

Barton suggested start of season deck hardware checks

Checklist for blocks, sheaves, mainsheet traveller & genoa cars:

With spring just around the corner, it's time to check your deck hardware for signs of wear and tear, especially mast sheaves and blocks before you re-step. A little time spent now can save a lot of grief and aggravation during the sailing season, help keep you safe at sea, and save you money in the long run.

For blocks and mast sheaves

Flush through blocks and mast sheaves with fresh water if you have left them exposed to the elements over the winter. You can use a mild detergent to remove mould and mildew, but make sure it is ecologically friendly though. Do not oil or grease, as this attracts abrasives such as dirt and salt.

Check for excessive movement on the bearings of both sheaves and blocks, especially at the mast head. A broken mast sheave invites the halyard to jam itself at the worst possible moment with a trip aloft the only alternative to remove a sail. Barton carries a range of sheave sizes from 30mm up to 70mm diameter or you can contact your mast manufacturer for replacements. If you cannot get the exact same diameter, that's ok, as long as you make sure your replacement sheave is a tight fit width ways in the mast casing to prevent your mouseline jumping off the sheave and jamming.

This masthead definitely needs some attention



Remove and inspect sheave

Replace this block

Check for signs of elongation around the fixing holes and shackles at the head of your blocks, as this would suggest overloading. If in any doubt, replace it with a higher load block; this especially applies to mast head blocks which are not so easy to inspect. Threaded and drilled shackle pins are a must aloft and should be wire seized and taped, or even cable tied to prevent unlocking. On the rest of your yacht, look at the condition of your split rings. If they are not tightly coiled then replace with new ones (I always keep a packet handy). A good tip here is to cover both sides of the split ring with a single piece of electrical or spreader tape and stick it onto itself; this helps prevent snagging in ropes and halyards.

For ball bearing blocks, the sheaves should spin freely. Again, flush through with fresh water. Any grinding or uneven spin after flushing would suggest the block has been overloaded. Ball bearing blocks are not suitable for high static loads, such as round the mast base, so you should replace with a plain bearing block or one with a higher rolling load rating.



Plain bearing blocks fitted at the mast base

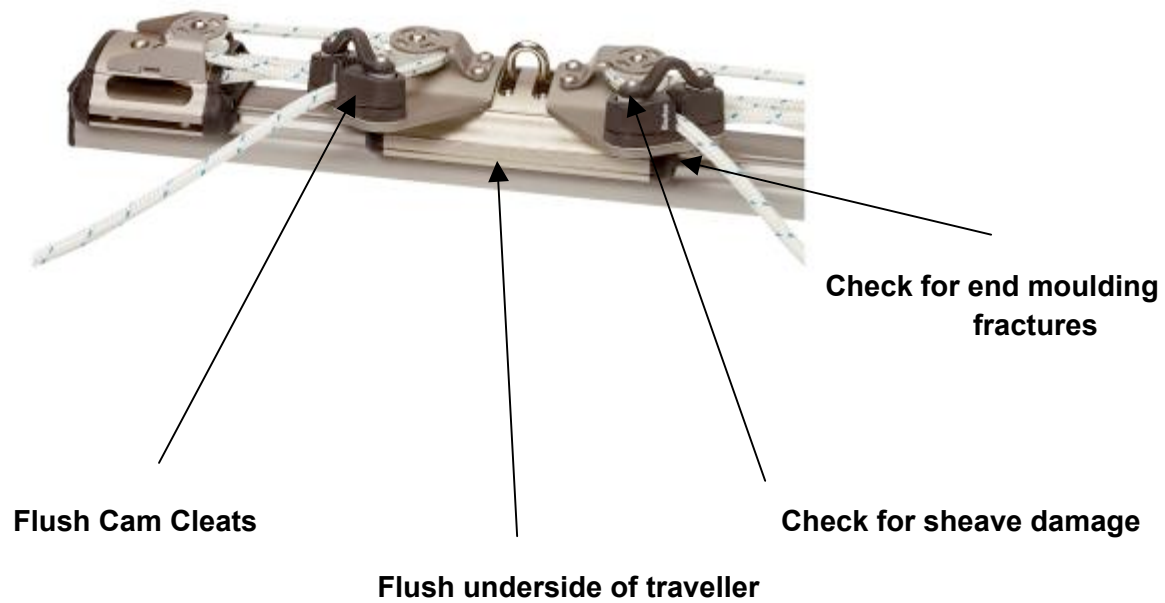
For Mainsheet Traveller and Genoa cars

Mainsheet traveller - Rinse thoroughly with a hose pipe and fresh water; especially the underbody where the ball bearings run in the car and along the track. Again, you can use a mild detergent solution for stubborn salt deposits; it will not harm the anodising.

Take time to look at the end mouldings on the traveller car. Crash gybes are usually the cause of fractures, so you may need to add spare end mouldings to your 'to do' list. You will need to remove the traveller car to do this so be sure to seek out or source a short length of track to transfer the traveller car onto for repair.

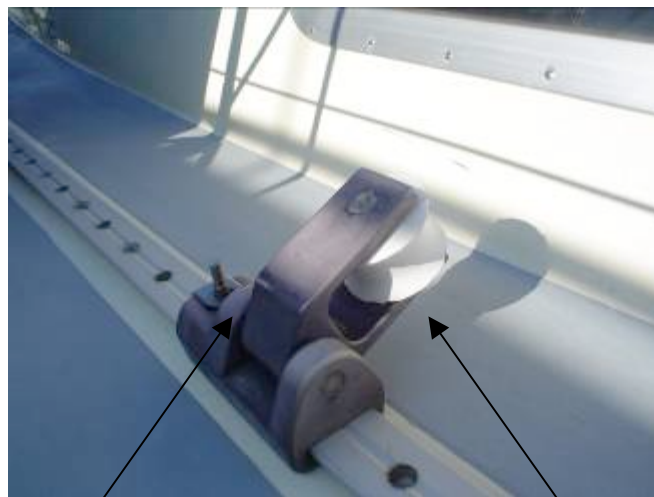
Flush through your control line cam cleats with water under pressure. The cams should open and return freely. If not, unscrew them and disassemble to check for broken return springs. Worn cam jaws reduce the efficiency of the cleat and will require a new replacement. Go for the highest specification cleat you can afford for a longer life. We recommend our K Cam series made from Kevlar and Zytel.

Check the condition of the control line sheaves as well. They are easy to remove and inspect; replacements may be required.



Genoa Cars – Check for signs of excessive movement about the sheave bearing. A small amount of play is acceptable, but any more than this may cause the sheave to lock up under load. Warning signs include excessive wear to one side of the sheave where it is not rotating.

Sheaves can be replaced so long as the car has been regularly flushed through and looked after. Heavy corrosion of the aluminium around the spindle makes it impossible to repair, so a replacement would be essential.



Broken pin needs replacing

Sheave damage will chafe sheets

The list of jobs to do may seem endless, but get the important ones over with now to prevent failure of your yacht and its equipment at sea. Any of your less critical, wish-list of jobs can be saved for a sunny day in dock or at anchor.