

Ups and Downs of Flex Tanks

The belowdecks storage of flexible tanks can be a big improvement over jerry jugs lashed to the rail. Water weighs over eight pounds per gallon and placing it lower in the bilge rather than higher, contributes to the stability rather than, in the on-deck scenario, detracting from a vessel's resistance to capsize.

However, simply placing the tank in a locker or on the cabin sole, and not carefully strapping it down, is asking for trouble. Lockers that close with a simple gravity held lid, and lack a positive latching device, may hide a flexible tank from view, but in a serious knock down, the last thing

a crew needs is a 130-pound bag of water slamming down on someone in a leeward berth.

In long term use, vessel motion and the continuous slosh of water in a flexible tank can cause it to slide, shift position and chafe. The longer a flexible tank is to be kept in use, the smoother the substrate and the better the securing of the tank needs to be. Another potential problem can arise if the tank is plumbed into the vessel's water system and it is winterized with alcohol-based antifreeze. In some cases chemical incompatibility can damage the lining. Check with the makers regarding this.