

Northland Spars and Rigging Ltd

How to check your Steering System

Your steering system is one of the most important systems on your boat and one area most yachties tend not to think about. Most manufactures recommend that maintenance be done yearly. Always refer to your manufactures' Installation and Maintenance Manual for specifics. Pedestals are aluminium but the bolts holding everything together are stainless so corrosion is always a problem.

NOTE: If you have hydraulic steering, refer to the manufactures maintenance manual for instruction on maintaining your system. When in doubt seek professional help. Hydraulics are VERY sensitive to dust and air that can be introduced if fittings are loosened.

PLEASE NOTE.

This information is published as a guide only. Northland Spars and Rigging Ltd accepts no responsibility for damage or loss to any vessel.

Useful links:

[Lewmar/Whitlock](#)

[Edson Marine](#)

Tools needed: Allen wrench(various sizes), flat and Philips head screwdriver, adjustable wrench, Tef-Gel, light machine oil, marine grade waterproof grease and Patience!

Inspection Area	Action	Comments	✓
Steering Wheel and shaft	Remove the steering wheel		
	Inspect the wheel, shaft and key		
	Clean any rust marks with metal polish		
	Lube the shaft with waterproof marine grease such as Lanacote		
	Remove the hub if applicable		
	Clean all bolts and coat with Tef-Gel to prevent corrosion		
	Remove the compass Coat bolts with Tef-Gel to prevent corrosion		
Engine Controls	Inspect handles and levers		
	Inspect throttle and shifter cables at both ends		
	Lube the cables and connections with a marine grade grease such as Lanacote		
Wheel Brake	Inspect the brake		
	Tighten as necessary		
	Clean grease off knurling		

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Steering Chain and Sproket	Inspect chain for wear by turning the wheel.		
	Replace if worn		
	Lube the chain with a light machine oil		
	Inspect the sprocket for bent, worn or broken teeth		
Steering Shaft Bearings	Inspect for play or resistance or damage		
	Replace if stiff or excessive play or damaged		
Steering Cable	Inspect wire for broken strands by running a light cloth over the wire. Look for kinks or bends		
	Replace cable if there are any signs of wear		
	Check cable tension. Cable should deflect 1" per foot		
	Tighten cable as necessary at the quadrant take-up eyes		
	Inspect conduit(if applicable)		
	Lube the cable with a lightly oiled cloth		
Cable Sheaves/Idler	Inspect idler plate and sheaves for wear and rough spots		
Note: If sheaves are worn the most likely cause is misaligned cables or sheave angle to the cable.	Replace if worn		
	Inspect sheave pins for wear		
	Replace pins if worn		
Steering Cable Alignment	Check that cables are centred in the groove of the sheave and quadrant		
	Adjust sheave placement		

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Quadrant/Radial Wheel	Inspect for signs of wear and cracks		
	Inspect connection at rudderpost for tightness		
	Inspect rudderstops		
	Replace quadrant if worn or cracked		
	Replace stops if missing or tighten if loose		
	Tighten all bolts clamping quadrant to the rudder post		
	Align quadrant or sheave for fair wire run		
Autopilot	Inspect connection to rudderpost or quadrant for tightness and corrosion. Replace worn or rusted pins connecting bolts.		