Marina del Rey Harbor
IN-WATER DRY DOCKING SYSTEMS

In-water dry docking systems keep your boat clean and dry while stored in-slip. These devices are different than boat lifts, as they operate without physically lifting the boat out of the water. They consist of a bottom lining and inflatable bumper that surrounds the boat. The device deflates in the rear to allow the boat to drive in and out. Once the boat is inside, the back of the device inflates, and the water between the boat hull and the liner is removed to leave the boat dry .

Fab Dock in-water dry docking system that was used in the County's 6-month trial with a Sea Scout vessel

Benefits of Using an In-Water Dry Dock

(1) **Protection of the boat hull** The newest models of in-water dry docking systems are fully automatic, portable, and aid in berthing the boat. The inflatable tubes act as fenders and bumpers to guide the boat in. The boat remains at water level, and the computer-controlled pumps keep the hull dry 24/7, even during rain.

(2) **Reduced cost of operating the boat** This type of system eliminates the need for regular hull cleanings and the application of antifouling paint, which slows the boat down and increases fuel consumption. An in-water dry docking system can quickly pay for itself in maintenance and fuel savings.

(3) **Improve harbor water quality** Use of in-water dry docks helps reduce copper and biocide pollution by reducing the length of time antifouling paints are in contact with harbor water and by eliminating the need for in-water hull cleanings. Unlike traditional slip liners that use a liquid biocide (e.g. bleach) to reduce marine fouling, in-water dry docks pump water out of the liner once the boat is docked, eliminating the hull's contact with water altogether. The in-water dry dock can also protect the water from fuel spills when adding gasoline; spilled fuel can be pumped out of the liner into a container and disposed of at an appropriate waste collection facility.

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In-water dry docking systems can accommodate any type of boat (including sail boats), up to 100 feet in length, with any type of propulsion. There is an off-the-shelf range catering to outboard and I/O powered boats and a custom-built option for everything else. Off-the-shelf models can be used with different boats of the same size class, and the material is very durable.

Testimonials

"It's nice to not have to pay to have the boat bottom cleaned! The computer-controlled dewatering pump is our favorite feature."
– Paul Renner, Sea Scouts

"It's an easy thing to use. It only takes a few minutes to get it ready to launch the boat that's in it, and it makes docking the boat really easy."
– Chad Pordes, Sea Scout Ship 16 (adult volunteer)

"I like the fact that we don't have to pay for bottom cleaning every month (twice during the summer)."
– Justin Howland, Skipper, Sea Scout Ship 16

"The Fab Dock is really good when we (Sea Scouts) are learning how to dock our 21' Striper."
– Caleb Esterhuizen, Boatswain, Sea Scout Ship 16

If you would like to see the Fab Dock in person, stop by the Burton W. Chace Park guest docks next to the Boathouse.

The mention of trade names or commercial products here does not constitute endorsement or recommendation for use.

County Trial

In September 2018, LA County Department of Beaches and Harbors installed a dry docking system made by Fab Dock, to test its performance in Marina del Rey Harbor over a 6-month period. The Fab Dock was used by the Sea Scouts on a 21' motor boat. During this time, they found that the Fab Dock was very effective for keeping the boat hull clean, and hull cleanings were not necessary. The automatic dewatering pump was even able to keep up with the heavy winter rains of 2018-2019. During the trial, the Sea Scouts also tested a second boat of similar size in the Fab Dock because it looked like it was taking on water. The boat turned out to be fine but keeping it in the Fab Dock while they investigated the problem gave them peace of mind that the boat was safe.

This material was prepared by the County of Los Angeles, Department of Beaches and Harbors.

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