

SAFETY - Safety at FBYC

Winter passages mean colder water, shorter days and fewer boats around to notice if something goes wrong, which makes a monitored trip plan more valuable than ever. A short newsletter piece could read:

Before your next sail, take two minutes to log your trip on the NSRI SafeTrx app. It's free, it tracks your passage on your phone, and if you fail to check in at your planned return time, it automatically alerts your emergency contacts and NSRI with your last known position. In winter conditions, when cold water shortens survival time dramatically, cutting hours off a search can mean everything. Download it, set up your emergency contacts today, and make logging a trip as routine as checking the weather. And as always: lifejackets on, kill switch attached, and let someone ashore know your plans.

It works well because it's actionable (one download, two minutes), seasonal, and reinforces the club's safety culture without preaching.

Winter checks: keep her rescue-ready

Winter is hard on a yacht, and harder still on the gear you only reach for in an emergency. Before the next front comes through, give your vessel a safety-focused once-over:

- Lifejackets: check inflation cylinders for corrosion, ensure auto-inflation cartridges are in date, and inspect stitching and buckles. Salt and damp lockers quietly destroy them.
- Flares and fire extinguishers: confirm expiry dates and mounting brackets. Winter is a good time to hand in expired flares for safe disposal.
- Batteries and electrics: cold weather exposes weak batteries. Load-test them, clean terminals and check your VHF transmits properly, not just receives.
- Bilge pumps: run both the electric and manual pumps, and clear strainers. A blocked pump in a winter squall is a bad discovery.
- Rigging and lines: inspect standing rigging for broken strands and check dock lines and chafe gear before the big blows arrive.
- Engine: change fuel filters and check for water in the fuel. Diesel bug thrives in half-empty winter tanks, so keep her topped up.

Ten minutes on a quiet Saturday could save a callout, or a life. If in doubt about any item, ask, the club and NSRI would far rather answer a question than respond to a distress call.

