

Boat Lift Cable Maintenance Information



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Boat lift cables endure wear from two primary sources: internal and external abrasion.

- ◇ Internal abrasion occurs as the strands interact during the lifting process, gradually causing friction and wear.
- ◇ External abrasion happens when the cable bends around the winch drum or rubs against adjacent components.

The lifespan of these cables is contingent upon several factors, including usage frequency, cable material, and the level of care they receive.

Factors Influencing Cable Longevity

Each time a boat is raised or lowered using a winch drum, internal wear occurs as individual wire strands, wound around the drum, move at different speeds. This variance leads to friction among the strands, resulting in gradual abrasion. Proper maintenance is critical, involving periodic application of penetrating oil for steel cables. This oil serves to minimize internal friction, preserve the galvanized coating (especially crucial for galvanized cables), and reduce abrasion between individual strands. It's imperative to avoid using grease, as it traps moisture within the strands, potentially accelerating wear.

Indicators for Cable Replacement

Determining when to replace a boat lift cable involves observing various indicators. These include noticing excessive broken strands, kinks, deformities, or areas exhibiting heavy corrosion. Corrosion is often evident near the winch or at the base of the cable, serving as a warning sign of potential galvanization wear or significant strength loss.

Expected Lifespan and Warning Signs

Experts advise replacing galvanized cables every two years for safety reasons, while stainless steel cables tend to offer a longer lifespan—up to twice as long. However, it's crucial to acknowledge that internal abrasion or rust can remain hidden, potentially leading to sudden failures without prior warning. Unexpected cable failures might occur, especially

during improper boat positioning, such as when the boat rack bounces due to wave action, posing risks of damage or injury.

Inspection Guidelines and Preventive Measures

Regular inspection is vital. Signs such as heavy corrosion, kinks, rust spots, broken strands, or deformities should prompt immediate attention. Monthly inspections using protective gear and rinsing the boat lift with fresh water after each use—especially after exposure to saltwater—are recommended practices. Additionally, applying penetrating oil lessens corrosion between strands, enhancing cable durability.

Practical Tips for Longevity

Abrasion between strands occurs when cables rub against each other, emphasizing the importance of routine lubrication to minimize wear. It's critical to avoid using grease due to its inadequate lubricating properties.

Considering Replacement

It's prudent to consider replacing cables every couple of years, regardless of slight wear or fraying. Attempting to extend cable life beyond this timeframe could pose significant dangers.