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## Canoe Storage

Like any piece of gear, the better you maintain your boat, the longer it will last. Proper storage is key in the effort to protect your canoe from the sun, weather and theft, and to prevent uneven weight distribution and maintain hull integrity. And the longer you store your craft, the more important proper storage becomes.

### Protecting against the sun

Sunlight can degrade just about any canoe hull material, from fiberglass to plastic to epoxy-coated wood (only aluminum canoes are safe). It can also damage wood gunwales and deck plates, as well as cause painted surfaces to fade or crack.

- The best way to protect against sun damage is to store your boat inside.
- When that's not possible, store your boat in a shaded spot.
- If no shade is available, use a tough, weather-resistant tarp or cover that's suspended above the hull (contact with the hull may promote mold or fungal growth in wet conditions) and entirely covering the boat.

#### A note on protective UV coatings

Sprays like McNett UV Tech can be applied to fiberglass, plastic and vinyl-skinned boats to significantly add to their from-the-factory UV protection. Apply a generous coating at the beginning of each season and prior to storing your boat for any long period of time to help shield it from sunlight and oxidation.

### Protecting against the weather

Prolonged exposure to weather can cause some hull materials to oxidize and/or degrade.

- Again, storing your canoe indoors is the best protection (although it still may be susceptible to extreme cold—see below).
- If you store your boat outside, make sure it's protected from precipitation and that rain and/or snow can't collect in the tarp and press down on the hull.
- If you store your boat outside or in an unheated building, be aware that repeated freezing and thawing can cause damage to fiberglass boats if water has seeped into seams, joints or cracks in the hull (it will expand and contract as it freezes and melts).
- Extreme cold and/or weather can damage wood gunwales and deck plates. Be sure to maintain all the wood pieces on your canoe as recommended by the manufacturer.

### Protecting against theft

The best way to protect your canoe against theft is to store it inside.

- If you store your boat outdoors, keep it hidden from view as much as possible.
- Position it so that it's difficult for a thief to grab it quickly and run.
- In high crime areas, thread a durable security cable through a sturdy part of the boat (like a thwart or carry handle) and connect it to a post, fence or building.

### Protecting against hull damage

Most canoe hulls will deform or bend over time if exposed to uneven weight distribution. Plastic hulls are the most susceptible to damage, but fiberglass and wood-hulled boats can also fall victim over time.

- Spread out the weight of the canoe over its entire length whenever you store it.
- Support the boat at several points along its length, using padded cradles, angled surfaces and/or wide, nylon straps that match the curve of the hull.
- Practices to avoid include:
  - Storing your canoe upside down on the ground, which is too harsh on the gunwales.
  - Supporting your canoe from its ends only.
  - Standing it up on one end.
  - Hanging it from its grab handles or thwarts.
  - Laying it down on its side on a flat surface for long periods of time.
  - Storing it near a significant heat source like a furnace or water heater.