

A white yacht is being hoisted by a large yellow crane at a marina. The crane's arm extends across the top of the frame, with cables supporting the yacht. The yacht is white with a blue hull and is positioned in the center of the image. The background shows a clear blue sky and other boats in the distance.

PROTECTING PERFORMANCE. PRESERVING VALUE.

SPRING COMMISSIONING CHECKLIST

A practical step-by-step checklist for preparing your boat after winter storage, lay-up or reduced use.

HOW TO USE THIS CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to bring your boat back into service methodically after winter storage, lay-up or reduced use. Work through each section before launch, record anything requiring attention and complete a controlled sea trial. Vessel layouts vary, so always follow equipment manuals and professional advice.



WORK THROUGH EACH SECTION IN ORDER

Start with records and a full walkaround before moving through the hull, machinery, electrical, plumbing, safety and navigation systems. Complete checks while the boat is ashore wherever practical, then finish with the launch and sea-trial log.

TICK OFF EACH COMPLETED CHECK

The two-page master checklist provides a condensed record for printing or keeping onboard. Only mark a task complete after the relevant system has been inspected, tested or serviced.



RECORD ISSUES AND FOLLOW-UP WORK

Use the notes column and inspection log to record faults, overdue servicing, parts required and work that must be completed. Give safety-critical defects and water-ingress risks priority, and confirm repairs before normal operation.

FOLLOW MANUFACTURER GUIDANCE & SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP WHERE REQUIRED

This resource provides general guidance and cannot cover every vessel, engine or installation. Follow the manuals for your equipment and use qualified marine professionals for fuel, electrical, structural, steering or other safety-critical work whenever you are uncertain.

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PRE-LAUNCH INSPECTION OVERVIEW

Successful commissioning starts before tools come out. Review how the vessel was stored, confirm what work is already planned and identify anything that could delay launch. A clear plan reduces duplication, missed checks and rushed decisions at the water.

REVIEW WINTERIZATION AND STORAGE RECORDS

Check what was drained, isolated, removed, serviced or protected before storage. Note outstanding defects, antifreeze-treated systems, disconnected batteries, closed valves and equipment due for recommissioning.

WHY: Accurate records prevent systems being started, filled or energised incorrectly.

CONFIRM LAUNCH, YARD AND SERVICE ARRANGEMENTS

Confirm launch dates, lifting requirements, contractor access, parts availability and any engine, safety or rigging services. Allow enough time for defects to be corrected before the vessel enters the water.

WHY: Last-minute delays often come from unfinished work or missing parts.

REVIEW MANUFACTURER RECOMMISSIONING GUIDANCE

Gather the current manuals and recommissioning procedures for engines, generators, batteries, chargers, watermakers and other installed equipment. Check required fluids, sequences, settings and service intervals.

WHY: Different systems require specific restart procedures and approved products.

COMPLETE AN INITIAL VESSEL WALKAROUND

Inspect the vessel from bow to stern, inside and out. Look for impact damage, leaks, corrosion, mould, pest activity, loose covers, disconnected equipment and changes since the last recorded inspection.

WHY: An early overview reveals problems before individual systems are disturbed.

RECORD KNOWN FAULTS AND OUTSTANDING WORK

Create one written work list covering unresolved winter defects, overdue servicing and new findings. Mark each item by urgency, person responsible and whether it must be completed before launch.

WHY: A controlled list keeps safety-critical work visible and accountable.



GATHER REQUIRED TOOLS, PARTS AND CONSUMABLES

Prepare manuals, personal protective equipment, hand tools, a multimeter, spare fuses, hose clamps, filters, lubricants, absorbent pads and manufacturer-approved fluids needed for the planned work.

WHY: Having the correct equipment reduces rushed substitutions and incomplete checks.

HULL, DECK & EXTERIOR CHECKS

The hull, deck and underwater gear should be inspected while access is clear and the vessel is dry. Work methodically around the boat, recording damage, corrosion, loose fittings and any item requiring repair before launch.



REMOVE COVERS, WASH DOWN AND INSPECT EXTERIOR SURFACES

Remove storage covers carefully and inspect them for damage before cleaning and drying them for storage. Wash the hull, deck and superstructure, then look for staining, cracking, blistering, impact damage or failed sealant.

WHY: Clean surfaces make defects and water-entry points easier to identify.

INSPECT THE HULL, ANTIFOULING, ANODES AND UNDERWATER GEAR

Inspect topsides and underwater surfaces for cracks, blisters, laminate damage, corrosion or coating failure. Check antifouling coverage and assess sacrificial anodes against the manufacturer's replacement guidance.

WHY: Underwater defects become harder and more expensive to address after launch.

INSPECT PROPELLERS, SHAFTS, DRIVES AND RUDDERS

Check propellers for dents, pitting, distortion, fishing line and secure fasteners. Inspect shafts, bearings, sterndrives, pods and rudders for play, damage, leaks or restricted movement.

WHY: Damage or looseness can cause vibration, water ingress and loss of control.

CHECK DECK FITTINGS, RAILS, HATCHES AND SEALS

Check cleats, rails, stanchions, hatches, windows and deck hardware for looseness, corrosion or movement. Inspect surrounding sealant and look below fittings for staining or moisture.

WHY: Failed bedding and loose hardware can allow water into the structure.



CHECK THE ANCHOR, WINDLASS, MOORING LINES AND FENDERS

Inspect the anchor, shackles, chain or rode, bitter-end security and windlass operation. Check mooring lines and fenders for chafe, stiffness, damaged eyes, failed valves or insecure attachments.

WHY: Reliable ground tackle and mooring gear protect the vessel in changing conditions.

INSPECT THE TENDER, OUTBOARD AND LAUNCHING EQUIPMENT

Inspect the tender hull, tubes, drain plug, fuel system, battery and safety equipment. Service the outboard as required and test davits, cranes, winches, falls, securing points and remote controls.

WHY: Tender and launching failures can injure people or damage both vessels.

ENGINE & MECHANICAL SYSTEMS

Recommission machinery slowly and in accordance with manufacturer instructions. Complete visual and fluid checks before starting anything, then monitor closely for leaks, unusual noise, smoke, vibration, temperature or warning alarms.

INSPECT THE ENGINE BAY FOR LEAKS OR STORAGE DAMAGE

Remove storage materials and inspect beneath engines, generators and tanks. Look for oil, coolant, fuel or seawater residue, corrosion, damaged insulation, loose mounts, pest damage and blocked ventilation.

WHY: Leaks and deterioration are easier to correct before machinery is running.



CHECK ENGINE, GEARBOX AND COOLANT LEVELS

Check engine oil, gearbox oil and coolant against the manufacturer's procedure. Confirm the correct specifications, investigate unexplained losses and never mix incompatible coolant or lubricant types.

WHY: Incorrect or low fluids can cause overheating, poor lubrication and serious damage.

INSPECT BELTS, HOSES, CLAMPS AND CONNECTIONS

Inspect belts for cracking, glazing, fraying and correct tension. Check accessible hoses for hardness, softness or splitting, and inspect clamps, supports and connections for corrosion or looseness.

WHY: Small belt or hose defects can quickly cause overheating, leakage or shutdown.

CHECK FUEL CONDITION, FILTERS, LINES AND TANKS

Inspect tanks, fill and vent hoses, supply lines, primer bulbs, filters and water separators. Check for leakage, fuel odour, water, sediment, microbial contamination or degraded fuel, and replace filters as specified.

WHY: Clean, leak-free fuel systems improve reliability and reduce fire risk.

INSPECT RAW-WATER SYSTEMS, STRAINERS AND IMPELLERS

Open and inspect strainers, confirm intakes are clear and check hoses, seacocks and clamps. Inspect or replace pump impellers as required, then confirm covers and seals are refitted correctly.

WHY: Restricted cooling water can overheat machinery within minutes.

PREPARE ENGINES AND GENERATOR FOR THEIR FIRST START

Confirm fluid levels, fuel supply and ventilation. If starting ashore, use only a manufacturer-approved cooling-water arrangement and never run a raw-water pump dry. Start each unit separately and monitor gauges, alarms, exhaust flow and leaks.

WHY: A controlled first start identifies faults before the vessel is committed.

ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS & BATTERIES

Electrical systems should be restored carefully after storage. Before energising circuits, inspect batteries, cables and protective devices, then bring systems online in a controlled order while watching for heat, smell, alarms or abnormal readings.



CHECK BATTERY CHARGE, CONDITION AND AGE

Identify each battery's chemistry, purpose, age and maintenance requirements. Inspect for swelling, cracking, leakage or heat damage, then check state of charge and arrange a suitable capacity or load test if performance is uncertain.

WHY: Resting voltage alone does not prove that a battery is healthy.

RECONNECT AND SECURE BATTERIES WHERE REQUIRED

Confirm polarity before reconnecting isolated batteries. Secure each case against movement, refit terminal covers and verify cables cannot chafe, short or contact moving parts. Follow the battery and vessel manufacturer's sequence.

WHY: Incorrect or loose connections can cause arcing, fire or equipment damage.



CLEAN TERMINALS AND INSPECT CONNECTIONS

Check posts, lugs, busbars and earth connections for corrosion, looseness or overheating. Isolate safely before cleaning, tighten to the specified torque and apply suitable terminal protection where recommended.

WHY: High-resistance connections cause voltage drop, heat and unreliable equipment.

TEST CHARGERS, SHORE POWER AND BATTERY SWITCHES

Inspect shore-power leads, plugs and inlets for burns, corrosion or damage before connection. Test battery switches, chargers, isolators and monitoring systems, confirming appropriate voltage and charging behaviour for each battery bank.

WHY: Charging faults can damage batteries or leave essential systems without power.

TEST AC AND DC CIRCUITS, BREAKERS AND PROTECTION

Energise AC and DC circuits methodically. Test residual-current or ground-fault protection where fitted, and investigate nuisance trips, heat, buzzing, burning smells or abnormal current draw.

WHY: Protective devices must operate correctly before the vessel returns to service.

TEST LIGHTING, PUMPS, ALARMS AND ONBOARD EQUIPMENT

Operate interior, deck and navigation lighting, freshwater and bilge pumps, ventilation fans, alarms and other onboard equipment. Confirm labels, indicators, switches and backup supplies work as intended.

WHY: A full function test finds dormant faults before they affect a voyage.

PLUMBING, SEACOCKS & THROUGH-HULLS

Water systems can leak, stagnate or remain filled with winterizing solution after storage. Inspect every accessible component before use, recommission one system at a time and keep bilges visible while checking for leaks.



INSPECT THROUGH-HULLS, SEACOCKS AND STRAINERS

Inspect accessible through-hulls for corrosion, cracking, movement or impact damage. Operate each seacock through its full travel without forcing a stiff valve, confirm handles are secure and clean strainers before reopening required valves.

WHY: Failed below-waterline fittings can cause rapid and serious flooding.

CHECK HOSES, CLAMPS, PIPES AND FITTINGS

Inspect sanitation, freshwater, cooling and drain hoses for cracking, softness, chafe, kinks or poor support. Check fittings and clamps for corrosion, looseness and leakage, especially below the waterline.

WHY: Deteriorated hoses and connections are common sources of water ingress.

CLEAN BILGES AND TEST PUMPS, FLOAT SWITCHES AND ALARMS

Clean debris and contamination from each bilge without discharging oil or chemicals overboard. Test manual and automatic pump operation, float switches, high-water alarms, non-return valves and discharge flow.

WHY: Clean, operational bilges reveal leaks and provide vital flooding protection.

FLUSH, SANITISE AND REFILL FRESHWATER TANKS

Drain any remaining winterizing solution according to local rules. Flush and sanitise tanks using the system manufacturer's method, refill with potable water and continue flushing until water is clear and odour-free.

WHY: Stagnant or contaminated water can affect health, taste and system reliability.



RECOMMISSION PUMPS, PIPES AND THE WATER HEATER

Restore valves and connections, prime pumps and inspect the system as it pressurises. Test every outlet and check the water heater, expansion tank and pressure pump for leakage, cycling or abnormal noise.

WHY: Pressure testing exposes leaks before they damage interiors or equipment.

TEST HEADS, HOLDING TANKS, SHOWERS AND GREY-WATER SYSTEMS

Flush and test each toilet, holding tank, vent, level sensor, deck pump-out connection, shower sump and grey-water pump. Check hoses, seals and clamps for leaks or persistent odour, and secure discharge valves as local rules require.

WHY: Sanitation failures are unpleasant, difficult to contain and often preventable.

SAFETY EQUIPMENT & COMPLIANCE

Safety equipment must be present, accessible, correctly sized and within required inspection or service dates. Requirements differ by vessel, flag, operating area and number of people onboard, so check the rules that apply to your boat.



CHECK LIFEJACKETS AND PERSONAL FLotation EQUIPMENT

Count and inspect every lifejacket and personal flotation device. Check sizing, straps, buckles, covers, lights, whistles and inflation components, and confirm equipment is dry, accessible and correctly marked where required.

WHY: Damaged, expired or inaccessible equipment may fail when urgently needed.

INSPECT THE LIFERAFT, EPIRB, FLARES AND SIGNALLING EQUIPMENT

Check the liferaft, EPIRB, personal locator beacons, flares and signalling devices against applicable carriage and service requirements. Verify seals, expiry dates, battery dates, registration details, hydrostatic releases and mounting arrangements.

WHY: Emergency equipment must be ready, current and registered to the correct vessel.

INSPECT FIRE EXTINGUISHERS AND FIXED FIRE SYSTEMS

Confirm portable extinguishers are correctly located, unobstructed and within inspection or service dates. Check gauges, pins, seals, hoses and mounting brackets, and verify fixed-system status indicators and controls.

WHY: Fire equipment must operate immediately and remain reachable during an emergency.

TEST SMOKE, CARBON MONOXIDE AND GAS ALARMS

Test smoke, carbon monoxide and gas alarms using their test functions. Check power supplies, sensor or unit replacement dates and alarm audibility throughout the relevant spaces.

WHY: Early warning is essential because fire and toxic gases can spread unnoticed.

RESTOCK FIRST-AID AND EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

Check first-aid contents, seasickness supplies, torches, spare batteries, emergency tools, thermal protection and other vessel-specific equipment. Replace expired, damaged, wet or missing items and confirm storage locations are labelled.

WHY: Complete, accessible supplies improve the response to injury or equipment failure.

CONFIRM CERTIFICATES, SERVICE DATES AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

Review registration, insurance, radio licences, operator qualifications and any required inspection or service certificates. Confirm emergency contacts, crew lists and operating documents are current for the planned cruising area.

WHY: Missing or expired documentation can delay launch or planned operations.



ELECTRONICS & NAVIGATION SYSTEMS

Navigation and communication equipment should be powered up at the dock and checked again underway. Confirm each display, sensor and alarm works together correctly, rather than relying only on a successful start-up screen.



POWER UP CHARTPLOTTERS, GPS AND DIGITAL CHARTS

Start each chartplotter and GPS receiver, confirm a reliable position fix and review chart coverage for the intended area. Check routes, waypoints, datum, time, units and backup navigation arrangements.

WHY: Incorrect settings or outdated coverage can create serious navigational errors.

TEST VHF, RADIOS AND COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT

Test fixed and handheld VHF radios using an appropriate radio-check service or working channel, never a distress channel. Confirm audio, controls, antennas, charging, DSC position input and vessel identity settings where fitted.

WHY: Reliable communications are essential for routine coordination and emergencies.



TEST NAVIGATION LIGHTS, HORN AND SEARCHLIGHTS

Test navigation and anchor lights from outside the vessel, checking lenses, sectors and secure fittings. Operate the horn and searchlights, and confirm spare bulbs or alternative signalling devices where applicable.

WHY: Other vessels must be able to see and hear you correctly.

TEST RADAR, AIS, AUTOPILOT AND COMPASS

Test radar, AIS, autopilot and compasses according to their manuals. Confirm heading, position and target data agree across displays, and investigate offsets, missing information or unexpected autopilot movement.

WHY: Incorrect sensor data can mislead several connected systems at once.

CHECK DEPTH, SPEED, WIND AND SONAR INSTRUMENTS

Check depth, speed, wind and sonar instruments for sensible readings. Inspect accessible transducers and confirm offsets, units, alarms and displayed depths are understood before navigating shallow water.

WHY: Incorrect readings can lead to grounding, poor decisions or unnoticed faults.

UPDATE SOFTWARE AND CHARTS AND COMPLETE A FULL FUNCTION TEST

Back up user data where supported, then install approved software, firmware and chart updates according to manufacturer instructions. Allow time to restart the network and test shared data, alarms, controls and backup equipment before departure.

WHY: Updates can improve reliability, but incomplete installations may create new faults.

FULL SPRING COMMISSIONING CHECKLIST

Use this condensed checklist as the working record for the main pre-launch checks. Tick each task only after it has been completed and use the notes column to record defects, parts required, professional work or items that must be revisited. Mark non-applicable checks N/A in the Notes column.

CATEGORY	TASK	COMPLETE	NOTES
PRE-LAUNCH INSPECTION OVERVIEW	Review winterization and storage records	☐	
	Confirm launch, yard and service arrangements	☐	
	Review manufacturer recommissioning guidance	☐	
	Complete an initial vessel walkaround	☐	
	Record known faults and outstanding work	☐	
	Gather required tools, parts and consumables	☐	
HULL, DECK & EXTERIOR CHECKS	Remove covers, wash down and inspect exterior surfaces	☐	
	Inspect the hull, antifouling, anodes and underwater gear	☐	
	Inspect propellers, shafts, drives and rudders	☐	
	Check deck fittings, rails, hatches and seals	☐	
	Check the anchor, windlass, mooring lines and fenders	☐	
	Inspect the tender, outboard and launching equipment	☐	
ENGINE & MECHANICAL SYSTEMS	Inspect the engine bay for leaks or storage damage	☐	
	Check engine, gearbox and coolant levels	☐	
	Inspect belts, hoses, clamps and connections	☐	
	Check fuel condition, filters, lines and tanks	☐	
	Inspect raw-water systems, strainers and impellers	☐	
	Prepare engines and generator for their first start	☐	
ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS & BATTERIES	Check battery charge, condition and age	☐	
	Reconnect and secure batteries where required	☐	
	Clean terminals and inspect connections	☐	
	Test chargers, shore power and battery switches	☐	
	Test AC and DC circuits, breakers and protection	☐	
	Test lighting, pumps, alarms and onboard equipment	☐	

FULL SPRING COMMISSIONING CHECKLIST CONTINUED

Continue recording the remaining system checks and final launch tasks. Any item marked incomplete or requiring attention should be transferred to the launch and sea-trial log or a separate work list, with responsibility and completion status clearly recorded.

CATEGORY	TASK	COMPLETE	NOTES
PLUMBING, SEACOCKS & THROUGH-HULLS	Inspect through-hulls, seacocks and strainers	☐	
	Check hoses, clamps, pipes and fittings	☐	
	Clean bilges and test pumps, float switches and alarms	☐	
	Flush, sanitise and refill freshwater tanks	☐	
	Recommission pumps, pipes and the water heater	☐	
	Test heads, holding tanks, showers and grey-water systems	☐	
SAFETY EQUIPMENT & COMPLIANCE	Check lifejackets and personal flotation equipment	☐	
	Inspect the liferaft, EPIRB, flares and signalling equipment	☐	
	Inspect fire extinguishers and fixed fire systems	☐	
	Test smoke, carbon monoxide and gas alarms	☐	
	Restock first-aid and emergency equipment	☐	
	Confirm certificates, service dates and required documentation	☐	
ELECTRONICS & NAVIGATION SYSTEMS	Power up chartplotters, GPS and digital charts	☐	
	Test VHF, radios and communication equipment	☐	
	Test navigation lights, horn and searchlights	☐	
	Test radar, AIS, autopilot and compass	☐	
	Check depth, speed, wind and sonar instruments	☐	
	Update software and charts and complete a full function test	☐	
FINAL LAUNCH & SEA TRIAL CHECKS	Complete a final vessel walkaround	☐	
	Confirm drain plugs, seacocks and hull openings	☐	
	Check fluid levels, caps, connections and loose equipment	☐	
	Inspect for leaks immediately after launch	☐	
	Test engines, controls, steering, thrusters and electronics	☐	
	Complete the sea trial and record follow-up work	☐	

LAUNCH & SEA TRIAL LOG

Use this log immediately after launch and during a controlled sea trial in suitable conditions. Record each result, stop if a safety-critical fault appears and return every unresolved item to the follow-up work list before the vessel enters normal service.

VESSEL NAME:		INSPECTION DATE:	/ /
PERSON COMPLETING CHECKS:		LAUNCH LOCATION:	
WEATHER AND SEA CONDITIONS:			
PORT ENGINE HOURS		STARBOARD ENGINE HOURS	

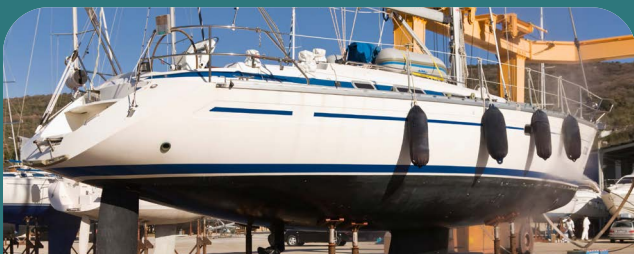
INSPECTION AREA	CHECK ITEM	PASS/ISSUE	ACTION/NOTES
IMMEDIATE POST-LAUNCH CHECKS	Check every through-hull and seacock for leakage	☐ Pass ☐ Issue	
	Check shaft seals, sterndrives and transom fittings	☐ Pass ☐ Issue	
	Confirm bilge water levels remain normal	☐ Pass ☐ Issue	
	Inspect machinery spaces and tanks for new leaks	☐ Pass ☐ Issue	
ENGINES & MECHANICAL SYSTEMS	Start each engine and generator and check alarms	☐ Pass ☐ Issue	
	Confirm cooling-water flow and stable temperatures	☐ Pass ☐ Issue	
	Check oil, coolant, fuel and exhaust systems for leaks	☐ Pass ☐ Issue	
	Record abnormal noise, smoke, vibration or readings	☐ Pass ☐ Issue	
STEERING, CONTROLS & PROPULSION	Test steering response through its operating range	☐ Pass ☐ Issue	
	Test ahead, astern and neutral gear engagement	☐ Pass ☐ Issue	
	Test throttles, trim tabs, thrusters and joystick systems	☐ Pass ☐ Issue	
	Check shafts, propellers and drives for vibration under load	☐ Pass ☐ Issue	
ELECTRICAL & NAVIGATION SYSTEMS	Verify battery and charging-system readings	☐ Pass ☐ Issue	
	Test navigation lights, horn and VHF radio	☐ Pass ☐ Issue	
	Confirm GPS, radar, AIS and instrument data	☐ Pass ☐ Issue	
	Test the autopilot in clear water with safe oversight	☐ Pass ☐ Issue	
BILGES, PLUMBING & WATER SYSTEMS	Test manual and automatic bilge-pump operation	☐ Pass ☐ Issue	
	Recheck hoses, seacocks and strainers for leaks	☐ Pass ☐ Issue	
	Pressurise the freshwater system and inspect connections	☐ Pass ☐ Issue	
	Test toilets, tank indicators and shower-sump pumps	☐ Pass ☐ Issue	
SEA-TRIAL PERFORMANCE	Record engine speed, vessel speed and temperatures	☐ Pass ☐ Issue	
	Check steering response and course stability	☐ Pass ☐ Issue	
	Test acceleration, manoeuvring and stopping response	☐ Pass ☐ Issue	
	Reinspect machinery spaces and bilges after the run	☐ Pass ☐ Issue	
FOLLOW-UP WORK REQUIRED	All faults and observations have been recorded	☐ Pass ☐ Issue	
	Required parts, repairs and support have been identified	☐ Pass ☐ Issue	
	Priorities, responsibilities and target dates are assigned	☐ Pass ☐ Issue	
	Safety-critical items are closed before normal operation	☐ Pass ☐ Issue	

Use this page for additional observations, measurements, service details, part numbers or work that does not fit elsewhere. Include dates and enough information for another owner, crew member or contractor to understand what was checked and what still requires attention.

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RELATED ARTICLES FROM TYMH

Continue your spring preparation with TYMH's practical guides to engines, electrical systems, bilges and underwater equipment. Each article explains common problems, inspection points and maintenance decisions in more detail.



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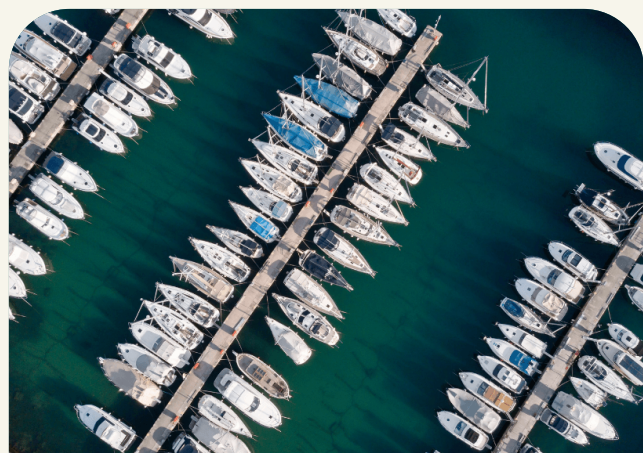
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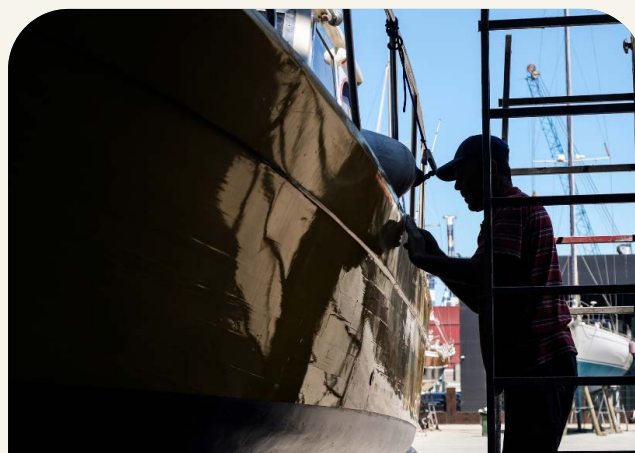
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