

Re: Your Device saved my boat!

Dear Boatsense,

At 9:55 this morning I got a text message from the bilge alarm I purchased from your company. "Bilge Water High" was displayed on my cell phone. I have received many other less threatening messages like "battery low" (which aided me in diagnosing my radar problems that ultimately turned out to be an alternator failure) and "device powered on", but this one got my attention. My wife and I had just spent the long weekend aboard my boat and had cleaned her up, stowed the gear and come home just last night. We had no issues with our pumps or leaks over the weekend.

As you know, my boat is a 1954 Wheeler Flybridge Cruiser that has been nicely restored. Wooden boats tend to let a little water in through seams, stuffing boxes and the like so I expect my bilge pump to operate periodically and my pump cycle counter has verified that assumption. With that understanding, I added the back-up to my automatic bilge pumps that your device affords me. I keep her on a slip about 30 minutes from my house. We had no intention of returning to the marina for at least another week. My pumps run about once every two hours. I placed the sensor for the bilge alarm such that it should detect water after one missed pump cycle.

When I arrived at the marina to investigate the alarm (about 10:30am) I found my main bilge pump had bound up and was not operating. The bilge water was just 3 inches or so above normal and I was able to correct the problem by turning on my forward pump, which is wired for manual operation only. My second automatic pump, located aft and not intended for operation unless under way did not activate. Frankly, I'm not sure how high the water would need to get before it would activate and I don't want to find out.

The bottom line is this: Without that message, nothing would have been done to correct the problem until the boat was sitting so obviously different that the owner of the marina would notice and give me a call. That is the best case scenario and by the time my old woody was listing or low enough to get the attention of anyone who might contact me, severe damage would have occurred or worse. You know well enough that once a hull goes much beyond the normal waterline, any hull penetrations, (gray water, heat exchangers, etc.) could allow a flow of water into the boat that the back up pumps may not be able to handle.

It doesn't take much imagination to see nothing more than my flybridge sitting 2 feet above the water as a worst case scenario.

So I thank you very much for your efforts to design this device and bring it to me as a prototype for my review. It may have just saved my beautiful old boat from a very undignified demise!

Sincerely yours,

Burt Stratton