

SpeedsealLife Puts a New Spin on Keeping Cool

Picture this: You fire up the iron jenny in preparation to exit a crowded anchorage. As the anchor slides onto the bow roller, the engine overtemp alarm shrieks a noisy reminder that you've skipped item number 2 on your pre-departure checklist—open the engine cooling water seacock. Your water-pump impeller typically would be toast at this point, but you've got an ace up your sleeve, SpeedsealLife. So you simply duck down below, open the seacock, verify the engine temp is good, and then continue on your way. At your destination, you check the impeller, verify that it's fine, and life is good.

SpeedsealLife, a new product from the makers of the original Speedseal, is designed to extend the life of an impeller, even when its run dry. SpeedsealLife uses a PTFE (Teflon) washer between the pump cover plate and a rotating brass disk that makes contact with the rubber impeller. Its predecessor simply used a brass cover plate.

HOW IT WORKS

In a typical water-cooled inboard engine, the seawater pump's nitrile or neoprene impeller rubs against a stationary brass



plate (i.e. the pump housing cover) and is lubricated by the water being pumped to cool the engine. In a run-dry situation, no lubrication means the impeller will be destroyed fairly quickly (2½ minutes on average), long before the engine overtemp alarm will sound.

Tests conducted by the company show that SpeedsealLife not only offers a much-improved dry run ability, but also a 300 percent increase in impeller life under normal use.

Practical Sailor has long touted the benefits of the original Speedseal (last reviewed in the July 15, 2005 issue), so editors were keen to check out the new and improved version. We installed a SpeedsealLife kit on one of our test boats (a Union 36 sloop) powered by a 43-horsepower Beta Marine. The installation was easy and fairly fast, requiring



PS installed the SpeedsealLife on our Union 36's water pump (above). Kits (left) include four hand screws, a brass cover and washer, and a Teflon washer.

no tools or sealants. Secured with four hand screws and a nitrile O-ring, SpeedsealLife accomplishes a true engineering seal directly on the pump flange, and the O-ring replaces the paper gasket used on some pumps. The SpeedsealLife cover also means future impeller inspections will be fast and painless. Testers will be checking the Union's impeller wear and will keep you posted.

SpeedsealLife kits—available for Yanmar, Volvo, Johnson, and Jabsco pumps—cost about \$100, and Speedseal upgrade kits also are available. According to the maker, the kits come with the guarantee that any unsatisfied buyer will be given a full refund on request. ▲

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