

Keep an Eye On Your Connections

A basic inspection of AC shore-power cords, plugs, and connectors is well within the ability of any sailor, and it allows you to spot potential problems before they worsen. To check the shore-power setup:

- **Secure AC power to avoid accidental shock hazards.** Turn off your boat's main AC breaker, the shore pedestal breaker, unplug the shore-power cord, and shut down generators and all DC-to-AC inverters that may be onboard.

- **Inspect the shore-power cord.** Ensure that it's constructed of proper marine-grade components, uses appropriately sized wiring, and is the shortest cord that will get the job done (use of undersized wiring or excessively long cords can be causes of excessive resistance). Replace cords that show signs of chafe, cracks, split insulation, or those with electrical-tape repairs.

- **Plugs and connectors.** These should be checked each time you disconnect shore power or monthly, at a minimum. Look for discoloration or corrosion on or around pins and plug inlets.

- **Check the "feel" of the connection when plugging in.** Those that feel loose or don't seem to be making firm mechanical contact likely won't provide good electrical contact. Avoid using worn or damaged pedestal plugs and report them to marina personnel.

- **Good resources for more information:** The National Fire Prevention Association Standard 303 and the American Boat and Yacht Counsel's Standard E-11.