

RNLI PRE-START ENGINE CHECKS

30% of all lifeboat call outs are caused by mechanical failure, says Peter Chennell, RNLI Sea Safety Manager. The RNLI recommend the following pre-start checks

Raw water filter

Shut the cooling water seacock, remove the filter element and clean it if necessary. Replace the element, screw the lid back onto the filter body and open the seacock.



Battery switch

Turn the battery on before starting. Do not switch it off while the engine is running.

Bilge blower

If you have a bilge blower or engine room extractor fan, run it for a few minutes before starting the engine.

Fresh water level

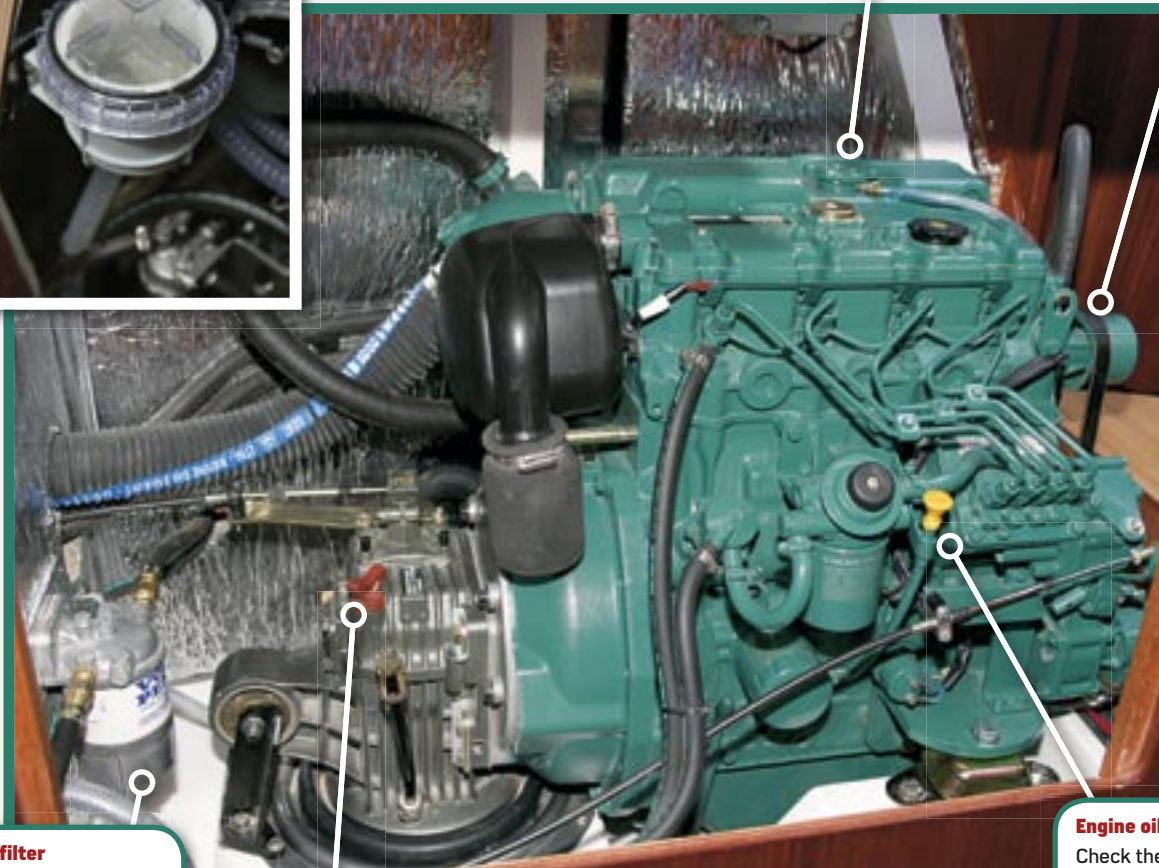
Some engines have fresh water cooling systems as well as raw water. Carefully remove the header tank cap and top up with water/antifreeze mixture if necessary to bring the level within about 50mm of the top. Carefully replace the cap.

Download this checklist from the YM website



Visual check

Check belts and hoses for cuts, splits or fraying and look out for oil or coolant leaks.



Fuel filter

Some boats have a transparent water separator/filter in the fuel line. Inspect the bowl for water or dirt and drain off any visible contamination. This filter has a screw underneath, allowing a sample to be drained and inspected for water

Gearbox oil level

Check the gearbox oil level with the dipstick. Some gearbox oil levels can only be checked with the engine running. Many gearboxes need special oil: engine oil will not do!

Fuel

Make sure you have enough fuel for your intended trip, plus a reserve of about 20% of the tank's capacity. The fuel tap on a diesel system should normally be left open.

Stern gland greaser

Boats with traditional transmission systems often have stern gland greasers. Give the cap or handle one full turn.

Engine oil level

Check the engine oil level with the dipstick and top up if necessary to keep the level between the 'max' and 'min' marks.

To test yourself on parts of engines and engine checks visit the RNLI Sea Safety website: www.rnli.org.uk/seasafety
The advice given relates to most yacht diesel engines. Always check with your engine manual or a qualified mechanic

