

Boat Q&A Talk

Dear Boat Talk: All of the articles I have read lately talk about the effects of Ethanol fuel on the engines. But what about the effects of this fuel on the boat gas tanks?

KG, Hauppauge, NY.

Dear KG: Most of today's boats are equipped with either aluminum, fiberglass or polyethylene gas tanks. These materials are used because of their light weight qualities and because they can be made to fit odd shaped spaces within the boat.

With the advent of ethanol being added to the formulation of gasoline, in certain areas of the country, including ours, many problems are now occurring within these gas tanks. Chemical analysis of the ethanol gasoline has determined that the pH becomes more basic or alkaline when you add ethanol to the mixture. Ideally, the pH should be neutral.

What does this pH level mean to your boat tank? For those with aluminum gas tanks, the gas reacts with the aluminum to produce aluminum hydroxide, which looks like a very fine brown powder when dry. These fine particles are smaller than sand particles, and therefore are not stopped or filtered by your primary or secondary gas filters. This means that the particles can lodge within the carburetors or find their way into the fuel injectors depending on the technology of your motor. When this happens you will experience run-ability problems with the motor. Most of the time, the engine will not idle properly, and in some cases will not be able to achieve top end RPM.

BoatUS reported in one of their publications that older fiberglass tanks experienced a degradation of the fiberglass to a point where the tank leaked. We have seen instances of current production fiberglass tanks experiencing a similar problem. We have collected a large quantity of fiberglass debris, enough to fill 3 plastic bags from one tank!

The polyethylene or plastic gas tanks, like the small six gallon portable tanks, and the above deck style, have not shown any reaction whatever to the ethanol gasoline. Some boat manufacturers are now installing permanent polyethylene gas tanks as large as one hundred gallons. Present technology does not allow polyethylene to be made larger than one hundred gallons due to limitations of the manufacturing process.

So, what should you do? Our recommendations are to only put as much gasoline in the tank as you will use in less than a month, keep recycling the gasoline by adding fresh gasoline to the tank and not letting the gas sit too long. Make sure you have a good water separating fuel filter and change it at least once per season. Treat the fuel even though you are not storing the boat. At the end of the season try to run the fuel down as low as possible, treat the remaining fuel as you would for winter storage.

Address your questions to
Moriches Boat & Motor
PO Box 658
East Moriches NY, 11940

A Free subscription to Long Island Boating World will be awarded for each question used.

**REAL BOATS FOR
REAL PEOPLE.**
QUALITY & STANDARD FEATURES THAT WILL
SURPRISE YOU AT PRICES THAT WILL PLEASE YOU!




350 Signature
Cruiser




290 Signature
Cruiser



Cockpit Dinette



Helm Station



CHAPARRAL

THE ULTIMATE ADVANTAGE



Amity Harbor Marine

30 Merrick Road, Amityville, NY

631 842-1280

Tuesday - Saturday
9:30-5:30pm

Sunday 10-4pm
Closed Monday

Many Used Boats Available Call For Details



Polar Boats Powered by



19' - 27' On Display