

Can you get it up?

Now you skippers should not be intimidated by this question. Of course I am referring you your anchor.

The anchor winch (windlass) is probably the most overworked piece of equipment on your boat, and the most neglected. Most manufactures recommend that an annual teardown on the winch be done. This would include changing gear oil, replacing seal and greasing as necessary. There are several styles of windlass on the market, however the most common types are.

- Horizontal shaft/motor on deck
- Horizontal shaft/motor below deck
- Vertical shaft/motor below deck.

All are plagued with their own problems. The most common is the washing out of grease and replacing it with salt from the every day use in our waters. This causes an over load on the motor and will trip the breaker or blow the fuse when you need it the most.

All enclosed places on a boat have condensation problems. The anchor locker is no exception. A wet rode or chain in an enclosed locker with the windlass motor below deck is a recipe for a failure. Condensation gets into the motor and washes out lubrication, also dissimilar metals in the motor will corrode very quickly and may cause the brushes in the motor to hang up and cause arcing to the commutator. A failure is just round the corner. Open the anchor locker when your boat is not in use, this will allow the air to flow and eliminate the condensation problem.

Most manufactures use a plastic composite as bushings for the more exposed moving parts. This allows a better tolerance to the salt environment. However these bushings do not hold lubricant like the old bronze types do, so seasonal maintenance is a must.

The last thing you want to here from your first mate, spoken loudly across the bay is
“What’s the matter? Can’t you get it up?”

Maintaining your winch will keep you and your wench happy. Which ever comes first?

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