PRINTABLE CHECKLIST

Antifouling a Boat Hull: Preparation, Paint and Application

Hull Care · Intermediate · 1-2 days

Antifouling is the single biggest job in most lift-outs. Done properly it keeps weed and barnacles off for a full season and saves noticeable fuel; done badly it flakes off within weeks and costs you the whole job again.

Tools and materials

- [ ] Antifouling paint (check coverage: roughly 8-10 m² per litre)
- [ ] Long-nap roller, tray and extension pole
- [ ] 2-inch brush for the waterline and awkward areas
- [ ] Scraper and 80-grit wet-and-dry paper
- [ ] Masking tape for the boot top
- [ ] Respirator rated for paint vapour, goggles, gloves, overalls

1. Wash off while the hull is still wet

- [ ] Pressure wash the moment the boat comes out of the water. Slime and weed come off easily when wet and turn to concrete once they have dried in the sun.
- [ ] Work top down, keep the lance moving, and stay off the gelcoat with a narrow high-pressure jet — you can cut through paint and gelcoat surprisingly fast.

2. Prepare and check compatibility

- [ ] Scrape off any loose or flaking paint back to a sound edge, then feather the edges with 80-grit so they do not telegraph through the new coat.
- [ ] Check the new paint is compatible with the old. Hard antifouling over eroding is usually fine; eroding over hard often is not. If you do not know what is on there, or you are switching type, use a sealer coat or take it back to bare and prime.
- [ ] Fill any gelcoat blisters and let them dry fully. Painting over a wet blister traps the moisture and it comes back bigger.

3. Mask the waterline

- [ ] Run masking tape along the boot top with the hull dry. A straight waterline is the only part of the job anyone actually looks at.
- [ ] Sight along the tape from a distance before you commit — small dips are obvious once the boat is afloat.

4. Apply the paint

- [ ] Stir thoroughly; the biocide settles hard at the bottom of the tin and unstirred paint is barely antifouling at all.

- [ ] Roll on two full coats, cutting in with the brush first. Apply a third coat on the leading edges, rudder, keel and waterline where wear is highest.
- [ ] Respect the overcoating times on the tin and the minimum launch time. Most eroding paints want to go in the water within a set window after the final coat.

5. Do not forget the anodes and the prop

- [ ] Never paint over anodes — a painted anode cannot do its job and your prop and shaft pay for it.
- [ ] Use a dedicated prop antifoul or prop grease on the propeller and shaft; standard hull antifoul will not stay on bronze.

Common mistakes

- [ ] Sanding dry without a respirator. Antifouling dust is toxic — always wet-sand and wear proper protection.
- [ ] Skimping to one coat to save a tin. You will be scrubbing weed by midsummer.
- [ ] Painting in the rain or below the minimum temperature on the tin, which stops the film curing properly.

Notes