



BOAT BUYING GUIDE





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About this boat guide

Buying a boat for the first time is the beginning of a new lifestyle: a world of fun, adventure, and family time. But there are many things to consider for the first-time boat buyer. What activities do I want to enjoy on my boat? How many passengers will I have? Where will I go boating? Do I have time to maintain a boat? We get it. It can be overwhelming.

Since our founding in 1990, our principles have remained the same: to provide the best products and customer service. With this guide, we want to ensure you are making the right choice so you can enjoy your boat for years to come. So from our Action family to yours, we are happy you're considering joining the boating world.

At AWS, we carry three types of boats—water sports-centered towboats, luxury bowriders, and everyday pontoons.

We will go into each one of these boat classes in detail. There are other boats, including fishing, dinghy, houseboats, trawler boats, and more, each one provides a different lifestyle. Our focus is on water sports, day cruises, and family adventures. So if that's your boating goal, this guide is for you!



We are Action Water Sports

Founded in 1990, Action Water Sports (AWS) began in Zeeland, MI with one focus—to provide unparalleled customer service to the boating community. Staying true to this principle has led to immense growth over the years. After outgrowing our Zeeland store, AWS moved to a larger building in Holland before settling in Hudsonville in 2002. Since then, Action Water Sports has added three more stores in Traverse City, Fenton, and Central Florida.

Today, Action Water Sports is the world's largest MasterCraft dealer by volume and continues to set the bar for excellence in the industry. For over 30 years, our team has continued to pass along our love for water sports and boating. We believe a boat is more than a piece of fiberglass. For us, boating is in our blood. It's in our nature, and it will forever be our lifestyle. So come meet our staff in person, and see what makes AWS a memorable experience for all who come.



Section 1

TYPES OF BOATS

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Towboats

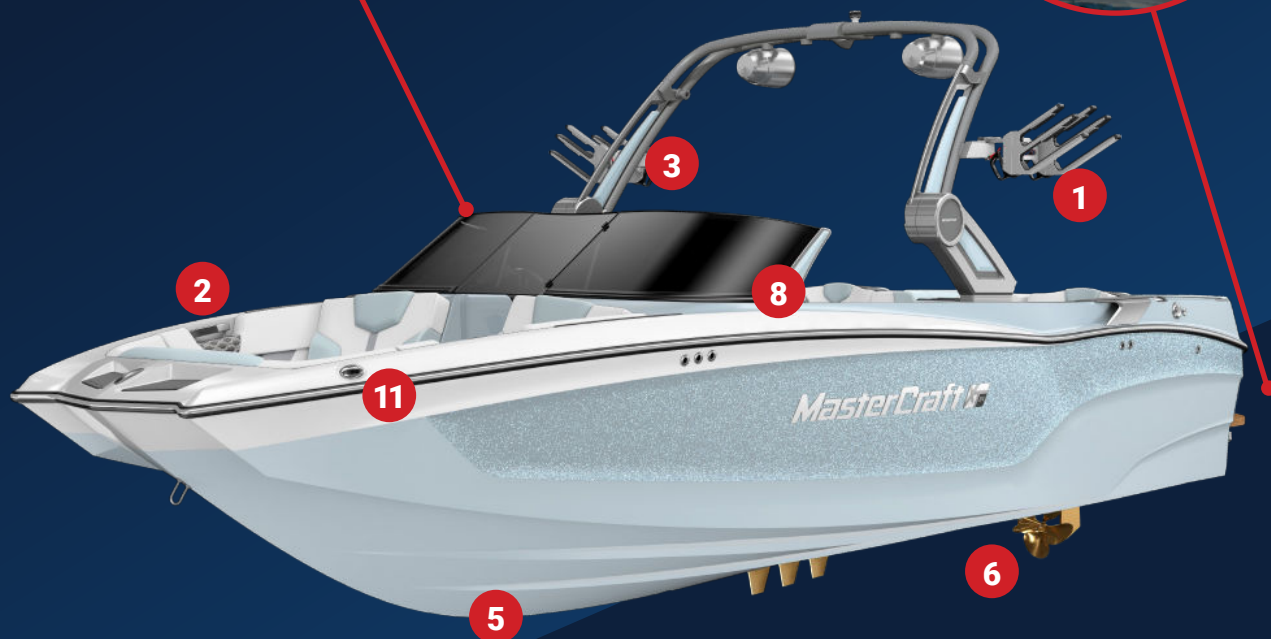
Today's towboats are built to create wakes and waves for water sports with their built-in systems, electronic controls, and ballast tanks. Towboats are also constructed with strong and sturdy tower systems in order to pull a rider behind the boat.

Another distinguishing feature of a towboat is the engine. In order to pull people or objects behind a boat, an engine with plenty of torque and horsepower is a necessity. The engines on a towboat are inboard propulsion systems, meaning the engine drives a propshaft that passes through the boat bottom with the propeller positioned under the boat and steering is accomplished by the rutter. This allows the boat to create a clean wake and keeps the prop away from the person being towed.

At Action Water Sports, our towboat of choice is MasterCraft. MasterCrafts are specifically designed to provide the premium water sports experience with each boat boasting a custom-made surf system. Few experiences are as exciting as being towed at high speed across the surface of the water or surfing along the wake of a moving towboat.

Towboats

- | | | | |
|---|--------------|----|----------------------|
| 1 | Board clamps | 7 | Stern (rear of boat) |
| 2 | Bow | 8 | Windshield |
| 3 | Tower | 9 | Swim deck |
| 4 | Motor | 10 | Helm |
| 5 | Hull | 11 | Cleat |
| 6 | Prop | | |





Bowriders

A bowrider is a leisure boat designed with an open bow for upfront seating. The bow deck is designed with a nonslip surface so passengers can walk comfortably from bow to stern. Throughout the boat, the furniture is designed for leisure activities so passengers can stretch out, lie down, and sunbathe.

Most bowriders have a deep hull design that allows them to cruise on larger bodies of water. Larger bowriders are also an excellent option for boaters who want to do some traveling.

Water sports enthusiasts rejoice! Some newer bowrider models are equipped with surf systems, ballast tanks, and board racks. This is for boaters that would like to have the option of water sports while also enjoying a comfortable, leisurely ride.

Here at Action Water Sports, we carry Cobalt boats. Cobalt is known for their timeless designs and superior boating experience. So if you're looking for a versatile experience on the water, a bowrider is up for the challenge.

Bowriders

- | | | | |
|---|-----------|----|----------------------|
| 1 | Windlass | 7 | Stern (rear of boat) |
| 2 | Bimini | 8 | Windshield |
| 3 | Arch | 9 | Swim deck |
| 4 | I/O motor | 10 | Helm |
| 5 | Hull | 11 | Bow |
| 6 | Prop | | |





Pontoons

Modern pontoons have many of the same luxuries as high-end cars and towboats. One of the biggest draws for a pontoon is the amount of space and comfort they provide. Generally, pontoon boats have a wider deck area with ample seating areas and lounge space.

At Action Water Sports, we carry Crest Pontoons and Barletta Pontoons. Both brands bring a sporty aesthetic and modern features such as USB ports, power biminis, LED lighting, and high-quality sound systems.

Both brands have both bitoons and tritoons. A bitoon has two aluminum tubes underneath the deck, and a tritoon has three aluminum tubes. Bitoons are great for inland lakes, while tritoons can handle rougher water conditions and offer water sports capabilities. And for those looking to host large groups or families, consider a tritoon. Adding a third aluminum tube will increase your boat's capacity and optimize the space on your pontoon.

Most pontoons are between 20 to 22 feet in length but range anywhere from 15 to 30 feet. Overall, pontoons are an excellent option for families looking to entertain and relax on the water.

Pontoons

- | | | | |
|---|----------|---|-------------|
| 1 | Ladder | 5 | Toons |
| 2 | Bimini | 6 | Ski tow bar |
| 3 | Arch | 7 | Door |
| 4 | Swimdeck | | |





Which boat is right for me?

Are you looking for a family cruiser? Maybe you'd like to wakesurf, wakeboard, and water ski? How about a pontoon boat? They're all great choices, and ultimately, determining which boat is right for you depends on how you plan on using your boat.

Towboats, like those from MasterCraft, are designed to manage the shape of your wake specifically for wakesurfing, wakeboarding, and even water skiing. They are capable of creating waves in the waist to chest-high range. You can ride a variety of different kinds of surfboards and truly experience endless waves.

Bowriders are versatile and can handle varied water conditions and activities. While they're designed for cruising in comfort, some boats from Cobalt can lay up a very robust wakesurfing wave that rivals the capacity of more dedicated wake boats.

Pontoon boats are always a great option for cruising as well. Modern pontoons like Barletta and Crest will keep you high and dry while offering a quiet, stable ride. Also, pontoons typically feature an outboard motor, offer a lot of open deck space, and are very versatile.

Questions to ask

If you are planning on purchasing a boat, aside from price and use, you need to consider what size boat you need. **You should ask yourself: where will I be boating?** Does my lake have size restrictions? Where do I plan on storing my boat in the off-season? How many people are in my family? What's my budget? The ideal boat should be large enough to suit your boating needs without breaking your bank account.

A speedboat is shown on a body of water, likely a lake, with a dense forest in the background. The image is dark and serves as a background for the text.

Section 2

COST AND FINANCING

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Cost of owning a boat	18

Prices

Towboat:

MasterCraft models start at \$109,900*. Most of our customers pay approximately \$125,000 to \$200,000* for a new MasterCraft.

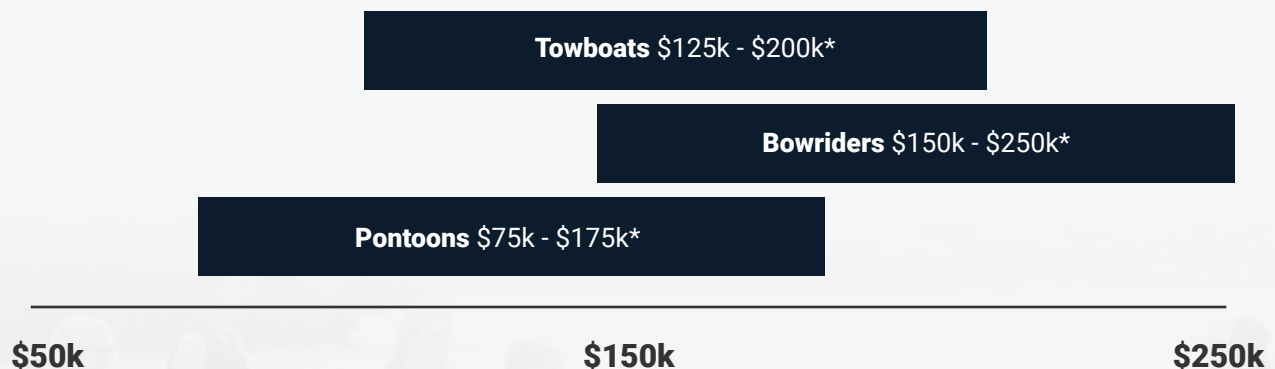
Bowrider:

Cobalt models start at \$85,900*. We typically see our customers pay \$150,000 to \$250,000*.

Pontoons:

At Action Water Sports, we carry Crest and Barletta pontoons. Both brands have models starting around \$39,995*. Our customers typically fall into the \$75,000 - \$175,000 price point for a new pontoon.

Average price range by boat type



*Prices shown on this guide are for information purposes only and are subject to change at any time without obligation. They are updated as of May 1, 2023.

Price factors

Depending on what options you want to add to your boat, this can significantly affect the price. Major factors include:

- Engine size
- Boat length
- Brand
- Condition
- Layout
- Furniture options
- Audio packages

For a bowrider, there are specific items that can drive up the cost:

- Windlass anchors
- Bimini vs arch
- Flooring
- Sound system
- Interior/exterior color options
- Upgraded cockpit screens/layout

For a towboat, the factors that will drive up price includes:

- Gel coat color
- Dash/screen package
- Tower
- Sound system
- Lighting packages
- Interior vinyl options

Lastly, for a pontoon, there are specific items that will up the cost:

- Bimini vs arch
- Flooring
- Sound system
- Interior/exterior color options
- Bitoon vs tritoon
- Upgraded cockpit screens

Financing

Financing a boat is faster and easier than many people think and is not very different from financing a new car. And even, if you have the cash on hand to buy a boat, it's important to consider your loan options.

To finance a boat, you can go in one of three directions:

- 1 Arrange financing through your boat dealer
- 2 Get a loan from your bank
- 3 Take out a loan with a lender specializing in marine financing

Most people simply work through their boat dealer, since dealers have plenty of experience setting up boat loans and dealers ensure the process is smooth, fast, and painless. Not to mention, here at Action Water Sports, we offer a discount when our customers choose to finance through us.

Still, some other buyers will opt for financing the boat by taking out a home equity line, second mortgage, or a personal loan from their bank. Unfortunately, this option can add paperwork and make the transaction more complex.



Cost to own

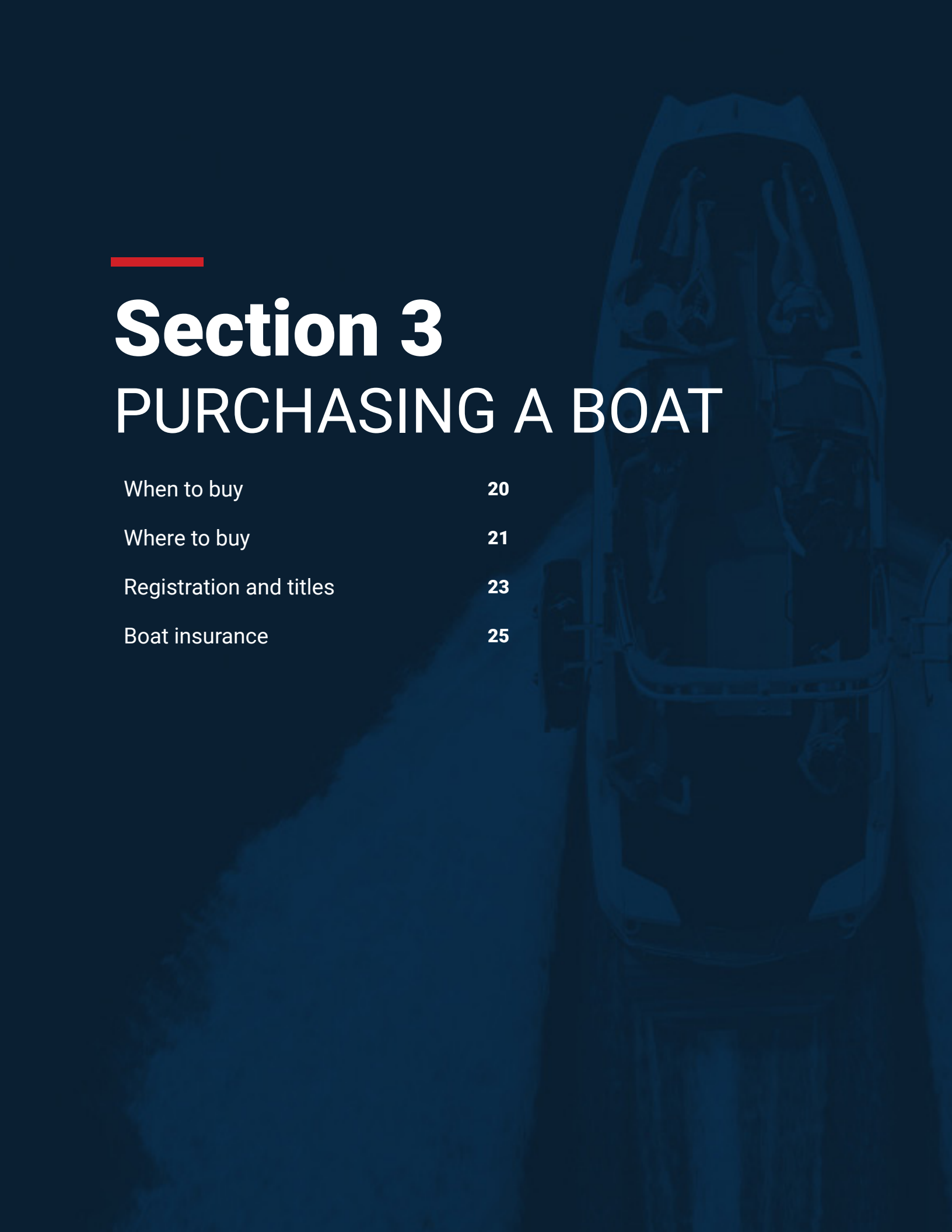
Depending on the make, model, and size of a boat, the cost to own the boat can vary quite a bit. Similar to a car, boat buyers also need to take depreciation into consideration as well as the cost to maintain a boat.

On average, new boat owners see a depreciation of 25% to 35% within a five year period; in contrast, the average new car sees a 60% depreciation within the same time period

The depreciation sweet-spot for most new boats is between 4-6 years. When our buyers trade-in within that time frame, they maximize their return toward their next boat, especially premium brands like MasterCraft, Cobalt, Barletta, and Crest, which hold their value exceptionally well.

It's important to be aware that boats require special attention to stay in tip-top shape, more so than your average car. **As for expenses, on average, we recommend that boat owners allocate between \$5,000 to \$8,000 per year.**

Broken down by boat class, we typically see Barletta and Crest pontoon owners spend 3-5% of the value of their pontoon on expenses. For MasterCrafts, it can range from 5-7%. Lastly, we see Cobalt owners spend approximately 5-10% of the value of their bowrider on yearly expenses.



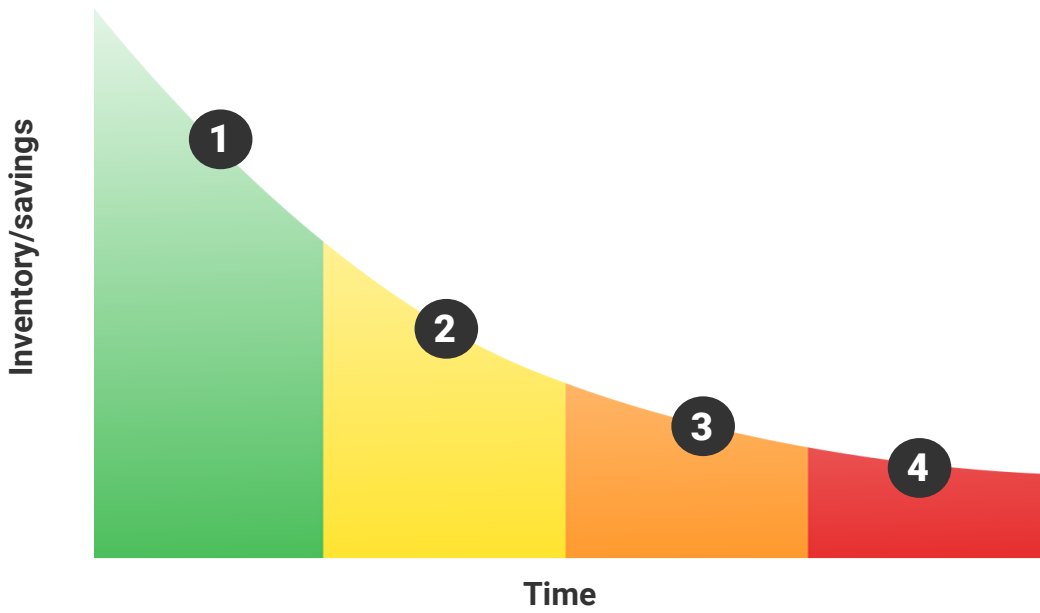
Section 3

PURCHASING A BOAT

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When is the best time to buy?

Fall is the best time to buy. Here's why:



1. Fall: Buyers that purchase during the fall will receive the best prices of the season and have the most options to choose from. Fall buyers will get their boat for next summer.

2. Winter: Boaters that purchase during boat show season will have a limited opportunity to save on their new model and may be subject to mid-season price increases. Plus, a limited amount of production slots will be available, and boats may not be complete by the next summer.

3. Spring: Boaters that wait until the spring to purchase are subject to very limited inventory (both stock and production). If purchasing a production slot, boats likely will not be complete by summer.

4. Summer: Summer boat buyers will see the least amount of inventory/stock available and savings.



Where to buy

Dealerships

Purchasing from a dealership offers a smooth buying process. Most dealerships have inspection processes in place in order to accurately value used boats.

If buying new, most dealerships have a relationship with their boat manufacturers to provide the latest and greatest boats as fast as possible.

Dealerships also typically offer service and storage options as well, making it a great one-stop-shop for all your boating needs.

Where to buy

Private party

Another option to purchase a boat is through private party. This can be a quick and easy way to purchase a boat with little to no barriers. However, the problem with purchasing from a private party is that you're really taking the previous owner's word on the condition of the boat. This can result in additional costs later on. Private party buyers also miss out on the benefits when purchasing from a dealership including free lessons, easy storing, and clear manufacturer warranties.

Buyers can also find boats online through trading websites and social media marketplaces. Buying online offers a great way to find a variety of options from different private sellers around the country. While most sellers provide photos and videos, it is difficult to gauge the condition of the boat without a thorough professional inspection.






Registration and titles

The thrill of buying a new boat can make someone often forget about the details, such as transferring the boat title from the seller to the buyer and registering the boat with your Secretary of State. This process can get confusing, but we've laid out three simple steps to help you get on the lake quicker than ever!

NOTE: When purchasing your boat through Action Water Sports, we will take care of the title and registration for you!

Step 1

Boat Payment



Once you pay for your boat, you'll receive the title and registration for both the boat and trailer. The title, just like a car, designates you as the legal owner of the boat. If the seller doesn't have the title, they must apply for a duplicate which will take 4-6 weeks to complete. If they do not have registration for the trailer, they must get the weight of the trailer which can be done at the nearest weigh station.

Step 2

Clear Lien on boat

If there is a lien on the boat, the seller must clear that amount. The easiest and quickest way to do that is to go to the seller's bank with them so they can pay and clear the lien. If there is no lien on the title, you are clear to take it to the Secretary of State.

Step 3

Secretary of State

The Secretary of State will title and register the boat in your name. All you need to bring is your ID, proof of insurance for the boat, bill of sale, and voilà, the SOS will complete the title and registration transfer. Don't forget to place your registration in the glove box of your boat!



Insurance

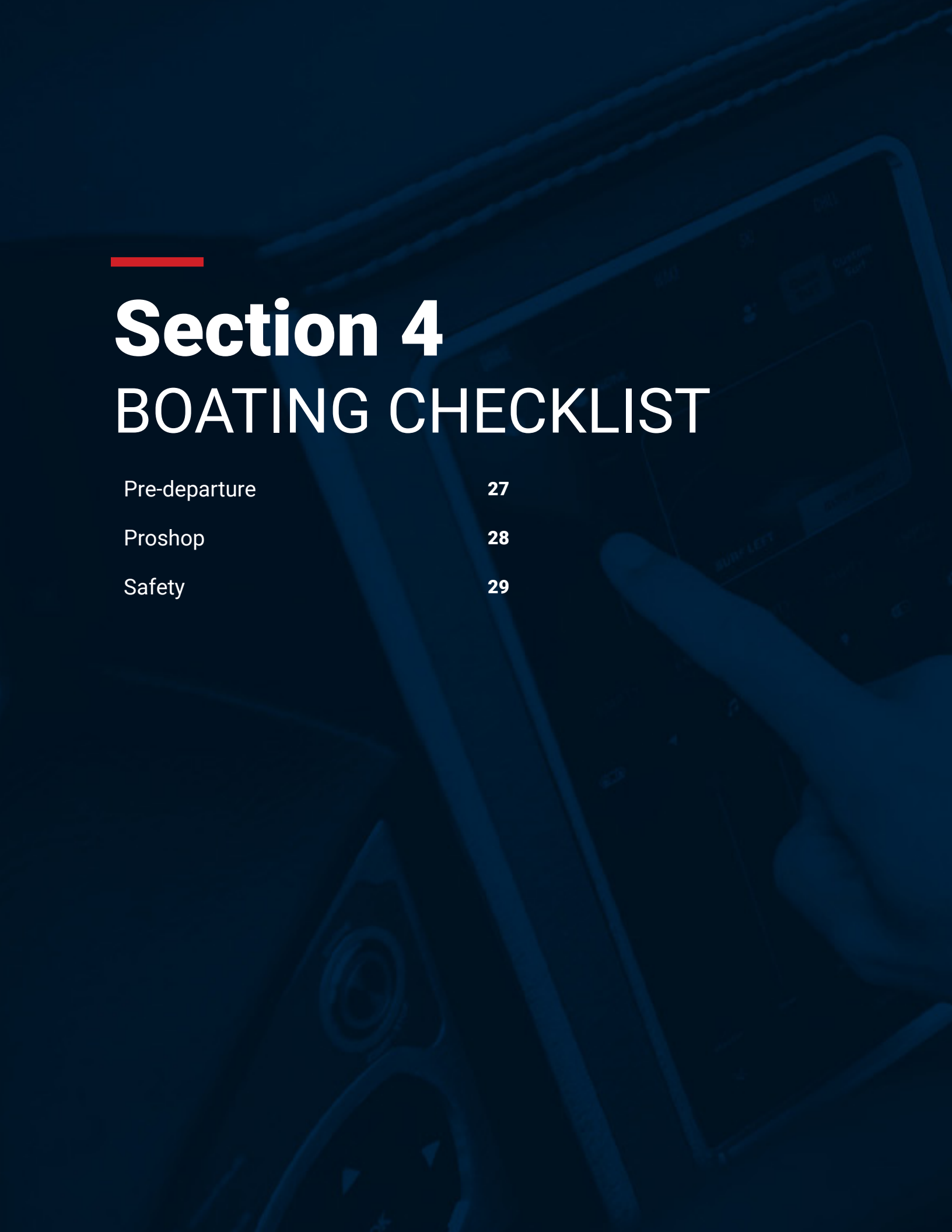
For our Michigan and Florida boaters, boat insurance is mandatory if you get a bank loan to purchase your boat. The bank requires that their collateral is covered in case of a loss. Otherwise, boat insurance is not required in the two states. However, we highly recommend purchasing boat insurance for seasoned boat owners and new boaters alike! Here's why:

- 1. Financial security:** If there is damage, theft, or loss to your boat or trailer, you're typically responsible for paying the deductible, and your insurance provider will cover the rest.
- 2. Liability:** Accidents happen, and you want to make sure you're covered in case someone gets hurt.

Boat insurance ensures minimum out-of-pocket costs in the event of an accident. Not having coverage can be costly.

When compared to auto or homeowner insurances, boat insurance coverages are affordable and often less expensive. Pricing is based on the value of the boat, state, prior ownership, boating experience, type of boat, and navigational area.

Additionally, marine insurance often offers coverages that a homeowner's policy may not. This includes offers such as an agreed value coverage or in some cases total loss replacement. Additionally, marine insurance will often offer personal effects coverage on water towing, pollutions spill liability, and salvage.



Section 4

BOATING CHECKLIST

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Pre-departure checklist

So you're taking your boat out for the first time? There's a lot to remember. Here are a few must do items before taking your boat out:

- ☐ Drain plug inserted
- ☐ Battery turned on
- ☐ Engine trimmed up (outboard and I/O engines)
- ☐ Gas checked
- ☐ Safety items packed (see safety checklist)
- ☐ Navigation and courtesy lights checked
- ☐ State numbering displayed
- ☐ Insurance purchased (varies by state)
- ☐ Registration and driver's license placed in glove box
- ☐ Anchor stowed
- ☐ Weather report checked

Safety checklist

Remember to pack essential safety gear. If you keep it onboard, inspect it periodically and keep it in good working order. Although the U.S. Coast Guard requires different items for different kinds and sizes of vessels, there is some basic gear that will help keep you safe and out of trouble with the authorities.

- ☐ Coast guard approved life vests
- ☐ Flare kit
- ☐ Throwables
- ☐ Sound distress device
- ☐ Dockline
- ☐ Fenders
- ☐ Fully charged fire extinguishers

New boat starter kit

When you shop at our proshop, here are the specific items we typically recommend:

- ☐ Flare kit (1)
- ☐ Life jacket bag
- ☐ Life jackets (one for each person on board)
- ☐ Throwable (1)
- ☐ Dockline (3/8" x 15')
- ☐ Fender line (3/8" x 6')
- ☐ G-5 Fender
- ☐ #8 Anchor
- ☐ Anchor rope (½" x 100')
- ☐ Anchor shackles
- ☐ Anchor lead chains



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USING YOUR BOAT

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Where to boat

One of the best parts of owning a boat is being able to travel to different lakes, marinas, and rivers.

While every boat is designed to be on the water, not every boat is designed for the same body of water.

A 26 to 36-foot bowrider would be way too big for a small inland lake, but the same size boat would be perfect for a large body of water with a marina.

An essential part of our sales process is figuring out where and how you would like to enjoy your time on the water. So if your family lives and plans on boating on small inland lakes, we would recommend a boat within the 20-23 foot length range. Larger lakes and rivers can usually support boat lengths ranging from 23-26 feet in length.



If you're looking for a great place to keep your boat that is 26 feet or larger, then your local marina is a great place to go. Marinas are usually located along oceans and large inland lakes. Marinas are a great spot to fuel up, tie up, grab a bite to eat, and relax. Unlike public lakes and rivers, marinas usually charge a slip fee to keep your boat stationed at the marina. Keep this in mind when making your boat purchase decision.

Overall, the best place to boat is mainly determined by what you would like to do out on the water and the type of boat you have.

Inland lakes and rivers are great for towboats with water sports capabilities and pontoons. In contrast, the oceans and large lakes are great for day boating and sturdy tritoons. It's important to discuss with your sales associate your desired boating lifestyle, where you plan to boat, and where you plan to keep your boat.



Trailer

In order to move your boat to different locations, it's essential to know how to trailer and tow your boat correctly. Here are a few tips:

Pre-departure:

While your boat is on the trailer, it's important to do a quick check of all trailer lights and connections. Make sure all cables are secure and the turn signal lights activate. Also, make sure to check the conditions of your tires. Look for any wear, tear, damage, and check the tire pressure. The recommended amount of pressure differs by brand, so be sure to check the manufacturer's recommendation located on the tire when filling up with air.

Trailer

Launching your boat into the water:

The key here is to take your time. Slowly back the trailer into the water. Once you see the back end of your boat floating, stop reversing into the water. It's important to keep the boat hooked to the trailer before starting the engine. If you have a dead battery or another issue with your boat, you can easily pull the boat back out of the water and address the issue. Once the boat is in the water, start the engine and unhook the boat from the trailer. Once the boat driver pulls away from the dock, slowly pull the trailer out of the water.

Towing your boat out of the water:

To tow your boat out of the water, align your boat with the dock. Then slowly begin to back up the trailer toward the water while using the dock as a guide. A helpful tip: placing your hand at the bottom of your vehicle's steering wheel will help you back in more efficiently. Whatever direction you turn your hand is the direction the trailer will go. Most modern trailers will have guide poles that mark the water level on the trailer once in the water. Have the boat driver slowly drive the boat onto the trailer. Once the boat is on the trailer, attach the boat trailer winch strap to the hook on the front of the boat. Crank the winch until the boat is fully secured onto the trailer. Then slowly pull the boat out of the water.



Storage

During the fall and winter months in northern climates, boats need to be winterized and stored in order to avoid damage during the offseason. When water is left in boats without being properly winterized or covered, the water can freeze, thaw and cause damage to your boat. This is why having a storage and service location you can trust is important in the boat buying process.

There are a few different ways to store your boat after winterizing:

- 1** Self-storage: most common self-storage options are garages or barns.
- 2** Shrink wrap: shrink wrapping is a common term used to describe the process of applying a polyurethane cover over your boat to protect it from UV light and other weather conditions. The cover is applied over the boat and then heat treated to create a tight fit. This prevents debris and water from entering the boat.
- 3** Dealership/marina storage facility: Many dealerships/marinas offer storage options for their customers. These storage facilities are typically well-maintained and may even be climate controlled.

For those living in warmer climates, you don't have to worry about winterization or storing your boat for the winter. However, harsh rays from the sun can damage/fade your vinyl and gel coat over time. That's why it's important to store your boat in a shaded area like under a lift with a canopy or covered to protect it from the sun's rays.

A man and a woman are standing in a boat dealership. The man is wearing a dark t-shirt with a logo that includes the word 'RINX' and some circular icons. The woman is wearing a dark t-shirt and jeans. They are both smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is filled with various boat-related items, including a large inflatable boat and some equipment.

Section 6

WORKING WITH A BOAT DEALERSHIP

One-stop shop

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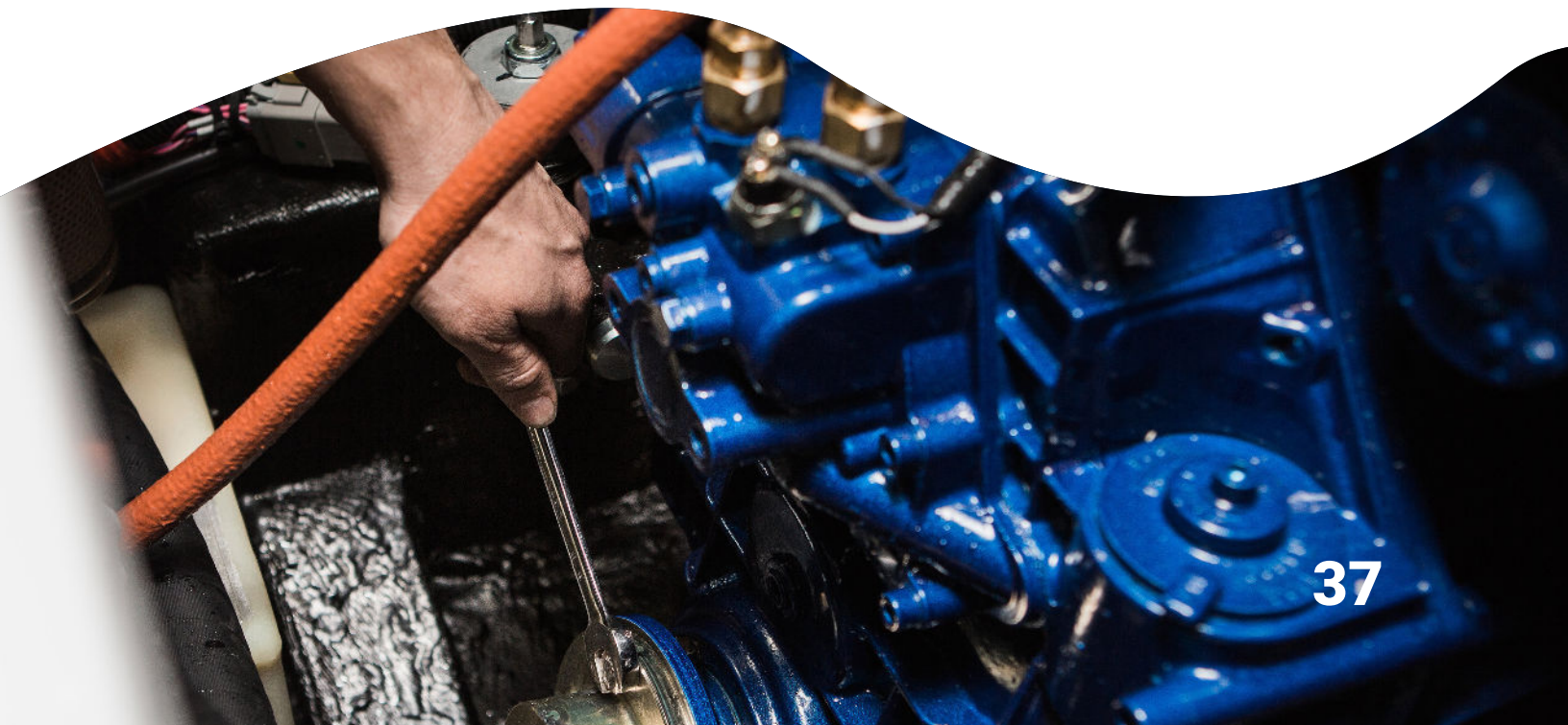
Action Water Sports

Your one-stop shop

Since day one, we've set out to be a one-stop shop for all your boating needs. We are committed to reinvesting our efforts to serve our customers at the highest level. We pride ourselves on making boating easy. From our pick-up and delivery services to our water sports lessons, we take care of your boat from start to finish. Here's what you can expect from doing business with Action Water Sports:

Service and parts: priority #1

The backbone of Action Water Sports has been, and always will be, our award-winning 5-star certified service departments. To make things even easier, our dockside service team is just a phone call away. Our team takes tremendous pride in efficient turnaround times, cost-effective solutions, and preventative maintenance. What does this mean for you? Maximum family time on the water.



A wide-angle photograph of a spacious indoor boat dealership. The ceiling is high with exposed white beams and several pendant lights. The floor is a polished, light-colored concrete. In the foreground, a white and black MasterCraft speedboat is prominently displayed, facing the viewer. To its right, a blue and black speedboat is visible. In the background, other boats and dealership signage are visible, including a sign that says "TOGETHER".

One-stop shop

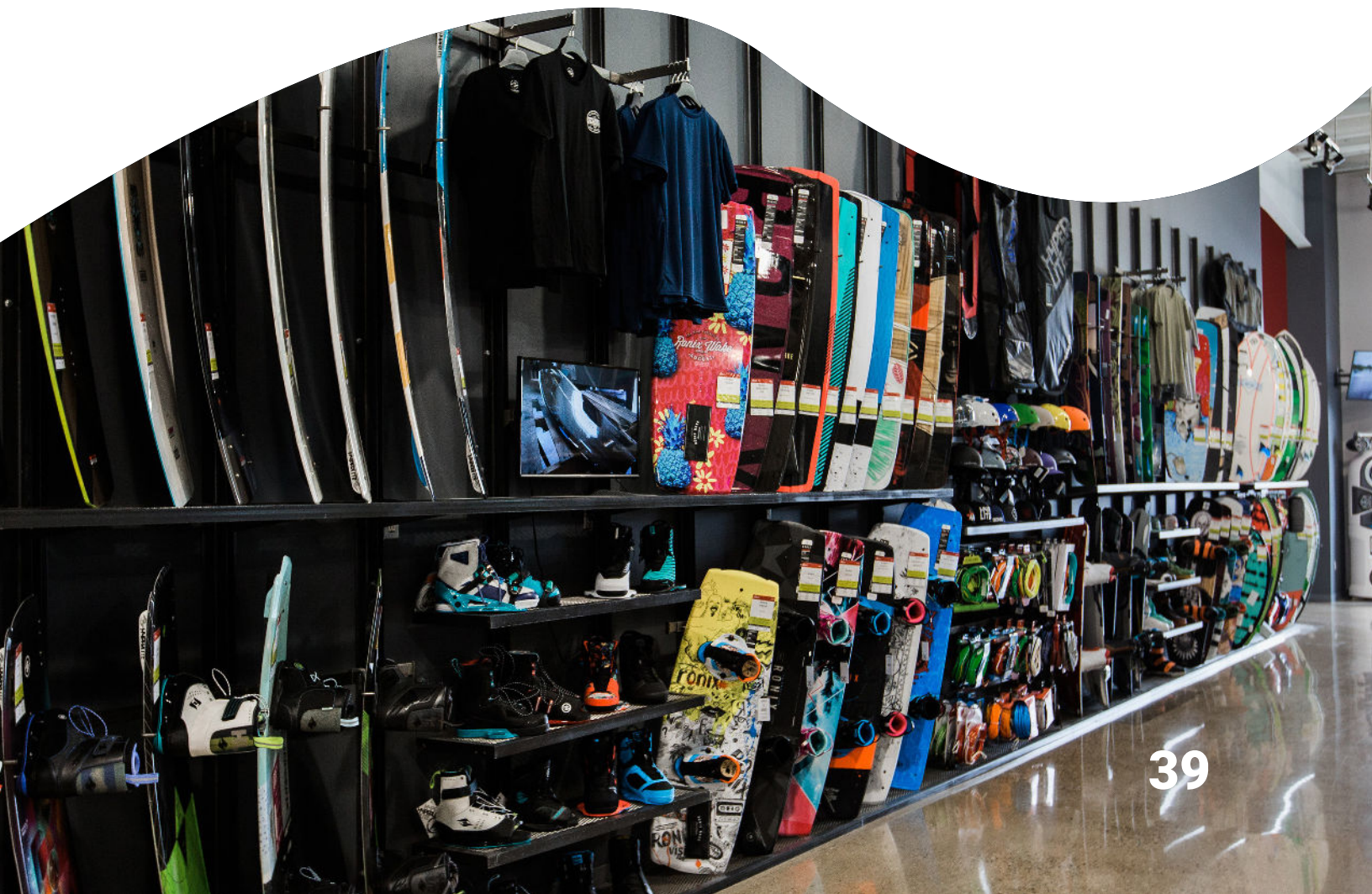
Boat sales: to be the best, you have to carry the best

Creating and maintaining a first-class dealership experience is much more than offering a great product; however, having a great product to offer doesn't hurt. That's why you'll find top brands such as MasterCraft, Cobalt, Barletta, and Crest showcased at our dealerships. Though their functionality may differ, their quality craftsmanship and attention to detail run parallel to one another.

One-stop shop

Water sports proshop: gear up and go nuts

Enjoy your time on the water with the best gear from the industry's top brands at Action Waters Sports. Our team keeps our proshops fully stocked year-round. You'll find skis, tubes, surfers, wakeboards, life jackets, board shorts, apparel, and much more at our award-winning facilities. Shop with confidence as our staff is eager to help outfit you with the perfect gear to match your boating lifestyle. Want our pros to join you on the water with your new gear? Our lessons team is happy to help you try out any new gear.

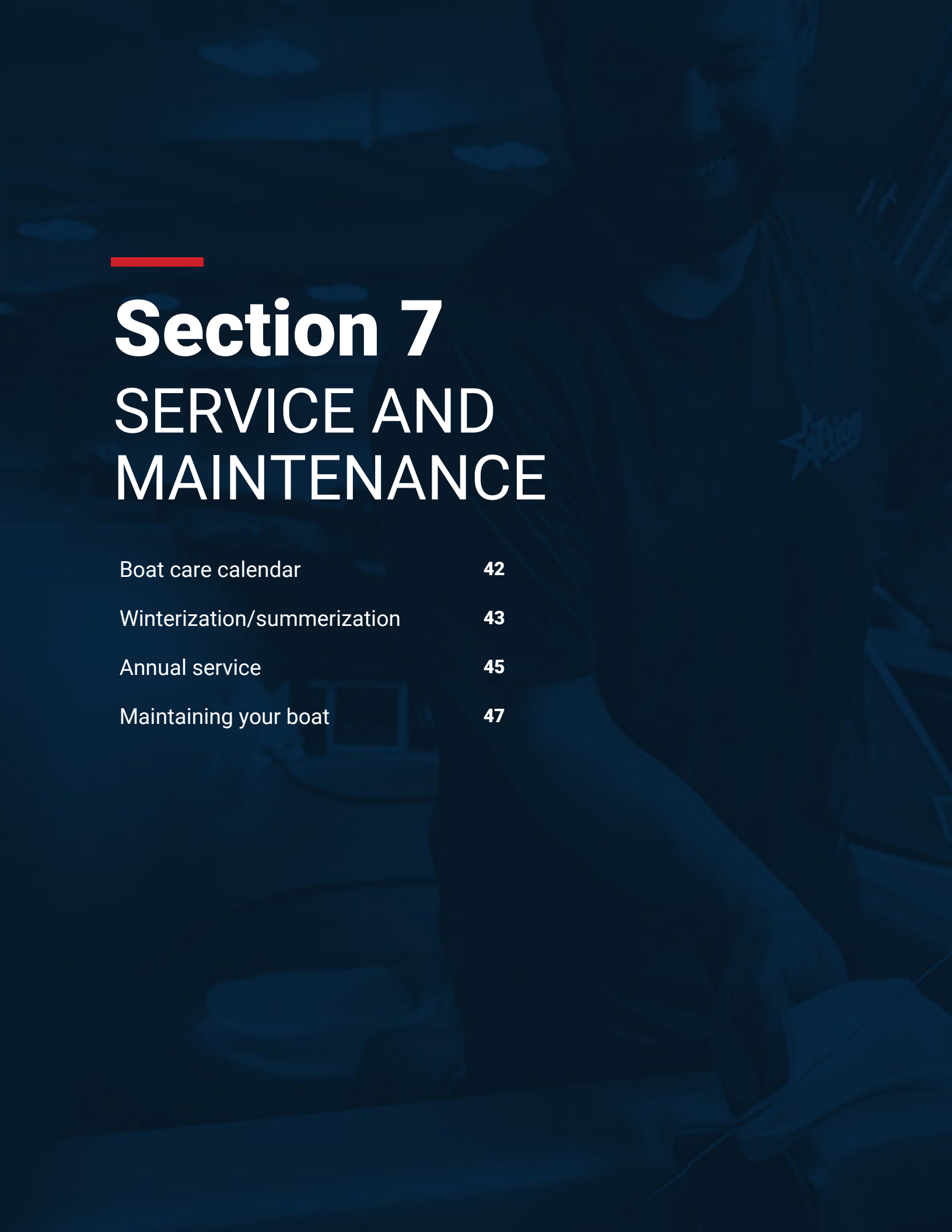




Dock and lift services: enjoy lakefront living

Your time on the water is spent doing more than just boating. It's a lifestyle that includes memories on the lakefront as well. That's why we offer multiple styles and brands of dock and lift options. Our team of experts will guide you through creating and customizing the perfect setting for your lakefront.

At the end of the day, we understand that buying a boat is a huge investment, and we strive to make that experience on the water unforgettable. You can shop at Action Water Sports with confidence that we will take care of all of your boating needs from start to finish.



Section 7

SERVICE AND MAINTENANCE

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Maintaining your boat	47



Boat care calendar

Spring

Remove your boat from storage and get it summerized. Schedule dock and lift installation.

Summer

You will likely need both a 20-hour inspection and 50-hour inspection, as well as an oil change if it's your first summer with a new MasterCraft. For Barletta and Crest owners, a 100-hour inspection, yearly oil change, and engine inspection for your Mercury will keep you on the water and out of the garage.

Fall

It's important to get your boat winterized if you live in a colder climate (see the next page for more information). Also, consider getting your boat detailed so next spring, it's good to go. Don't forget about fall service and arranging storage.

Winter

Schedule routine maintenance and upgrades before your boat goes into storage. Some of our most popular upgrades on older boats include adding onboard heating systems, underwater lights, speakers, or cruise control.



Winterization/summerization

Proper winterization and summerization services are crucial not only to the operation of your boat but also for maintaining resale value. These services are best done in the fall season; typically our customers get their boat winterized after Labor Day.

Winterization services protect your engine from harsh winter elements and freezing damage, while summerization services prepare your boat for the summer season. Both services are recommended for boaters living in climates where temperatures dip below freezing.

You can perform these services yourself or get it done at your local dealership. Your local dealership will conduct winterizations and summerizations to the manufacturer's specifications. Plus, they will be able to conduct routine maintenance and upgrades at the same time.

When working with a local dealership, here are the steps to take:

1. Schedule your boat pick-up or drop off time
2. Schedule winterization and summerization appointment
3. Schedule any routine maintenance/upgrades
4. Arrange for winter storage
5. Schedule dock and lift removal/spring installation (if applicable)



Annual service

New boats are highly sophisticated and full of valves, pumps, and electronics, many of which get exposed to the elements over the course of a season. When it comes to boat upkeep, there seems to be two schools of thought. You have the “break-fix” maintenance plan and preventative maintenance plan. In the first scenario, a customer brings their boat in for service after they’ve encountered a problem. The other knows that their boat performs at its absolute best with a scheduled maintenance plan. One is reactive and the other is proactive.

Both options are certainly doable. However, those who plan ahead with routine maintenance will typically experience much more uninterrupted time on the water when it matters most to them.



Annual service

If you want to keep your boat in tip top shape, here are some annual service actions that you'll need to remember:

- Oil change (every 50 hours)
- Raw water impeller replacement (every 100 hours or every 2 years)
- Ballast impeller replacement (every 2 years)
- Winterization
- Summerization
- Shaft alignment



Five signs your boat needs service

Check engine light

Warning sign that the engine is being impacted in a direct or indirect way. Commonly leads to an engine overheat.

Heavy vibration

Sign that something is either damaged or out of alignment. Boats should not have any vibration louder than a cellphone.

Power loss

If your boat is not accelerating or there is an immediate drop in power, your boat is in need of service.

Washed out wakes

Washed out wakes can signal there is an issue with the trim tabs not deploying properly, ballast timers being off, or electronics not functioning properly.

Steering issues

If you feel heavy resistance while turning or steering, then you may be in need of service work. A new steering cable may be required or your rudder may be damaged.

Maintaining your boat

Maintaining your boat is essential if you are considering trading in or reselling. By keeping your boat looking ready for the showroom, you will retain as much of your boat's value as possible. From the interior to the exterior, much of a boat's value is about its appearance. Here are some things to consider to help keep your boat's physical appearance in tip-top shape:

- Prevent gel coat fading with a boat canopy or cover
- Fix interior vinyl rips or cracking
- Air out the bimini to prevent mold
- Use a marine-grade vinyl cleaner
- Clean stains as they arise
- Properly store your boat
- Wipe down the interior before covering your boat
- Keep your boat trailer clean and maintain its wheels
- Wax your boat to protect it against corrosion



Maintaining your boat

Exterior

Here are some boat detailing and cleaning tips that apply no matter what type of boat you are cleaning:

- Thoroughly rinse your boat to remove any loose dirt. Start at the highest point.
- Fill a bucket with water and add soap specifically made for cleaning boats. Don't use household cleaning agents.
- Wash with a soft brush and rinse your brush frequently. Dried soap can leave a film or scratch a layer of wax. Be sure not to scrub too hard or else you risk scratching the surface of the boat.
- During a final rinse, let the water run down to help prevent beading and water spots.
- Use a highly-absorbent towel or chamois to dry. Drying your boat with a towel will prevent residue.
- Buff the surface to prepare it for waxing or sealing, and then follow the application directions for your wax or sealant.

It's also important to keep the exterior of your boat clean when moving your boat from lake to lake. This will prevent new aquatic invasive species introductions from water recreation activities.



Maintaining your boat

Interior

While maintaining the exterior of a boat is highly important, the inside is where you need to spend a lot of time. Boats get wet all the time, and water can cause mildew and mold to grow.

Use a good mildew stain remover to get your interior looking great again. Once you get all the mildew, mold, and grime scrubbed out of the inside, make sure to vacuum the interior. Remember that polish and wax don't just happen on the outside of the boat.

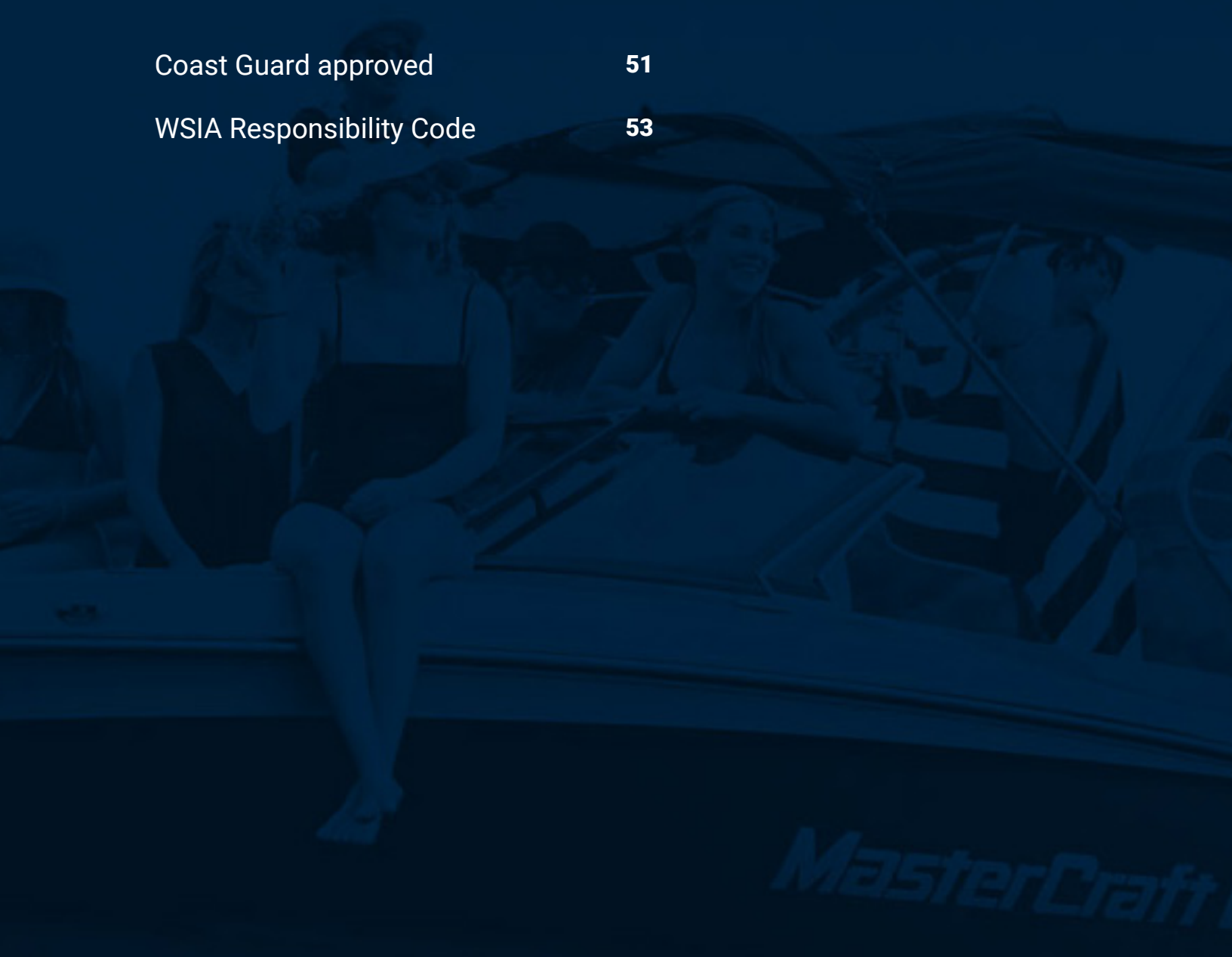
There are a lot of products for use in the interior of a boat. Depending on what is inside your boat, you may need upholstery brushes or other specialized tools.

Section 8

SAFETY AND ETIQUETTE

Coast Guard approved 51

WSIA Responsibility Code 53



Coast Guard approved

With keys in hand, you're about to take your first steps toward boating fun and creating lifelong memories with your family. Before you head out on the water, let's make sure you've got everything you need to be U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) approved.

The USCG has compiled a list of required boating safety equipment, which they have determined to be the minimum equipment and operating standards. Some states may have added additional required items/safety equipment. The sales rep at your local Action Water Sports will have a better understanding of your state's requirement.

Here's what you need to be USCG approved:

Fire extinguishers

For boats 26 feet and less, it is required to have at least one Coast Guard-approved hand portable fire extinguisher. For boats 26 to 40 feet, it is required to have two B-1 type or one of the B-2 type USCG approved extinguishers. Fire extinguishers are best kept in an accessible place. Avoid placing them under seats or towels and hard to find places.



Coast Guard approved



Visual distress signals

While boating in Coastal Waters, the Great Lakes, and oceans, a flare kit is required in case you need to signal to nearby boaters or authorities that your boat requires immediate assistance. Flare kits have an expiration date, so be sure that your boat has a functioning kit before hitting the water.



Whistles/horns

Any boat under 40 feet should have an efficient sound producing device such as a horn or whistle. The whistle should be able to be heard at least a half nautical mile.



Personal flotation devices

No matter how good of a swimmer you think you are, life jackets are essential when it comes to boating. On large bodies of water, they are required by the USCG. Unfortunately, competition vests are not USCG approved.

Additionally, a must-have on all boats is a throwable flotation device. It's not designed to be worn, but to supplement the buoyancy of someone overboard. Unfortunately, competition vests are not USCG approved.

Knowing what is required when boating and complying with those requirements will aid you in staying safe while remaining on the good side of the U.S. Coast Guard.



WSIA Responsibility Code



The Water Sports Industry Association (WSIA) is the water sports industry's leading advocate. They are known for preserving the vitality and responsibility of water sports activities. As a boater, it's important to be aware that good judgment and personal awareness can help reduce the risks in boating and water sports. To increase your enjoyment of water sports and boating, the WSIA promotes the following elements of the responsibility code.

In water sports, it is your responsibility to:

- Always familiarize yourself with applicable laws, waterways, and inherent risks
- Always have a capable observer in addition to the driver and agree on hand signals
- Always wear a USCG type III, ISO, or other agency approved (PFD) life jacket
- Always read the user's manual and inspect equipment before use
- Always ski or ride under control, at proper speeds, and within your limits
- Always turn ignition off when anyone is near the watercraft power drive unit
- Always stay clear of engine exhaust to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning
- Always make sure the engine cutoff lanyard is connect to the driver
- Always stay 200 feet away from the shoreline when wakesurfing
- Never "platform drag" or touch swim platform while the engine is running
- Never ski or ride near swimmers, shallow water, other boats, or obstacles
- Never operate watercraft, ski, or ride under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Never accelerate until rope is clear of body parts

