

Do you know what you are putting in your tank?

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FUEL GOOD THIS SEASON

Boating in the Channel Islands is spectacular yet demanding and everyone knows the importance of carrying out thorough vessel checks before putting out to sea.

Maintenance Checks

Checking your engine should be a regular item on the safety maintenance list. This doesn't just mean checking for leaks or damage. It includes checking and maintaining the condition of your fuel system tank, lines and filters with particular consideration given to the type of fuel you are purchasing. Make sure you know what you are putting in your tank!

Know What's in Your Tank

There are different fuels available including conventional petrol and diesel and, more recently, a range of biofuel blends. In many French ports, you might find only higher percentage biofuels are available. While these are thought to be better for the environment, advice from boating associations is that they are likely to cause problems with engines and systems. You need to take extra care if this is what you are filling up with.

Avoid Biofuel If You Can

Current advice offered by the RYA to boat owners is to avoid biofuel products wherever possible. This is because biodiesel blends react with moisture drawn from the air, resulting in increased microbial growth, sediment formation and filter blocking. Biopetrol blends are also more corrosive due to their solvent properties, leading to accelerated damage to seals and engine parts. Once the fuel is contaminated, this cannot be effectively reversed without the system tank, lines and filters being drained and refilled with clean product.

If You Are Sold Biofuel

- Remove all water from the tanks and conduct monthly checks to ensure they remain water free.
- Consider modifying tanks that don't already have drain points for removing water.
- Examine sight gauges on older fuel storage tanks for signs of leakage and replace any leaking seals.
- Consider replacing fuel seals as a one-off, precautionary exercise if you are having tanks serviced before you receive the new fuel.
- Replace fuel filters after two to three deliveries / turnover of the new fuel.
- Consider fitting dual filters in parallel with changeover valves in case one blocks.
- Ensure content of tanks is turned over every six months to help prevent blockage of filters and fuel lines.

Check Fuel Supplier's Pumps

It's important for suppliers to ensure they are properly storing, delivering, and labelling their fuel. If you're unsure what fuel you are using, ask an attendant and make sure you only top up from pumps that are clearly and properly labelled.

For more helpful advice, simply search for biofuel or biodiesel on leading boating websites such as www.rya.org.uk