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Be wise - avoid damages

The ABC of avoiding damages.



*What needs to be checked before starting the trip in order to sail safely and relaxed?
We support you with the „tips for skippers“ from our daily YACHT-POOL practice!*

Due to our experience, we know: Every season, there are damages that happen again and again. Sailors are familiar with most danger, but they are not always present in mind. We want to sensitize you to these typical situations and danger points, so that you can prepare accordingly. You do not only avoid damage, but also critical situations that can put you and your crew into serious danger.

The following catalogue of avoidable damages and tips on how to avoid them can spare you from unnecessary trouble, costs and serious injury risks for yourself and your crew!

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Handover the Yacht

From the handover the responsibility for the yacht is up to the skipper.

For this reason: no rush, no hurry!
Take your time, don't let yourself stress.

A 100% thorough handover is the best preparation for a relaxed trip! Avoid misunderstandings by **documenting** present damages:

- Check for scratches and visual damage inside and outside (on furniture and floors, in the gelcoat also on the hull from all sides, bimini, sprayhood, dinghy, cracks in deck hatches).
- Check not only the sails, but also test the function of the anchor windlass.
- Check and count life jackets, as well as lifebelts and lines.
- Ask if underwater photos were taken after the last trip.
- Cell phone photos to document the current state are very useful, since the file includes the date of recording.

The skipper confirms the recorded boat status in the protocol of delivery. Therefore, from the point of view of the charter company, damages newly discovered after the trip has arisen during **your** trip!

Make a **detailed crew and safety briefing** before each journey (and document it in the logbook!):

Explain all damage-susceptible areas and situations of this YACHT-POOL catalogue of damage prevention!

Please also point out special risks of injury: from the boom, by clipping fingers on cleats, winches, clamps and hatch covers.

Returning the Yacht

Report any problems that occurred when you return.

- Greater damage should be reported to the base immediately in advance, so that necessary spare parts can be ordered to repair the Yacht promptly.
- Please report retained deposits immediately to YACHT-POOL.

Important:

Insist on a proper inspection and approval with a written documentation and the note that subsequently detected damages are not accepted.

Engine: Check the Oil Level

All marine engines consume engine oil. Regular checks of the oil level prevent damage!

- Therefore, clarify the required control with the charter company. If agreed so: keep a daily control rhythm during the trip!

- Motor damage is expensive - this concerns motorboats, as well as sailboats - and usually these damages are not insured.

Engine: Stay Cool! Prevent Overheating

At the handover, the engine and exhaust (sound, water flow) should be explained.

- During your trip **always** keep an eye on the temperature gauge and the water outlet.
- If the engine overheats, stop and check the engine immediately.
- Common cause of a problem: defective water pump impeller or flotsam in the cooling water inlet.

Both causes are usually easy to identify without tools:

a) Flotsam in sea valve:

When engine stopped, open the seawater filter cover in the engine compartment and pour water into it. The water must flow unhindered and quickly thru the seacock - if not: constipation.

b) damaged impeller:

When engine stopped, open the seawater filter in the engine compartment. Close the seacock. Fill the filter container with water (which will not run out). Start the engine: The water must be sucked off immediately and quickly (within 1-2 seconds). If not: the impeller is defective and must be exchanged.

Please do not forget to reopen the seacock!



ATTENTION: do not dive in the immediate vicinity of the harbor (for example, in Croatia this is strictly prohibited!)

Even if the propeller is free again, an expensive damage may have occurred if the predetermined breaking points of the connection between the propeller and shaft are broken, or the seal to the gear has been damaged.

Power Unit and Shifter

There is an essential difference between sail-drive and shaft-drive with fixed or folding propeller:

- yachts with sail-drive and fixed propellers: let the axis rotate while sailing, otherwise the transmission may get blocked!
- Yachts with rigid shaft and fixed pitch propeller: reverse gear to stop the axis. This protects the bearings.
- Never shift the transmission and the gas throttle with excessive force.
- When changing from ahead to astern (reverse) always take a short break.

IMPORTANT: For yachts with a rigid shaft and fixed pitch propeller, the idle can only be re-inserted to start the engine when the boat barely makes any move, otherwise there will be too much pressure on the propeller.

Test on the first day of the trip in an **uncritical** situation how your charter yacht behaves!

Hold on tight while Reversing: Danger of damaging the Rudder

When reversing, the rudder blade receives pressure from the “wrong side”, which makes it hard to hold on to the helm.



If the steering wheel is torn out of hand, expensive damage to the mechanics of rudder and autopilot may be the result.

- Always hold the steering wheel firmly and drive slowly
- keep the helm amidships, drive slowly astern (until the vessel is moving), reduce speed and then steer.

Sailing with Engine running

Ship engines do not get sufficiently lubricated if the heeling is more than 15%.

- Sailing with mainsail and running engine during strong winds can permanently destroy the engine!
- In case of emergency, but only for a short period of time, it is acceptable to sail with shortened sails and a running engine.
- Engine damage due to lack of oil is very expensive and usually not insured.

Sails: Mainsail Furler - Position of the Locking Lever

When operating the furling system, always pay attention to the position of the locking lever.

Engine: Ignition key or power On/Off switch

- Never operate the ignition key or power On/Off switch while the engine is running.
- Never turn the battery switch while the engine is running (this can destroy the regulator of the generator).
- After stopping the engine, turn back the power switch to „Off“, or turn back the ignition key, otherwise the battery will get discharged.

Attention, this is a common mistake! If a battery is discharged in this way, it is very often completely destroyed.

A very common Damage: Transmission and Propeller Damages due to Ropes sticking in the Screw

- Mooring lines, floating ropes, chains near the propeller (for example in marinas or when anchoring):
- Gear immediately to idle!**
- Also be aware of thin nylon fishing lines from fishermen.
- If you caught a line: dive and remove it immediately with a knife.

- Position (only) while hoisting (setting) the sails: „free“! Afterwards, always set the lever back to „Ratchet“!
- Also, after shorten the sails set to „Ratchet“ (otherwise too much pull on the line).



- When striking the sail, open both stoppers of the endless furling-line. Always pull on the line so that the mast wind turns clockwise when rolling in (otherwise the sail curls up backward and gets stuck).
- If the little line inside the leech of the mainsail has not been slackened before rolling in the mainsail, it may come to blockages and sail damage, when setting the sail again.

Sails: Shorten the Main Sail without a Furling System

- To avoid unintentional unreefing, the reef lines, especially the reef outhaul and the reef tack should be tied up tightly. Otherwise the reef clew may get released with a stronger gust of wind.
- It is good to secure the reef clew to the boom with an additional lashing.

Sails: Foresail and Genoa with Furling System

An incorrectly enforced halyard can lead to the break of the forestay (overload!)

A loose jib/genoa halyard can wrap around the upper part of the furler, while the sail is being unfurled or furled. If the halyard is wrapping around the forestay and twisting it, it might get torn, especially if winches are being used. This may result in a falling of the mast over crew's heads if the forestay breaks!

- Check the tension of the jib halyard frequently, in case it has slackened.
- **Attention:** Apart from a halyard being not taut enough, another cause of resistance while unfurling the genoa can be a twisted spi halyard!
- Always operate the furling system cautiously and do not use winches with violence!
- While furling the genoa keep the sheet hauled to avoid its tangling.

Sails: Genoa Trim

While sailing, check the lower leech twist of the genoa from time to time!

• A furling genoa always requires precise trimming. The bigger the sail area, the further the towing point must be moved astern and vice versa.

- At upwind performance the ideal towing point of the sail is when its foot edge and lower leech are at about the same tension. The sheet should roughly split the clew angle.
- Because of the particular cut of a furling genoa in opposite to regular genoas, the leech in the upper third often flutters (flaps) on all other courses. Solution: Instead of tightening the leech strap (it may work as a brake!) move the towing points forward and haul the sheets.

Optimal trim spares the sails and makes the vessel sail faster.

Sails: Spinnaker and Gennaker

Before hoisting and striking spinnaker or gennaker remember to clear the spinnaker halyard, keep it off the forestay, avoid its wrapping.

- If the halyard is wrapped, it may get cut when setting or furling the genoa.



- Gennaker and Spinnaker are light wind sails, so inexperienced crews should not use them if the wind speed exceeds 10 knots. Otherwise expensive damage may occur!

Adjust the Sail Area

Always adjust the sail area to the weather. More sail does not necessarily mean more speed. Sometimes the opposite is the truth.

- Damages to the sails often occur due to an oversized sail area.
- reef on time when you observe that the weather will change.

When is „on time“?

Old Sailor Rule: When you first think about reefing, you should do it **now!**

Beware of Accidental Jibe

Every year, serious injuries and expensive damage occur due to Patent jibes!

Always set a preventer - the bull pendant - when the mainsheet is sheeted out! The bull pendant is always attached to the **very end** of the boom, not in the middle. The leash should be fixed at the front, at the middle cleat or better at the bow cleat, in order to optimize the draft angle.

Winches- Watch your Fingers

Always put 4 (!) wraps around the winch to provide adequate friction to the winch drum.

- **Attention:** Watch your fingers when wrapping the sheet around the winch. **Always** keep your fingers off the winch to avoid injury, which is likely to happen if another crew member starts grinding or when loosening the sheet.
- Pointing this out to your crew members is **mandatory!** Squeezed fingers are frequent accidents aboard a vessel.



Don't expect too much from the Autopilot

The autopilot is most useful when you keep on course for a longer time, with the engine running (e.g. during calm).

- Attention under sail: In case of strong pressure on the rudder and strong waves, the autopilot may have problems with constant course corrections and get damaged!
- In case of downwind bearings however, the autopilot may actually do better than a helmsman.
- **The autopilot needs a lot of power - which is missing in the anchor bay in the evening!** Keep an eye on the battery voltage.

Chartplotter, Tablets and Nautical Charts

A plotter or a tablet-PC is NOT a nautical chart, even though many are convinced of it. It is just an aid and its indications might be inaccurate.

- Damage that occurs when navigating without a nautical chart, can refuse the insurer of the ship (breach of duty of care, maybe gross negligence).
- At least from time to time document your position, time and course in the nautical chart in pencil.

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Use the Seacocks

Keep the seacocks (except for the engine) and hatches closed during the cruise!
This way dangerous water ingress and wet mattresses are avoided.

Hatches and Windows

Do not step on the hatches. Even light weight may break them and let them become leaky. **They also break and bend when sheets jam in open hatches.**

- **Attention:** If the hatch is only lowered and laid upon the locking lever, a short, strong thrust may bend or even break off the levers!
- Do not leave the hatches half-open, resting upon locked levers. Make sure the lever is unlocked if the hatch is open, and lock it if you want to close the hatch.

Marine Toilet

During yacht takeover let someone demonstrate flawless functioning of the toilets and pump once through every toilet. A recurring problem at sea are clogged toilets. This is especially unpleasant if it was caused by the previous crew.

This problem can be recognized with the milk test – if no waste-holding-tank is installed. Pour some milk into the toilet and pump it through. Looking overboard you can observe whether the toilet has been properly emptied.

- Ask for the function of the waste-holding-tank (sewage-tank), which remains closed in bays and only gets emptied in the open sea.
- Open the seacock before every use and close it afterwards!
- Before every use, pump through the pipe. Once used the toilet, pump at least 15 to 20 times in order to make sure that no residues remain in the pump or at the valves.
- **Never** dump paper or any solid objects into the marine toilet!

Proven sailor rule: nothing I did not eat or drink, passes the toilet!

Don't mix:

Water-Tank – Fuel/Diesel-Tank

Attention: Be always sure **which** tank you are filling – water or fuel/diesel!
The insurance can refuse the damage.

- Unfortunately, it happens often, especially when crew members busily „help“!
- A trivial, but very **important** point in the crew-briefing!
- If it happens, do not start the engine! Immediately ask the charter-company for instruction on-the-spot.

Dinghy and Outbord-Engine

Handle the dinghy with care!

Never tow the dinghy, strong traction can rip off its brackets or ropes.

- Dinghy damage and „losing“ the dinghy while towing can be grossly negligent!
- even at low speed (e.g. in marinas) never tow the dinghy with the outboard engine fixed to it.
- Never pull the dinghy over rocks or stony beaches (danger of damage).
- Never let the dinghy out of sight when you go ashore. In particular, at night. The theft risk is great.
- If the propeller of the outboard engine grounded, the safety cotter in the propeller shaft may break.

This can easily be repaired on board if a replacement pin is present (it's usually found in the tool kit).

Nevertheless, the failure of the OB engine is always annoying and dangerous!

Keep the Distance - Pushing a Yacht away

If a yacht drifts even slightly, then many tons of mass are moving. Arm and leg bones and stanchions cannot oppose that.

- Explain explicitly at the crew-briefing!
- only use fenders if you want to keep a yacht away from other ships or jetties and docks!



- pushing the hull of the ship with hands or feet is very dangerous: danger of squeezing and breaking! It should be strictly avoided.
- Never push against railing or stanchions (they will bend and break!).

Harbour Manoeuvres and Anchorage: Avoid Grounding



Be careful while mooring. This is where most damages occur. Inform yourself at the base about shoals and other danger zones in the area before starting the journey.

- Note the corresponding information in the nautical chart.
- Inform yourself about the calibration of the sounder (sonic depth finder):
 - a) Measurement from the surface of the water: then the displayed depth corresponds to the true depth and should be equal to the depth in the map (consider tides!)
 - b) Measurement under keel: unfortunately often used for charter yachts, set so „for safety reasons“. Here you can see the residual depth under the keel, which is often confusing in bays and harbors.
- Be aware of hull damage and grounding on ALL ship manoeuvres.
- Caution also at all port entrances and exits!
- Caution when parking into the berth. This is where most of the damage happens.
- Caution when driving astern (reversing) in ports and bays: the sensor of depth gauge is mounted in the bow and shows enough depth,

while the rudder threatens already ground contact. Keep lookout!

- Never berth with open bathing platform! Expensive damage to mechanics and hull are considered gross negligently caused!

Footwear aboard

Appropriate boat footwear has a finely treaded, light rubber sole.

- Dark rubber soles are inappropriate, as they can leave dark marks on deck.
- Leather soles and heels should be avoided for your own safety.
- Tiny stones can get caught in coarsely treaded soles, which may damage the floors of the deck and bunks.

YACHT-POOL wishes you a pleasant and safe trip, and may always be six inches of water under your keel!

A few more tips:

For the good seamanship and responsibility of the skipper towards the crew, it is also necessary to talk about the charter risks and their safeguarding.

Inform yourself immediately:
www.yacht-pool.com

**...and when a crash has happened?
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