sinking are from bilge pump failure from wear/tear and bellows wearing out allowing water to enter the boat. Routine maintenance of these two items can prevent costly insurance claims.

### Common losses with simple solutions to avoid them:

- 1) Boat plug – remember to remove the boat plug each fall when removing the boat from the water, as this prevents rainwater from filling up the boat if/when the cover becomes loose or tears. NOTE: Do NOT forget to re-install the plug before putting the boat back in the water the following spring. A good way to remember this important item is to store/attach the plug to your boat ignition key.
- 2) Boat launch – Some boat owners detach their boat from the trailer eyelet before backing the boat into the water so they can hit the brakes fast and let the boat easily slid off the trailer into the water. Unfortunately countless losses occur using this method as many boat ramps have too steep an incline allowing the boat/motor to slide off the trailer onto the cement.
- 3) Freeze damage - Don't forget to winterize (fog/pickle) your engine each fall before temperatures go below freezing, as freeze related damage is typically not covered by boat insurance.
- 4) Vermin/rodent damage – Be careful where you store your boat during the off-season as vermin/rodent damage is typically not covered by boat insurance.

### **What are some common mistakes owners make when it comes to boat insurance?**

- Many boat insurance companies insure a specifically described boat, motor and trailer; listed on insurance policies by a specific hull identification number (HIN), vehicle identification number for trailers (VIN) and serial number for motors. A common mistake occurs when a gas motor is replaced and the insurance company is not notified (usually within a specified time) of the change, which precludes coverage for the replacement motor. Always notify your insurance company when a boat, motor or trailer is replaced.
- Be sure to consider the value of boat equipment (life preservers, depth/fish finders, canopies/covers, anchors, trolling motors, fuel tanks, etc.) when deciding the amount of insurance you want on your boat/motor. These items are usually included in the boat/motor coverage limit. Don't make the common mistake of thinking these items are covered by your Homeowners Insurance, as those policies usually restrict coverage for boats and boat equipment and sometimes for certain perils; IE theft away from a residence.
- Do your homework and research marinas and boat repair shops before entrusting your boat with them (BBB, etc.). Some unscrupulous shops have been known to disappear with your boat/motor, and most boat policies exclude coverage for loss from infidelity of any person to whom the boat was entrusted.
- Have a boat with a cabin or cuddy and also a lot of personal property on your boat? If the answer is yes, don't forget to ask your insurance agent to endorse your policy with optional personal property coverage.