



Marine AC

A hot topic on many of the marine forums is whether it is safe or not to leave your boat AC on while you're away from your boat for more than a few hours. The fact is that boaters are divided on the issue. The plus side to leaving them on is that the cooler temps make it easier for your refrigerator to stay cool theoretically extending its life, the boat is more comfortable when you return, and the most common answer is that it reduces the humidity onboard preventing mold and mildew.

The minus side of the discussion is that most marine air conditions are water cooled and they pump significant water through the unit while in operation. This means you need to check your strainers more frequently. A broken hose on the discharge could potentially lead to interior flooding. In the event that your bilge pump wasn't working, or couldn't keep up, you could potentially sink your boat. You also have an energized piece of electrical/mechanical equipment running unsupervised leading to a potential fire. Finally, you are utilizing a lot of electricity, increasing the cost to the marina, and potentially affecting membership dues.

Three years ago, we ran into a situation where the condensation drain pan on our forward AC unit became clogged. We later discovered that the pan had overflowed and the storage areas under our floor had flooded, the storage was damp, moldy and we had damage to items stored down there. We were fortunate that our bilge pumps were working and adequate to keep the damage to a minimum. After that experience, we made the decision to keep our AC units turned off as much as possible. Always turn them off when we leave for more than a few hours. We do have a small dehumidifier that we place in the sink and run when we are gone. Placing it in the sink allows the condensate to drain out of the boat.

Per the Rules and Regulations, no air conditioners shall be operated when leaving the boat for an extended period of time for safety and electricity cost reasons.

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