

# Integrated Pest Management

Cornell Cooperative Extension  
Suffolk County

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## Anti-fouling Paints and Boat Bottom Maintenance

### 9.4 Understanding a Boat Moisture Meter

A moisture meter can be reliably used to test and see if the hull core is wet.

Most meters have two sensors, one for sending and one for receiving. The ratio of the electric permeability of the material to the electric permeability of free space is changed by the presence of water and this is read on the meter as percent moisture.

Job number one is to make sure your moisture meter is designed for use on fiberglass hulls if that is indeed what you are testing. Not all meters are designed for fiberglass testing. Here are a few additional tips:

- Give the boat a couple of weeks after hauling out before you test it.
- This testing should be done from the inside of the hull and not from the outside of the hull.
- The inner skin laminate will give you a less distorted reading because it is thinner.
- The inner skin of the hull **MUST BE DRY** and the boat not submerged recently; also the bilge may trap water.
- If a wet reading is obtained on the inner skin, then this indicates that you have a wet core.
- Use a scanning reading rather than a spot reading.
- Use anywhere on the boat as long as you are a foot or so above the waterline and salt residue needs to be wiped off.
- Salt will affect a moisture meter reading by up to 50%.
- Moisture levels are reported as a percentage.
- Non-skid deck surfaces distort readings.

- Readings that are taken around keels, rudders and struts may also be distorted because of the metal content.

<https://www.practical-sailor.com/boat-maintenance/moisture-meters-can-you-trust-them-we-test-five-models>

<http://www.moisturemeterguide.com/page25.html>

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