

Shrink Wrapping Boats

Shrink-wrapping of yachts and motorboats has been done for over 20 years. Shrink-wrapping protects boats when they are winterized. In areas where severe winters and heavy snowfall occur this method of protection for storing boats can help prevent serious damage to boat super structures.

With proper training, the right equipment and using “flame retardant” shrink wrapping film this process can be completed with minimum chance of fire or damage to customers’ boats.

Training:

Proper shrink wrapping technique is a skill that must be learned before attempting to protect a boat with shrink wrap. Training literature and videos that teach these skills are available from several suppliers of shrink wrap materials and tools.

Ventilation:

When a boat is shrink wrapped the shrink wrap cover needs to be ventilated to eliminate moisture buildup that can lead to mold or mildew problems. Vents should be placed to provide cross ventilation. Some minimum suggested numbers of vents are shown below:

- A minimum of 4 vents are needed on boats up to 19 ft. with beams up to 8 ft.
- A minimum of 6 vents are needed on boats 17 ft up to 29 ft long with beams of 8½ ft up to 9 ft
- A minimum of 8 vents are needed on boats 28 ft up to 31 ft long with beams up to 10 ft.
- A minimum of 10 vents are needed on boats 30 ft up to 38 ft long with beams up to 11 ft.
- A minimum of 12 vents are needed on boats 38 ft up to 60 ft long with beams up to 16 ft.

Remember over-ventilating is better than under-ventilating.

Shrink Wrap Film:

Use of “Flame Retardant Film” is strongly recommended. Regular shrink wrap films can burn and create a fire hazard during shrinking.

Flame Retardant shrink wrap that meet NFPA 701 guidelines is recommended. The criteria in these guidelines require the shrink wrap to self extinguish within 2 seconds when a flame is removed from contact with the shrink wrap.

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Heat Guns for Shrink Wrapping:

Heat guns for applying heat to shrink wrap are available in both propane fired and electric models. Propane fired guns are the most common. Both types are available in UL Listed (Underwriters Laboratories) and non-listed styles. We strongly recommend using a UL Listed model to further reduce the chances of starting a fire during the shrink wrapping process.

Do It Yourself

Boatowners should never be allowed to shrink wrap their own boats at the marina. They may not have the necessary training, experience, equipment and materials to safely conduct this process.

Fire Prevention and General Safety Tips:

A fire extinguisher should be kept handy when shrink wrapping a boat. Class A fire extinguishers (water extinguisher) will extinguish most shrink wrap. A multi purpose dry chemical extinguisher is recommended as they can also extinguish electrical fires and burning liquids.

Fuel tank filler caps should be tightly sealed before shrink wrapping begins.

The loss prevention information and advice presented in this brochure are intended only to advise our insureds and their managers of a variety of methods and strategies based on generally accepted safe practices, for controlling potentially loss producing situations commonly occurring in business premises and/or operations. They are not intended to warrant that all potential hazards or conditions have been evaluated or can be controlled. They are not intended as an offer to write insurance coverage for such conditions or exposures, or to simply that Great American Insurance Company will write such coverage. The liability of Great American Insurance Company is limited to the specific terms, limits and conditions of the insurance policies issued.
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