

Why do I need a Marine Survey?

By Tim Martin
Marine Surveys Canada

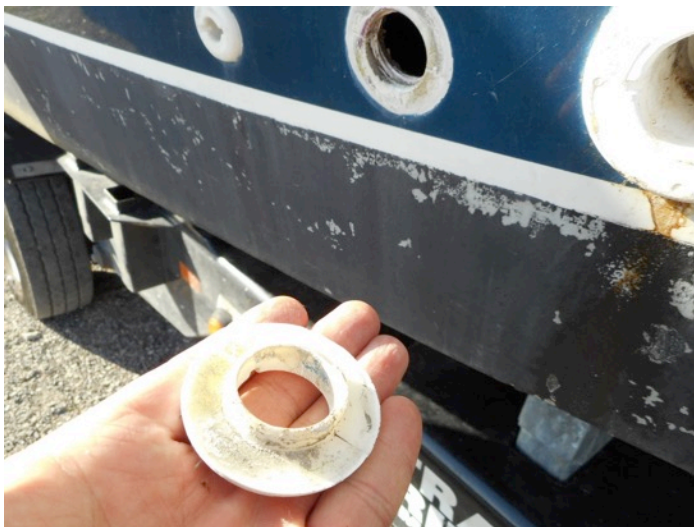
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Whether you are an experienced boater or are purchasing your first boat, you are likely to end up requiring a marine survey at some point.

By simple definition, a marine survey is a boat inspection. More specifically, it is a very detailed technical inspection and lengthy document that speaks to the condition and value of a boat. The findings of the marine surveyor typically establish whether or not a boat is seaworthy (safe to be in the water). Many unsafe boats will float and get a family to and from a favourite anchorage. Many appear to be perfectly safe, even to experienced boaters. In reality, marine surveyors often find issues with boats that come as a complete surprise to the boat owner.



In 2003, I ran a boat repair shop near Edmonton, Alberta. Often I had requests from customers for me to provide a 'marine survey' as a requirement to renew their boat insurance. Honestly, at the time I was as perplexed by the request as they were.



The insurance brokers in the area knew little of what they were being asked by the insurance company they represented. The mechanical inspection reports I had provided to customers were not sufficient to meet the requirements for insurance companies, and some of my customers were left uninsured. Frustrated for my clients, I did a little research. What I discovered led me to a new profession in marine

surveying. More than 15 years later, I can safely say I have learned a thing or two about marine surveys.

Marine surveyors are required to be familiar with safety legislation and construction standards. Experienced marine surveyors will provide important insight as to how the standards and legislation apply to a given boat. It is for this reason that insurance companies look for a marine surveyor's report, which helps

the insurer to determine the level of risk they undertake when they insure the boat. The marine surveyor will inspect the boat's structure, electrical systems, fuel systems, safety and navigation equipment, and even the cosmetic items that can erode the boat's value. A boat with a fuel leak that catches fire on the lake is a very expensive catastrophe for an insurance company, not mention a tragedy for the affected families.



The risks to a prospective boat buyer are much the same. As a major purchase, a boat buyer signing on the dotted line without having the benefit of a marine survey could discover they are on the hook for thousands in structural repairs in order to have the boat insured. Would you consider buying a home without a home inspection? In addition to a marine survey, a mechanical inspection done by a qualified marine service technician can also verify that the engines and mechanical systems have good serviceable life in them.

If you are contemplating that your next big purchase might just be a boat, be sure to hire a marine surveyor before you make the commitment. It might just be the safest boating choice you can make.