



## **MRAA's Suggested Best Practices for Boat Dealerships to Respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Marine businesses throughout North America are working to adjust their operations to care for their team, and for current and prospective customers during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The World Health Organization, the U.S. Center for Disease Control and the Canadian Government have led the way for us all in providing guidance for businesses and consumers. We've provided links to their guidance at the bottom of this document. In addition, many states, provinces and local governments have each issued their own regulations and guidelines to help keep the public and the businesses who serve their communities safe. As you follow the regulations and guidelines that specifically apply to you, your team and your community, below are some ideas and best practice recommendations collected by the Marine Retailers Association of the Americas that marine businesses might consider for safely adjusting their processes to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

### **Service Department**

1. Customers will be directed to schedule all service appointments online or over the phone. Prior to servicing, all customer data and boat information will be captured. Phone numbers will be required for non-contact communication.
2. At the time of scheduling, we will collect the customer's preferred method of contact to keep the customers updated on their boat's status and ready time. We will stagger service appointments in order to better guarantee proper social distancing between service technicians, dealership employees and customers.
3. Our staff will prepare Repair Orders in advance with information provided from the Appointment Process (noted above) and pull needed parts for the technicians using gloves, if available, to reduce the need to disinfect before installation.
4. Service writers and technicians will use email, phone, text, chat or video chat to communicate with customers.
5. Technicians will work solo on a unit without the customer or others nearby. Customers will not be permitted to "linger" with the technician, dealership employees or within the service area for any purpose.
6. Technicians will use their own bins or carts to move parts and tools to and from the boat. If the repairs or maintenance to a vessel are being completed inside a service or storage area, social distancing areas will be maintained (six feet) at all times. The service department and surrounding area will be deemed a "high-risk area" and sanitized accordingly.
7. If a vessel is serviced inside, the servicing will occur in an area that is sanitized and maintained in accordance with the CDC, EPA, OSHA, state and local guidelines.
8. If a technician needs physical help completing a task, other dealership team members will wear disposable gloves and face masks to protect both employees.
9. All boats being dropped off by a customer will be cleaned and disinfected by the technician before they begin work.
10. All boats being prepared for delivery to the customer will be cleaned and disinfected by the technician before the boat is made available for pick-up or drop-off.
11. Our staff will implement a process to allow only one customer to drop off or pick up a boat at any given time and place.
12. To maintain the dealership practices in place, we will complete the authorized work, the Repair Order, warranty claims and associated paperwork using digital communications.
13. If communication is needed during the time of service, we will use video chat to show customers the needed repair or service, and gain authorization via text, email, DocuSign or phone.



## Sales Department

1. Customers will be prompted to inquire about boat purchases and available inventory online, where we will attempt to collect all customer data, contact info and boat information. Customers who visit the physical dealership or marina for sales or service will be greeted with signage, directing them to call or go to our website to schedule an appointment.
2. Sales presentations will be made by appointment only and will practice social distancing measures throughout.
3. Boats will be sanitized before and after every presentation per CDC, EPA, OSHA, state and local requirements.
4. All customers will be asked to wash or sanitize their hands prior to entering a vessel, in the showroom, outdoor display, or on the water. Hand sanitizer, sanitizing wipes and/or soap and water and disposable towels will be made available for use before and after being in the boat.
5. Our sales team will make face coverings, masks and gloves available, and customers and our employees will be asked to wear them. Some states require individuals to wear face coverings when in public; therefore, we will inquire as to the specific state and local laws in our jurisdiction and will inform the customer prior to arriving at the dealership.
6. No more than one person will be allowed in a boat at the same time, unless they occupy the same residence and/or the standards of social distancing can be followed. Rules apply to above and below deck.
7. Boats, including all touch points outlined in our Boat Demo & Delivery Policy (included in this packet) will be thoroughly sanitized following employees or customers being inside the boat.
8. When closing a sale, our dealership will conduct the majority of this electronically. We will email a password-protected loan package for the security of customer's private information, and customers will be asked to print and sign documents.
9. Customers will be asked to scan documents and email them back to our dealership and will mail the original signed loan package back to our location.
10. When closings must happen in person, we will establish a segregated room or sanitized area, and will maintain social distancing requirements as set forth by the CDC, EPA, OSHA, state and local governments. To the extent that our dealership is required to conduct an in-person closing, we will provide a sanitized area for customers to sign hard copies of documents. Our dealership employee and the customer will sit at opposite ends of a 6-ft table set in an open-air space or within a sanitized area of the dealership with proper ventilation that conforms to governmental guidelines. We will provide two sets of documents; one set for the dealer employee interacting with the customer and one set for the customer to review prior to signing so as to avoid any close contact during the review of sales contract language. We will provide the customer with his or her own clean pen (to keep) that he or she may use to execute the necessary documents.
11. All boats being prepared for delivery to the customer will be cleaned and disinfected by a staff member before the boat is made available for pick-up or drop-off.
12. Home drop-off of boats will happen only after the documents have been signed. Whether our staff is picking up a customer's boat at their house or the customer is dropping off a boat at the dealership, our process will be designed to be completed safely by as few people as possible and follow social distancing guidelines. Our dealership employees will not be permitted to linger and the drop-off will be performed in an expedient manner. All dealership employees who perform home drop-offs will be instructed as to proper social distancing and how to politely instruct a customer to maintain his or her social distancing for mutual benefit and politely decline any invitation by the customer into a home or confined space.
13. We will equip our vehicles and forklifts with sanitizer and disposable gloves.
14. Where social distancing requirements can be followed, boat orientations will happen with one customer and one dealership personnel; where they can't be followed, video orientation will be implemented.





### **Boat Drop-Offs:**

1. Signage will clearly mark a designated area for the customer to drop off a boat via trailer, limiting the need for backing up and assistance as much as possible.
2. We will incorporate signage to explain the reason we are keeping our staff at a distance and this pledge to ensure safety practices are in place.
3. Signage will also communicate what to do with keys after the drop-off and our plan for follow up.
4. We will proceed with our check-in process, which will be completed without personal contact with the customer:
  - Visually confirm requested service;
  - Condition or damage - Note and photograph;
  - Complete Safety Checklist;
  - Complete Repair Order with customer via phone, to include:
    - › Best contact method: Text, Email or Phone;
    - › Other needed service or repairs noted;
    - › Promised ready date;
    - › Payment method and pre-approval;
    - › Gain authorization as required via phone, email or text.
5. If we need to speak to the customer, we will do it from a safe distance of at least six feet. If weather permits, we will hold these conversations outside by meeting the customer near their vehicle.

### **Pick-Ups:**

1. If a boat needs to be picked up from a customer, we will direct customers to leave the boat in a place we can access the boat without assistance and to provide information on where we can find the keys ahead of time. Our dealership employees will not be permitted to linger and the pick-up will be performed in an expedient manner.
2. We will also communicate prior to arrival that customers will need to stay at a distance, no closer than directing the driver toward the trailer tongue (no closer than six feet). All dealership employees who perform pick ups will be instructed as to proper social distancing and how to politely instruct a customer to maintain social distancing for mutual benefit and politely decline any invitation by the customer into a home or confined space.

### **Boat Demonstrations and Deliveries**

1. Boats, including all touch points outlined in our Boat Demo & Delivery Policy, will be thoroughly sanitized following employees or customers being inside the boat. Employees must perform the same steps with every boat that comes in for service prior to a customer demo or delivery, whether at the dealership, at their home or on the water. The boat MUST be sanitized before and after a sea trial by a customer.
2. We will communicate CDC, EPA, OSHA and state and local regulations for guidance on safe practices and procedures during the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. All customers will be asked to wash or sanitize their hands prior to entering a vessel, in the show room, parking lot or on the water. Hand sanitizer, sanitizing wipes and/or soap and water and disposable towels will be made available for use before and after being in the boat.
4. Our sales team will make face coverings, masks and gloves available, and customers and our employees will be asked to wear them. Some states require individuals to wear face coverings when in public; therefore, we will inquire as to the specific state and local laws in our jurisdiction and will inform the customer prior to arriving at the dealership.
5. No more than one person will be allowed in a boat at the same time, unless they occupy the same residence and/or the standards of social distancing can be followed. Rules apply to above and below deck.





6. If our insurance policies allow, we will consider allowing the customer to conduct a sea trial solo. No more than one customer will be allowed on the boat, unless they occupy the same residence – whether it is a demo with an employee or the customer on his or her own. Rules apply to above and below deck. All sea trials that may be permissible to conduct solo will only be offered to a customer who has extensive marine experience and knowledge of USCG navigation and safety procedures. We will make an inquiry and evaluation on a customer-by-customer basis, including the size and type of vessel that is subject to the sea trial.

7. We will make hand sanitizer, sanitizing wipes, or soap and water along with disposable towels readily available after the customer is finished with the demo or sea trial.

8. We will explore virtual sea trials where an employee records a demo or provides a video conference option.

9. To minimize multiple touch points, employees should request that the customer driving the vehicle leave the key/key-fob in the boat after a sea trial. Then, please consider the following:

- Avoid key hand-offs. People should be staying at least six feet away from each other.
- An employee, using gloves or a disinfectant wipe, must pick-up the keys and seal them in a clean, plastic bag.
- Using gloves or a disinfectant wipe, an employee can retrieve the keys from the bag.
- Disinfect the keys and fobs using one of the products on the EPA's approved list ([click here](#)) and let them sit for the amount of time recommended by the EPA.

10. Employees who are cleaning boats must wear proper Personal Protective Equipment such as eyewear, a face covering and/or gloves. If PPE is not available, please refer to the CDC's acceptable alternative, found [here](#).

11. The CDC recommends using products identified by the EPA to disinfect surfaces. A list of cleaning products that meet the EPA's criteria for use against COVID-19 can be found [here](#). The EPA recommends following the products' label directions for safe, effective use, and to follow the minimum contact time listed for each product on the EPA list.

12. Employees must clean/sanitize all surface touchpoints, as outlined in our Boat Demo & Delivery Policy, that a consumer or employee may have touched. This work should be done before AND after every demo, or when a trailer is dropped off and immediately before delivering a boat to a consumer.

13. When arriving for a service appointment, customers should know how/where to dock their boat or unhook and where to park their trailer in a spot where we can safely sanitize it. The boat should be properly tied down while waiting for it to be fully sanitized and the trailer should be parked so that it is not in the way.

14. Property awaiting cleaning or disinfecting should be clearly marked to avoid confusion.

15. Employees will regularly and **thoroughly** wash their hands for 20 seconds with soap and water, consistent with CDC guidelines. This is especially important after you have being in a public place, or blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. This includes interacting with consumers and cleaning boats they've been in.

Learn more here:

[World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)

[U.S. Center for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#)

[Canadian Government](#)

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