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Your warning about E15 fuel could save a customer's summer boating season



Who doesn't love summer? Particularly at more northern latitudes, boating enthusiasts wait through long winter months and often fickle spring weather to finally see better boating conditions. As the temperature climbs, they're eager to feel the cool spray as they race across the waves in their boats.

The advent of summer is also great news for you, as consumers' eagerness to get on the water presents more opportunities for you to sell products, provide services and share your expertise.

This summer in the U.S., boaters should be extra careful as they prepare for their outings on the water, and you can help spread the word. If boaters don't pay close attention, a change in fuel availability could pose a risk to their boats' engines and their warranties. As their trusted dealer, you can provide them good advice to spare them from considerable heartache.

E15 gasoline blend, a significant threat to boat engines, is usually restricted from sale during the summer. This year, however, it will be available at gas pumps across the U.S.

E15 gasoline contains up to 15% ethanol derived from corn and, sometimes, other grains or sugars. Because of its heightened evaporative properties when the weather is sunny and hot, it contributes more significantly toward the development of summertime smog than petroleum-only and lower-ethanol fuels. Consequently, the

Environmental Protection Agency in 2011 banned the sale of E15 during the summer.

This year, however, major global issues have led to inflation, with gasoline among the most affected products. As a countermeasure, the president announced an EPA policy waiver that lifts restrictions against the summertime sale of E15 gasoline. This fuel is priced lower than other blends and offers some financial relief to owners of the many road vehicles that are rated to run on E15.

Whereas it might be a worthwhile alternative for some cars and trucks, **E15 gasoline is not an option for marine engines.** Ethanol attracts water from condensation and the air, which in turn can wreak havoc on a combustion engine. Problems that can be precipitated by too much ethanol in fuel (and 15% is too much) include the following:

- Corrosion of metal parts,
- Deterioration of rubber or plastic parts,
- Fuel permeation through rubber fuel lines, and
- Starting and operating difficulties.

For these reasons and more, warranty coverage on a broad array of repairs and services will become void on a Mercury engine that has had fuel made up of more than 10% ethanol in its tank.

Mercury has communicated for years about [the damage ethanol can cause](#), and has issued **Outboard Service Bulletin 2022-08**, **MerCruiser Service Bulletin 2022-07**, **Mercury Racing Sterndrive Service Bulletin 2022-07**, and **Mercury Racing Sterndrive Service Bulletin 2022-08 Use of E15 (Gasoline-Ethanol Blend) in Mercury Marine Engines** regarding the issues of E15. Dealers can order the Mercury/Quicksilver Alcohol Tester (p/n 879172T28) to test a boat's fuel if E15 is suspected.

The availability of E15 at pumps this summer adds more risk of its use, whether by a boater who wants to save some money and isn't aware of the damage ethanol can cause or by a boater who knows but might not notice the pump's ethanol-content labels when fueling up.

You can be the hero who saves the day. Remind your customers that a fuel that could be damaging to their engine and would void some warranty coverages is at the pump this summer. Tell them to slow down, read the ethanol-content labels and use only gasoline with ethanol content of 10% or less.

To help you communicate the importance of not using E15 fuel to your customers, a digital graphic and suggested copy are available for you to download from the Dealer Marketing Portal under Digital Assets > E15.

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