



EASTERNBAY
— BOAT WORKS —

Understanding Outboard Maintenance

A straightforward guide to maintaining
Mercury & Yamaha outboards

Routine maintenance isn't just about engine hours.
Time, salt air, fuel quality, and corrosion all play a
role in keeping your outboard reliable.

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When Is Routine Maintenance Due?

Understanding Service Intervals

Routine maintenance isn't based solely on engine hours.

Most Mercury and Yamaha outboards follow this routine maintenance schedule:

Every 100 Operating Hours

OR

Every Year, Whichever Comes First

Weekend Cruiser
Low Hours, One Year

Engine Hours: 28

Time Since Last Service: 14 months

Next Recommended Service:

☐ 100-Hour Service

Heavy Seasonal Use

Engine Hours: 246

Time Since Last Service: 8 months

Service Timeline:

☑ 100-Hour Service

☑ Second 100-Hour Service

☐ 300-Hour Service — Next

Even though this boat has not reached 100 hours, annual maintenance is due because one year has passed.

Frequent use can require more than one routine service in a season.

Why Time Matters

Oil, fuel, rubber components, and cooling system parts continue to age over time—even when your boat isn't being used. Salt air and moisture can also accelerate corrosion.

This guide summarizes common routine maintenance recommendations for Mercury and Yamaha outboards. Maintenance requirements may vary by engine model, operating conditions, and manufacturer updates. Always refer to your owner's manual for model-specific service requirements.

Mercury Outboard Maintenance Overview

The summaries below explain what is typically included at each major Mercury service interval. Exact maintenance requirements vary by engine model and serial number, so always refer to your owner's manual for model-specific requirements.

100-Hour/Annual Service

Routine Maintenance - Performed every 100 operating hours or once each year. Focuses on replacing routine wear items and inspecting the engine for developing issues before they become expensive repairs.

Typical Service Includes

- Engine oil & filter
- Fuel filters
- Gearcase lubricant
- General inspection
- Grease and lubrication
- Check belts, hoses and steering components
- Inspect anodes
- Engine diagnostics (if applicable)

300-Hour Service (Builds on Routine Maintenance)

- Includes everything from the 100-hour service
- Adds water pump and additional cooling system maintenance
- Focuses on longer-term wear items

500-Hour Service (Builds on Previous Services)

- Includes previous maintenance
- Replaces additional long-life components
- Expanded inspection and preventive maintenance

1000-Hour Service (Builds on Previous Services)

- Includes previous maintenance
- Replaces additional long-life components
- Expanded inspection and preventive maintenance

Yamaha Outboard Maintenance Overview

The summaries below explain what is typically included at each major Yamaha service interval. Exact maintenance requirements vary by engine model and serial number, so always refer to your owner's manual for model-specific requirements.

100-Hour/Annual Service

Routine maintenance performed every 100 operating hours or once each year.

Focuses on replacing routine wear items and inspecting the engine for developing issues before they become expensive repairs.

Typical Maintenance Includes

- Engine oil & filter
- Fuel filters
- Gearcase lubricant
- Spark plugs
- Water pump inspection/service
- Grease and lubrication
- Inspect anodes
- General mechanical inspection

300-Hour Service (Builds on the 100 Hour/Annual Service)

- Includes all routine maintenance items
- Adds cooling system service and inspection
- More extensive fuel system inspection
- Expanded electrical and charging system checks
- Greater focus on long-term wear items

500-Hour Service (Builds on Previous Services)

- Includes all previous maintenance
- Additional fuel system servicing
- Expanded cooling system inspection
- More comprehensive electrical and control system checks
- Replacement of additional long-life components

1000-Hour Service (Builds on Previous Services)

- Includes all previous maintenance
- Comprehensive fuel system service
- Major cooling system inspection
- Additional mid-life component replacement
- Complete engine condition evaluation



Common Questions

Is winterization the same as an annual service?

Not necessarily.

Winterization prepares your engine for storage by protecting it during the off-season. Routine maintenance follows the manufacturer's recommended service schedule and replaces fluids, filters, and other wear items.

Depending on what's included, a winterization service may also include annual maintenance—but the two are not automatically the same.

Is spring commissioning the same as an annual service?

Not necessarily.

Spring commissioning prepares your boat for the season by checking systems, reconnecting batteries, testing equipment, and making sure everything is ready for use.

Routine maintenance may be performed at the same time, but it is a separate service unless specifically included.

My boat only has a few hours on it. Does it still need annual service?

Yes

Most Mercury and Yamaha outboards recommend routine maintenance every 100 operating hours or once each year, whichever comes first.

Even engines with very low hours continue to age. Oil degrades over time, fuel can deteriorate, rubber components age, and salt air can accelerate corrosion.

My engine runs perfectly. Why should I service it?

Routine maintenance is designed to prevent problems—not wait for them.

Replacing fluids, filters, and other wear items on schedule helps identify small issues before they become expensive repairs and keeps your engine operating reliably throughout the season.

When is the best time to have my engine serviced?

There isn't a single "right" answer.

Many owners schedule annual service during winterization or before spring commissioning because the boat is already out of the water. Others prefer to service mid-season based on operating hours.

The most important thing is staying on schedule rather than waiting until something doesn't feel right.

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