

Fighting Odor with Hoses

One of the chief causes of head odors is poor maintenance or design of the onboard sanitation system. The hose and hose connections are often, but not always, the culpable components.

Our somewhat controversial sanitation hose test in 2000 found that Sealand's Odorsafe, a white PVC hose, was clearly superior to rubber hose for this service. (The company has since come out with Odorsafe Plus, which we have not yet tested.) The Odorsafe hose is expensive, but worth it, in our opinion.

Good hose is useless if the unions are not well clamped. Barbed hose end fittings should be snug and securely sealed and, of course, free of leaks.

All hoses fail. You can prolong the life of your hose and prevent odors by ensuring there are no loops that can trap sewage. The easiest way to identify a

failed hose, is to rub a clean cloth along it and sniff it every foot.

Rigid PVC tubing will also contain odors well, but it is only suitable for long, straight hose runs between the head and holding tank. If there are many bends and unions, they will only introduce more potential for leaks.

Some head odors come from rotting organic matter, such as seaweed and krill in the intake line or holding tank. Boats that have ready access to a dock or adequate freshwater capacity (either in tankage or watermaker) may want to consider upgrading to a freshwater-flush system.

Saltwater heads will benefit from a freshwater flush as well. Some head odor problems can be resolved simply by a routine flush—losing the seacock and flushing freshwater through the head.

More tips can be found in Peggy Hall's



Clear, reinforced PVC hose, while fine for pressurized freshwater systems, is not a good choice for tight turns or suction-side applications, and it won't fight odors as well as a premium hose.

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book "Get Rid of Boat Odors," available direct from the publisher's web site, www.seaworthy.com. You can also find advice on heads at www.practical-sailor.com, under "Tools and Techniques."