

## HYPALON vs. PVC

### Material Pros and Cons

Inflatable dinghies are manufactured from one of two type of fabrics: Hypalon or PVC (polyvinyl chloride). Both of these materials can serve sailors' needs, but they offer different pros and cons.

A synthetic rubber material patented by DuPont, Hypalon generally is better than PVC at handling abrasion, extreme temperatures, exposure to lots of sun, ozone, gasoline, oil, chemicals, and environmental factors like mildew and fungus. Hypalon boats are heavier and more expensive than PVC, but they typically hold up better over the long haul—especially in warmer climates—and come with a longer warranty.

PVC is a vinyl polymer. PVC-coated inflatable boats are lighter and more easily portable than Hypalon dinghies, but the fabric is not as resistant to extreme temperatures, abrasion, chemicals, or ultra-violet rays.

Construction methods using the materials also differ. Hypalon boats have airtight, glued seams, but because PVC is a plastic, its seams can be thermo-welded or glued. This allows manufacturers to mass-produce PVC boats, making them less expensive; however, it also means the seams are more difficult to repair unless you happen to have a thermo-welding setup



*PVC-coated inflatable boats like this West Marine P-V350 have the benefits of light weight and easy portability.*

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in your garage.

Hypalon inflatables are best suited for cruisers, those who use a dinghy frequently or in severe climates, and those who leave the tender inflated the majority of the time. Because Hypalon dinghies can last for a decade or longer, buyers on a budget would do well looking for a used Hypalon in good condition. That way you get the high-durability and ruggedness of Hypalon at a cost closer to that of a new PVC boat.

Boat owners looking for a lightweight, limited-use dinghy that will be used in a mild climate likely would be served well by a PVC inflatable.