

Most insurance claims are a result of damage on shore, and the largest cause of boat deterioration is the build up of water inside the hull. The consequences of water and moisture ingress into the hull and decks are particularly rapid during cold weather.

The aims of this section are therefore to stop your boat blowing over in high winds, and to ensure all water drains out.

1. Remove hatch covers to allow buoyancy tanks to air (if tanks are air tight will also prevent pressure build up. Good practice between races too.)
2. Remove the bungs from the transom drain holes and open the self bailers.
3. Support boat on rack (or similar sturdy object) placed at the front under the trolley. For an Enterprise on a West Mersea trolley a rack 29" in height will leave the transom just clear of the ground. (Other trollies may require a slightly greater height.) Do not be tempted to place a tyre under the stern as this can trap water and rot the exposed edge of the bottom ply.
4. Drive stakes (with hole or loop at the top) into the ground either side of the shrouds. Hold the boat down with an old main or jib sheet fastened to the hole at the top of the stake. Pass the rope over the boat, round the mast and down to the other stake. (If you are unable to acquire suitable stakes chandlers such as 1st Mark sell "corkscrew dog tethers" for this purpose – cost £3.50 each).
5. Check the boats next to yours are tied down! If not have a word with the owner, or tie it down yourself.
6. If buying a new cover, breathable ones will reduce the build up of moisture. They are more expensive but well worth the extra cost.
7. Winter storage can be a real problem for many boat owners. Anywhere the boat can be stored and kept bone dry is obviously the ideal. If you are unable to find suitable accommodation in garage, stable, shed, lounge or whatever. You must try to keep you boat dry to avoid damage caused by rain and frost. The owner of the boat in the picture was faced with this problem, and has adopted a multi-layer approach. The boat has the mast down and is supported on a rack with the bungs removed, the bailers are open and the bungee on the transom flaps has been eased. Foam pipe insulation has been fitted on the rubbing strips, and the boat protected with a cocoon cover and two boom up covers (the top one is ancient). An additional collar has been fastened round the mast, and is held tightly in place by bungee cord. A further piece of bungee has been placed just in front of the collar, so that any rain water running down the mast drips off at this point. The boat is fastened to the trailer at the bow and to fixing points by the wheels.

