

DF65 and DF95 Maintenance Schedule

To get the most fun and reward from your DF65 or 95, we encourage owners to take some simple precautionary measures to prevent failures, to get to know the equipment and take care of it on a regular basis.

Preparation is the key. Preventative maintenance and a bit of care and attention is essential whether you sail in salt, fresh, icy, or warm water. Here are some tips that I have developed through trial and error to overcome known issues and keep you on the water, whether for social racing with your friends or competitive racing at Championships.

Risk Management - Preventative Maintenance

1. Smear a light coat of CorrosionX or similar water prohibiting compound (e.g., Vaseline, silicone spray) over any movable parts - gooseneck threads, pulley, rudder linkages, mast gate.
2. Make sure all parts are moving properly and has no signs of corrosion. If it has, wash thoroughly, dry, then lubricate or replace as required.
3. Check that any sheets are not frayed. Pay close attention to braids that travel through rings at the bridle, backstay and job topping lift.
4. Use a good quality Spectra/Dyneema line. The braid weight should be determined by the bowsie friction required, rather than the breaking strain. Generally, 30-50lb is desirable.
5. Make sure to use cyano/super glue on ALL knots otherwise they will slip and come undone. Any knots are suitable provided the glue is applied. Trim off any lose tails.
6. Test all your rigs ready for use, making sure of sheeting travel and tuning. Any changes to the sail winch serve or transmitter will affect all sail sets, so recheck and fit all sails after any changes in the cockpit tray. It is much easier to sort any issues indoors than at the waters edge where often rig changes are required in limited time.
7. Inspect any line attachments, boom bands etc and make sure they are secure with no way of working loose in hard conditions.
8. Check all potential water entry points – hatch covers, main bridle holes, cracking around the keel box.
9. Check the rubber sail sheet tension is adjusted correctly to prevent it falling off the winch drum.
10. Treat the hull with great care. It is ABS plastic and not carbon fibre! Never drop the boat in the water, apply too much backstay pressure, leave the boat in the sun, or rigged in the car. Regularly check for moisture on windy days as the leverage on the keel can open very small cracks.

Radio Equipment

11. Make sure all servo, winch and battery lead plugs have liberal treatment with CorrosionX or similar inhibitors to prevent corrosion. If any light corrosion (light green powder) is found on plugs, only ever use an electrical contact cleaner spray and an old toothbrush to clean immediately.
12. Use a safety clip on the extension lead to prevent it becoming detached, requiring the removal of the main hatch.
13. Always remove the battery from your boat. If the battery is showing any signs of rust, corrosion or swelling, discard responsibly and replace, as it will fail in the near future.

Research LiFe battery maintenance on the internet. Rechargeable LiFe batteries will save you replacing AA batteries often...and its better for the environment.

14. If you have had a rudder servo fail and it is showing signs of water ingress or rusted screws, do not try to repair or save it, just throw it away and source a replacement as it will only give you more grief down the track. The DF servos are relatively cheap to replace, so keep a spare on hand.
15. Apply new hatch patches before arriving at the club as it is much easier to do it at home rather than out of the weather. Make sure all patches are firmly down, if a patch needs to be lifted in wet conditions, replace the patch, DO NOT RE-USE. Transparent hatch covers and tape will allow you to see and unstuck adhesive or condensation caused by water ingress.
16. Make sure all batteries are fully charged. Trickle charge used batteries after each race day to keep them topped up.
17. Adjust the rig so the boat predominantly sails itself to windward. This will avoid overuse of the rudder and sail winch to keep the boat on track. Refer to the Tuning Guide and adjust each race depending on the wave and wind conditions.

In Between Races

18. Check and drain boat after every race, only exception is on a very light air day, but leave never more than 3 races to drain.
19. When not sailing, the boat should be laid flat with a towel covering the hull and fin from direct sunlight and the stern plug removed to allow for air expansion inside the hull. Temperature changes when returned to the water, can suck water through the smallest entry points. This is the number one reason why so many boats have electrical failure in open water conditions.

At the End of Racing

20. Boat and rigging must be thoroughly washed. Remove the drain hole bung/patch and allow any moisture to dry out until the next race day.
21. If this is not done immediately after sailing and then stored in a dry, moisture free place, you will forever have radio problems.
22. Make sure you thoroughly hose rigging and stand to dry.
23. Carefully wipe down your sails afterwards, they should not be put away wet, as they will sweat in their box/bag, distorting, and ruining the sail film.
24. If you are very happy with the set-up of your boat with a particular rig on a given day, mark all your bowsies and turnbuckle positions so that settings can easily be repeated next time this rig is used and update your Tuning Guide.