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# A Guide to Dock Maintenance and Safety

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So you've installed your dock. Now what? Here is what you need to know to keep your boat dock in good shape and your family safe.

There are many different types of docks available, so the maintenance required will depend on the dock you have. Traditional docks usually have a wooden frame or a steel frame with wood decking. Some docks are supported above the water on posts. The posts could be pounded into the lake bottom, sitting on a pad or there could be a wheel on the end of the post. A third basic type of dock would be a floating dock. V-Dock has an aluminum frame and maintenance-free poly-decking. The majority of V-Dock customers opt for the ease of a roll-in dock, but in some situations a post sectional dock or a roll-n-float dock is the best solution. Preparing all docks for different seasons requires some maintenance and attention to safety, regardless of the type. Here's a guide for what you need to know to keep your family safe on the dock and how to keep it clean.

## Springtime Maintenance



Before your dock comes into heavy use again here are some suggestions for some routine maintenance.

Traditional Docks	V-Dock
Check for lifting nails and rusting or loose bolts.	V-Dock's stainless steel bolts are installed with an impact driver and use locking nuts, so they won't loosen or lift up.
Check for loose decking or damaged wood. Replace or re-secure.	Although it's not a safety issue since V-Dock's Poly-Deck TM is secured in two ways, you could walk along the edge of the V-Dock to make sure the clips that hold the decking on are secure. If a clip does get turned over the course of the summer you will notice the Poly-Deck TM makes a slight ping noise when walking along that area. That is when you will want to take a look underneath to see if the clip has been turned or needs to be re-tightened with a 7/16" socket wrench.

*(Springtime Maintenance Cont.)*

Traditional Docks	V-Dock
If your dock has pneumatic tires they may need some air.	V-Docks tires never go flat and require no maintenance.
Check the welds on your framework while it is out of the water and easy to inspect. Welds can break or show signs of stress indicating that they are about to break. If you find broken welds, repairing them may require a portable welder.	There are no welds on a V-Dock to inspect.
Power-wash sealed deck boards to remove algae and grime.	Power-wash the frame if it needs cleaning. If grease or oil is visible on the Poly-Deck™ use a rag and some paint thinner or cleaning solution to remove.
Apply a protective stain to the wood decking every 1 to 3 years. Strip and re-seal it every 5 years.	No need to stain, V-Dock uses a patented Poly-Deck™ that is a solid color all the way through and offers a 15 year warranty.
Replace rotten or worn boards.	V-Dock's Poly-Deck™ won't rot or warp and each individual plank allows for water drainage.
Reinforce dock steps and ladder rungs.	There is no bolting or drilling required for V-Dock steps and ladders.

## Power Washing Tips



When pressure washing boat docks, it's important to wear safety glasses and protective clothing. Test a small and less visible portion of the dock's surface to find the proper power setting before attempting to clean the whole dock. If you use a cleaning solution, try it on a less visible section first in case there are any issues. For traditional docks and V-Docks, try these helpful tips.

Traditional Docks	V-Dock
Scrub the planks and pilings with a nylon brush and water-safe solution to break down algae and bird droppings.	The rain will typically wash away dirt from the surface. If you're having a dry spell, use a hose or pressure washer to remove dirt deposits and bird droppings from the Poly-Deck™.

*(Power Washing Tips Cont.)*

Traditional Docks	V-Dock
Use a light pressure washer setting to remove any dirt or residue. Avoid getting too close and damaging the wood.	Pressure wash as needed, and don't be concerned with the color chipping, scratching or coming off, the material is a solid color all the way through.

## Winterizing Your Deck



If your lake freezes over the winter, you will want to remove your dock from the water to avoid the ice damaging your dock.

Traditional Docks	V-Dock
<p>Remove the wooden panels and stack them on shore. You may want to cover any wooden parts to keep them dry over the winter.</p> <p>Make sure to label sections or posts so you know where they go next Spring when you try to put the dock back in the water.</p>	<p>Store your dock far enough away from the water's edge to avoid ice damage. No need to cover a V-Dock.</p> <p>If your roll-in V-Dock sits up high above the water, lowering your dock by using a cordless drill or V-Dock handle will reduce stress on the legs/structure of the dock.</p> <p>A roll-in V-Dock can be removed manually, or by hooking up a tow bar to a vehicle.</p> <p>A post sectional V-Dock will be removed one section at a time. Use our roll-n-float system if you have them.</p>
Raise or remove the ladder. Remove benches and other accessories.	Remove accessories from your dock except bumpers, cleats and lights.

## Safety Tips

- Always keep a first aid kit nearby. Extra sunscreen products and bottled water will provide relief and hydration for anyone who has been out on the water or in the sun too long. Keep a dry blanket on hand if space permits.
- Mark your dock with something tall and preferably orange over the winter to warn approaching snow mobiles and others that the dock is present.
- Provide life vests for children or anyone who is not a strong swimmer.
- Take a CPR course to be prepared for an emergency.
- If your traditional dock steps are made of wood, check them regularly for splinters and algae.
- Install lighting if you plan to use your dock after dusk.
- Be vigilant. Make sure that children know and understand the safety rules for swimming, fishing and boating. Don't let them stay or play on the dock unattended.

Owning a boat dock can make boating, fishing, sunbathing and enjoying the waterfront more fun. To learn more about the V-Dock design and materials, visit <http://www.v-dock.com/>.