



Preparing Your Dock for Winter With a Dock De-Icer or Ice Eater

Read this article to make sure that your dock and boat are protected from costly damages this winter.



Last year's winter brought [severe arctic conditions](#) into many parts of the United States. Lakes that rarely freeze were frozen solid for weeks. Some were able to get their docks protected, while others weren't so lucky. De-icer and ice eater demand was sky-high and many stores were sold out.

This is why it is so important to get ahead of the game and get your dock de-icer(s) installed early.

If you own a dock, boat, marina, or boathouse, you need to take into consideration the damage a harsh winter could do to your waterside property. Some of the things are obvious, while other tips have been passed on after lessons learned through costly and sometimes lengthy repairs.

Deep ice and frozen waters can create a need for costly repairs to anything on or near the water. This is why you need to consider a dock de-icer as part of your plan for winterizing your dock.

Read on to find out why it is important to properly winterize your dock and how a dock de-icer can make it simple to keep your property protected.

Why It Is Important to Winterize Your Dock

If your dock is surrounded by thick ice, then it is in danger of several possible problems. One of the major issues can be flotation crush damage.

This kind of damage can occur regardless of the type of dock material. This is where some of your most costly damages can occur and can start a domino effect of more damages.

As water freezes and turns to ice it expands.

The colder the temperature and the longer it is below freezing, the more ice expansion happens. The more expansion the more the ice will crush your dock floats, pilings, or anything else in the water.

It is a good idea to watch water levels and check on the cable tension if ice is surrounding your dock. You very well may need to loosen up the cables to provide some relief.

Another thing to prepare for is if large chunks of ice break away and are free-floating in open water, they can cause all kinds of damage if they crash into or scrape along your dock.

This normally happens as temperatures warm open, large areas thaw out and then wind blows these large ice chunks into your dock.

Not only will this [ice do permanent damage](#) to the dock, such as loosening the fastenings, crushing floats, breaking cables, causing structural damage, and more; but it will also prevent you from being able to get onto the dock to help fix the problem.

Ice build-up can also smother any wildlife that is living in the water if it is a small lake or pond. Ice kills any vegetation, which in turn will lower the oxygen levels of the lake or pond.

Any marine life will not survive in low oxygen waters and will begin to die off.

Prevent Damage With A Dock De- Icer

Dock de-icers are also known as ice eaters, aerators, or dock bubblers.

They help prevent ice from developing in and around the area surrounding your dock by keeping the water moving and bringing warm water to the surface from the bottom.

They can also melt ice that has already formed. They help prevent damage to your dock, marina, and boats while also reducing fish winter die-off in lakes and ponds.

They help winterize fixed docks made out of metal, steel, and wood that you cannot remove during winter.

[Dock winterization](#) is an important part of dock maintenance, and failing to do it can result in costly damage to your dock come the spring. Not only can the costs add up quickly, but the repairs can take a while.

This has been especially true if you could be waiting on a backordered part; as we have seen a lot of since the beginning of the covid-19 pandemic.





How to Prepare Your Dock

If you are looking to prepare your dock for winter, you first need to consider what type of dock you have and consider whether or not you can or should remove it.

If you can't remove your dock, then it will require dock winterization using a reputable de-icer, like the Power House Ice Eater, Kasco Dock De-Icer, or Scott Aerator Dock De Icer.



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Removable Docks

For removable docks, you will need to remove and store all of the accessories that are on the dock. That could include cleats, fenders, benches, and handrails. Remove these first and store them safely.

Then you need to make sure that the dock is clean. This will stop it from degrading and having mildew build up in storage; it will also save you a job in the spring.

Once clean, you can unscrew and store each of the sections in a dry and secure location.

You may want to label each section after removal to make it easier to reassemble them later.



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Fixed Docks

You cannot remove a 100% chance of damage from the winter months for a fixed dock, especially in extreme weather conditions. But there is a lot you can do to reduce the damage potential.

Again, firstly make sure you remove all the accessories from the dock. This could include any lighting you have installed on the dock, any ladders, and furniture. Make sure this is all cleaned and stored safely in a dry location.

Now, you need to install a de-icer to help winterize your dock. A de-icer is installed below the water's surface so that it can create an opening around your dock by forcing warmer water from the bottom to the surface.

You will need to experiment with a few settings to find the best solution for your dock.

Depending on the size of the area that you want to protect, you may need multiple ice eaters; large marinas often times have dozens in place.

You can set it on a timer to turn on and off when needed. Another great option is to use a thermometer that will allow the unit to only run when it is below freezing. This can help save you in electricity costs as the de-icer may not need to be running all of the time to be effective.



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Other Winterizing Tips

If your dock sits on a pontoon that is fixed, make sure you attach a safety line to it when you prepare your dock.

This can help when the winter thaw starts just in case the dock has come loose during the coldest months. Tie it to a tree if you have to, but make sure there is enough slack to account for tides and other water level changes.

You should also detach as much as you possibly can from the shoreline, such as gangways and ramps.

Removing as much connection with the shore as possible will help reduce any displacement in the case of a really big freeze.

Check on your de-icer regularly to make sure it is still effective. Remember, you can adjust the settings and angles when needed to ensure you are de-icing enough of the surrounding dock area.

Get your dock de-icer/ice eater installed in the fall before the water freezes. This way it will be in place when the freeze starts and you can test it regularly if you would like.

Use A Dock De-Icer To Keep Your Dock Safe

If you have a fixed dock on a large lake or just a large fish pond that you want to keep free from ice throughout winter, an ice eater/ de-icer is the best solution to avoid costly damages and also protect fish and plant life.

The more that you can do to winterize your dock or pond before the freeze sets in, the more you can enjoy all your dock has to offer come the spring.

Thanks for reading and have a great day!

If you are interested in purchasing a [reputable dock de-icer](#), please take a look at our collection and find out more about how they can protect your dock from winter damage.

If you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to contact us here.

We would be more than happy to answer any questions you have and help you choose the right ice eater(s)/De-Icer to keep your property protected.

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