

# Does Your Canvas Boat Cover Look Like This?

What every Boat Owner Should Know About Boat Cover Repair

**Patching holes**

**Rotten Thread**

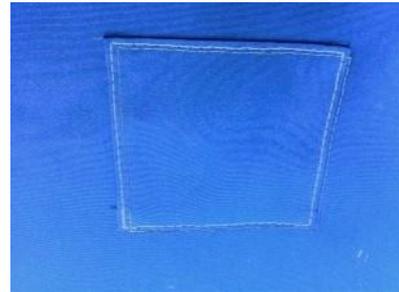
**Torn tent pole patches**

**Mildew removal**

**Waterproofing**



## Patching Holes



Before you make plans to repair a hole you will want to check the integrity of the fabric. Give your fabric the tug test, take hold of the fabric in both hands and see if it tears. If it does then your money is better spent towards a new cover. If the fabric is sound then repair it. The best way to patch is with a sewn on patch, if you can do it yourself then go for it.

Here is what a basic boat cover repair kit would look like.

- Boat Cover Repair Kit**
- Super Tack Double sided adhesive tape
    - Scissors
  - Marking pencil (washable white is nice)
    - Ruler
    - Straight pins
    - Boat Fabric
  - Backing Vinyl/no fray edges
    - (Vinyl laminate if possible)Canvas shops will have this



Besides the boat cover repair fabric you will need the largest thread your sewing machine can handle. Use polyester outdoor thread, your home

sewing machine probably won't take thread heavier than 92 polyester thread. You can buy 4 oz. spools that are small enough for your sewing machine and should work well for you.

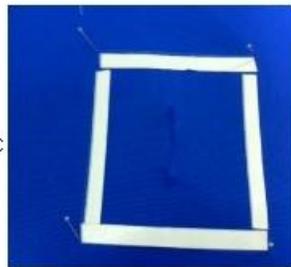
**Never use nylon thread** on your boat cover and the small polyester spools you buy at the fabric store used for clothing won't last either, use polyester outdoor thread only.

**Start with small repairs and move to larger as your skill improves.** For bigger tears you may need to use a professional to give you a quality repair.

1. Draw out the area of the patch



2. Tape the inside edges of pencil marks with super tack tape.  
3. Insert pins in the corners to transfer pencil marks exactly on underneath side of the fabric  
4. Tape the back side too.



5. Cut a substantially larger piece of backing vinyl and stick to the underneath side.



6. Tape and turn the the edges with the high tack adhesive.



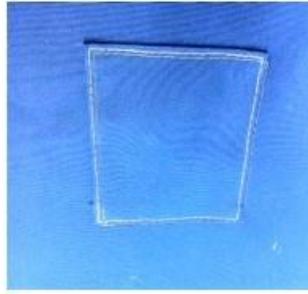
7. Stick to the taped patch to the adhesive tape on the cover.



8. Pin the patch all the way through as many times as needed. This stabilizes the patch for maneuvering under the sewing machine.



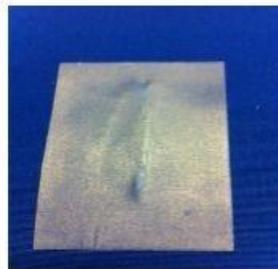
9. Sew your patch on with marine thread only



10. Turn the repair over and trim away the excess vinyl for a nice neat finish.



Another way you can handle smaller tear repairs is with a product called tearaid®. Tear-aid® is flexible cut to size patch with a single sided aggressive adhesive that will stick to a variety of fabrics. The patches come in **Type A** for all fabrics including Sunbrella® and **Type B** for vinyls . You just clean the fabric according to their instructions and stick the patch on both sides of the fabric, rub and your done. The patch is opaque in color, so it blends pretty well.



Another product on the market that works well as an adhesive patch is sail repair tape and is available in most marine supply stores. Sail Repair tape only comes in white.

### **Rotten Marine Thread**

**Thread tip!** Give your boat covers the tug test every year without fail, to check the integrity of your thread. If you will do this faithfully, you may save yourself from costly repairs after a storm goes tears through your marina. Thread may look fine, but fail when substantial pressure is applied. I can't tell you how many conversations I have had with customers on this subject and been told many times that “my thread was fine”.

If you've gotten to the point where your thread is gone, you'll be looking for a shop to restitch your cover. Just a **couple of things to keep in mind concerning thread**. Ask the shop owner what kind of thread they use? **Do not use Nylon thread** on boat covers, use the heaviest outdoor polyester thread your machine can sew with. For DIY projects 92 (home sewing machine) and 138 (commercial sewing machines). Some fabricators carry PTEF® thread which are lifetime threads, since they are very expensive you may not find them everywhere.

A 138 polyester should last 3 years in the most difficult tropical climates, 5 years in the south and more in the north. Most of the time **restitching** with polyester is all you need even, just ask yourself if your thread will outlast your cover to determine if you should add the expense of restitching with PTEF® thread.

### **Tent Pole tear repair**

If your boat cover tent pole is the type that sticks through a grommet and your poles has ripped out the grommet, as long as it is a clean protrusion you may be able to repair it on your own using a tent pole vent called a Boat Vent II®.



Tent Pole thru grommet



Boat Vent II®

These types of vents require a silver dollar size hole be cut into your cover. The vent unscrews and separates into two halves , one half goes on the outside of the cover and the other half goes on the inside, screw it back together and insert the pole into the female receiver cup. The bonus on using the vent is that the hot air build up under the cover escapes through the vent. In my opinion nearly all boat covers should have these types of boat vents installed. **Keep in mind** that there does need to be a reinforcement patch in place before you install this type of vent, a single layer of fabric will not hold the vent alone and your fabric will tear through.

### **Mildew Removal**

The best way to prevent mildew is to keep the dirt from building up on your cover.



The mildew grows on the dirt trapped in the weave of the fabric. So keeping your cover clean is your best defense. A question I get asked frequently is can I put Sunbrella® in the washing machine and can I pressure wash Sunbrella®? The best way to handle your fabric for cleaning is by laying it flat on a driveway, dock or grass and use a soft bristle long handle scrub brush. Sunbrella® suggests a mild natural cleaner such as Woolite®, Dreft®, Ivory snow® for light cleaning. Sometimes you just need more help. I suggest one of the Industry favorite products listed below. In the case where nothing you try get's that mold out you may need to use some

Clorox®. 1 cup to 1 gallon of water along with some detergent. Clorox is very tough on the threads unless your threads are PTEF® lifetime threads. **Using Clorox® will absolutely shorten the life of your polyester threads,** but the truth is sometimes the really tough mildew won't come out without it but it should be a last resort. If you use Clorox® rinse extremely well.

### **Favorite Industry Products**

Try these products before you resort to Clorox®



Iosso Mold & Mildew

Stain Remover®



303 Fabric/Vinyl Cleaner®



### Star brite Sail and Canvas Cleaner®

As for pressure washing, I've seen in done many times but you better be sure it is set on a very light setting so you don't blast a hole through your fabric and stand back away from the cover.

Washing machines can work too, but for both pressure washing and washing machines you will need to re-waterproof your cover.

### **Waterproofing a Clean Leaking Boat Cover**

Before waterproofing a boat cover it must be completely cleaned with no exceptions. You don't want to seal the dirt in.

Just like the list above for cleaning your covers, the same manufactures are also known for the their waterproofing products.

No, Scotchguard™ in the spray cans doesn't work for well for waterproofing canvas boat covers.



## Iosso Water Repellent®



## 303 Aerospace Protectant®



## Starbrite Waterproofing with PTFE®

A final reminder, keeping your canvas boat cover free of dirt to start with is your best defense against mold and mildew and will help you prolong the life of your boat canvas which really does keep money in your pocket.