

So Just How Much Power Do You Need in Your Pump?

Important factors to think about when selecting an electric bilge pump include the size of your boat and bilge, pump output capacity, output positioning options, and warranty.

Pumping capacity is probably one of the most important, but just how much you should have is a good question with no clear or easy answer, mainly because boats are so different. Any compartment that's essentially watertight should have its own pump. The American Bureau of Shipping recommends one 24-gallon per minute pump (roughly 1,440 GPH) plus one 12-GPM pump for boats shorter than 65 feet. The Lloyds of London standards relate to vessel length and volume, recommending a 50-GPM pump for a boat about

50 feet in length.

Based on size alone, a good rule of thumb is having a minimum of 5,500-GPH pumping capacity for a 40-foot boat. A mix of various size electric pumps or a mix of electric and manual pumps could accomplish this, but we recommend using manual pumps solely as backup, added capacity.

In our opinion, a good mix in an electric bilge pump setup would comprise a smaller primary pump (1,000 to 1,500 GPH) to handle the everyday pumping needs using minimum power and a couple of 2,000-GPH backup pumps (or better yet, an engine-driven emergency pump) with a quality automatic bilge switch like the Water Witch (PS Gear of the Year 2006).

