

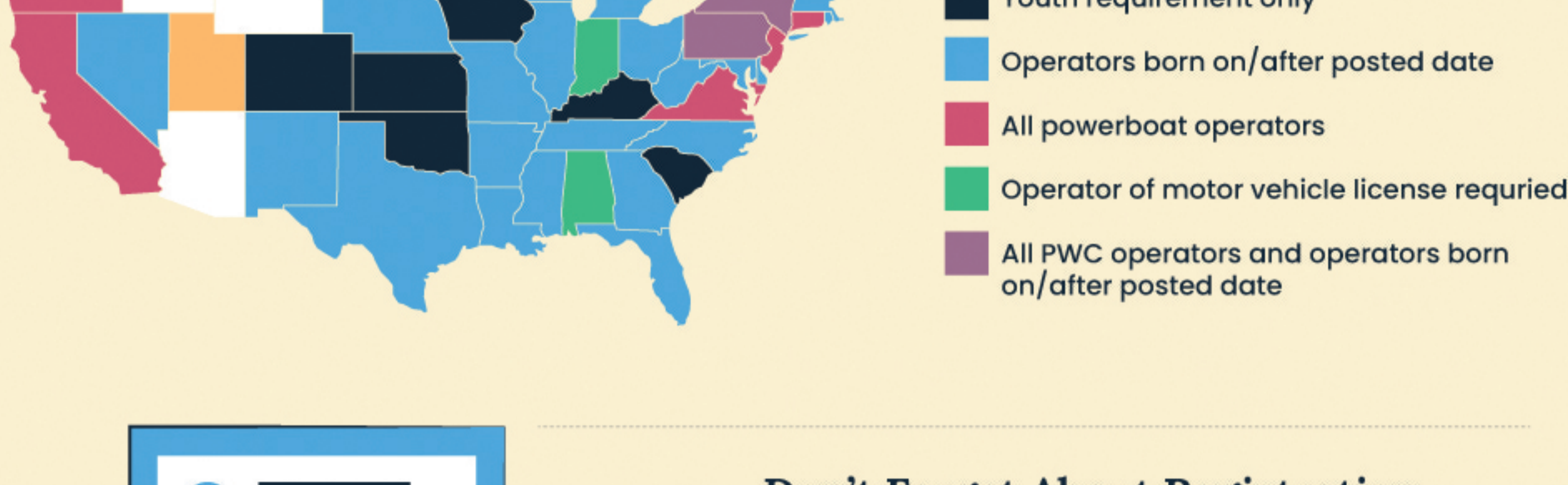
Earning Your Sea Legs: Confessions of a Boat Captain

Before you get too far in purchasing a boat, there's A LOT to know up-front about owning and maintaining one. So, be careful not to jump in without being prepared.

"Take it from ol' Skipper here; I wish knew more about the problems, costs, and rules to owning a boat beforehand!"

Waterway Rules and Regulations

Before you even operate a boat, you need to make sure what your state's requirements are for a boating education card. Also, look for any other important rules you are required by law to follow, or you may be fined!



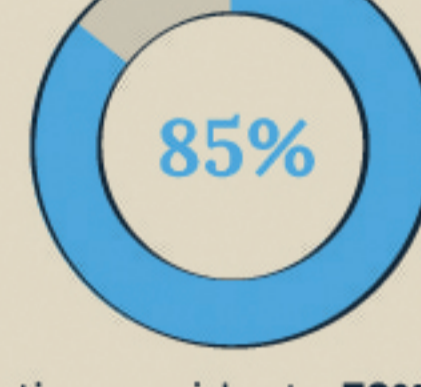
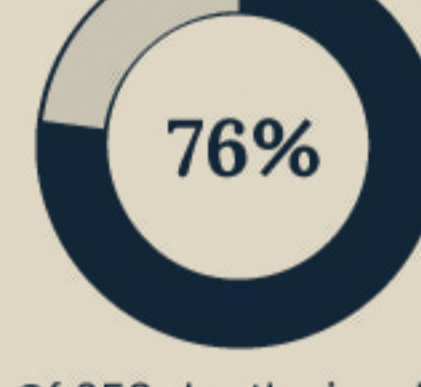
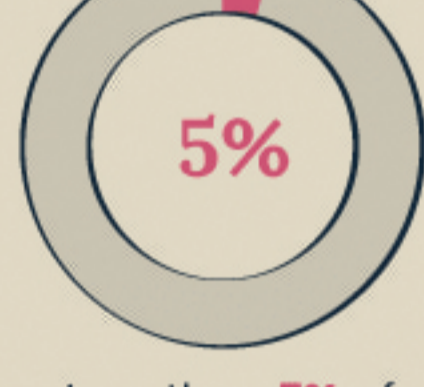
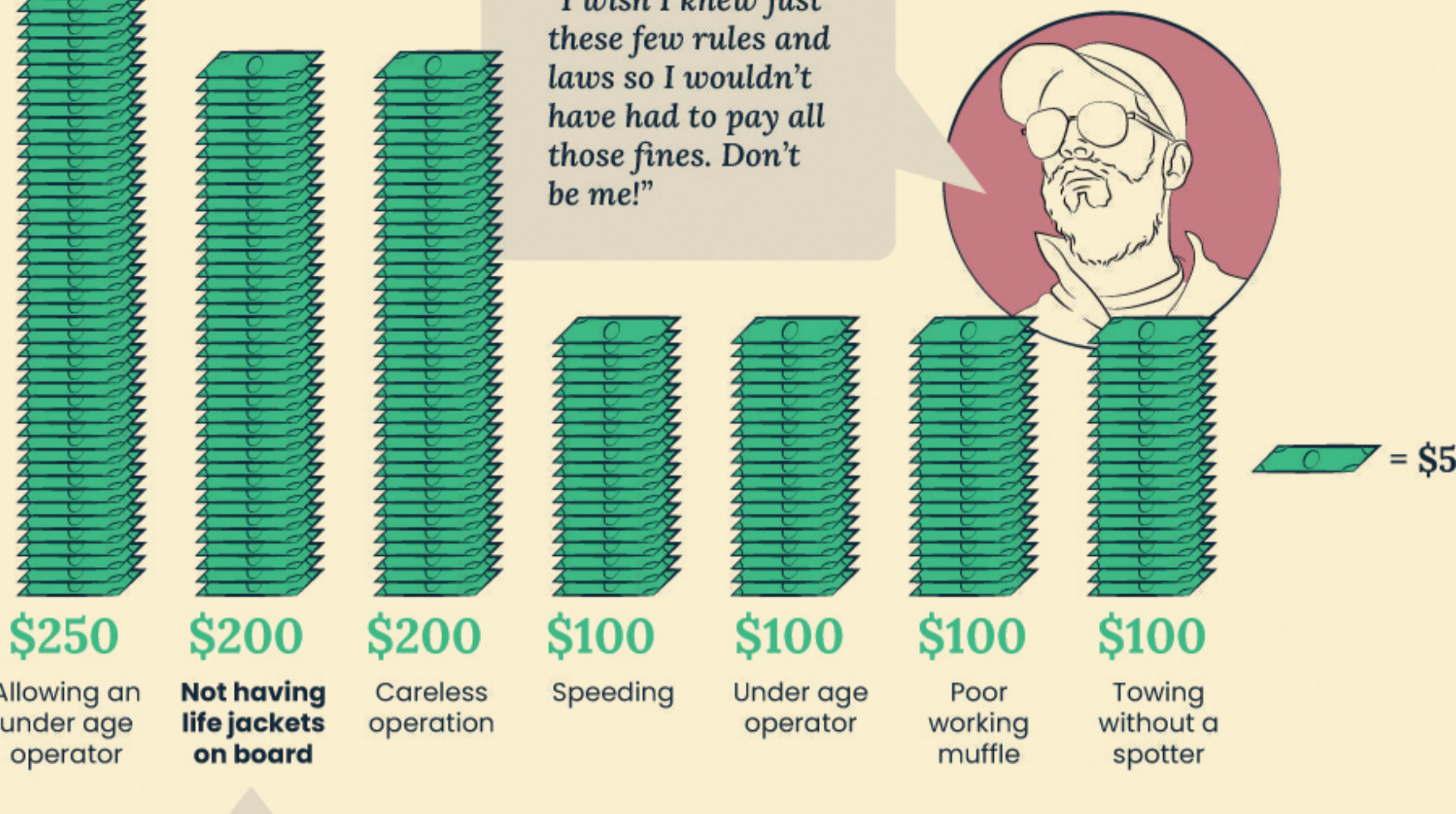
Don't Forget About Registration

For all U.S. recreational vessels, two types of registration are required:

Vessel Registration: state-issued Certificate of Number

Vessel Documentation: federally documented with the U.S. Coast Guard

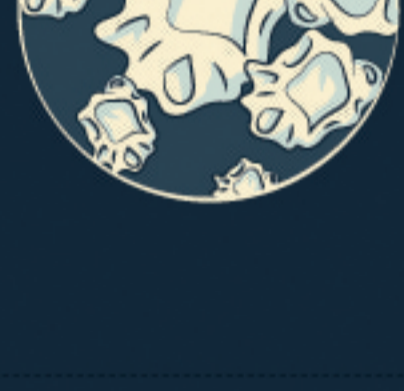
"I wish I knew just these few rules and laws so I wouldn't have had to pay all those fines. Don't be me!"



Staying On Top of Maintenance

Don't be a fool and just leave your boat lying around waiting for its next use. To get the most out of your boat, you have to have frequent maintenance.

"I didn't do maintenance for 3 years and had barnacles growing on barnacles!"



If you're storing your boat in water for a long period of time, be warned! Barnacles can grow within just a 3 month time period.

Recreational boats are commonly used between 75 - 150 hours per year.

75-150 hours

Every 100 hours (or 1 time a year)

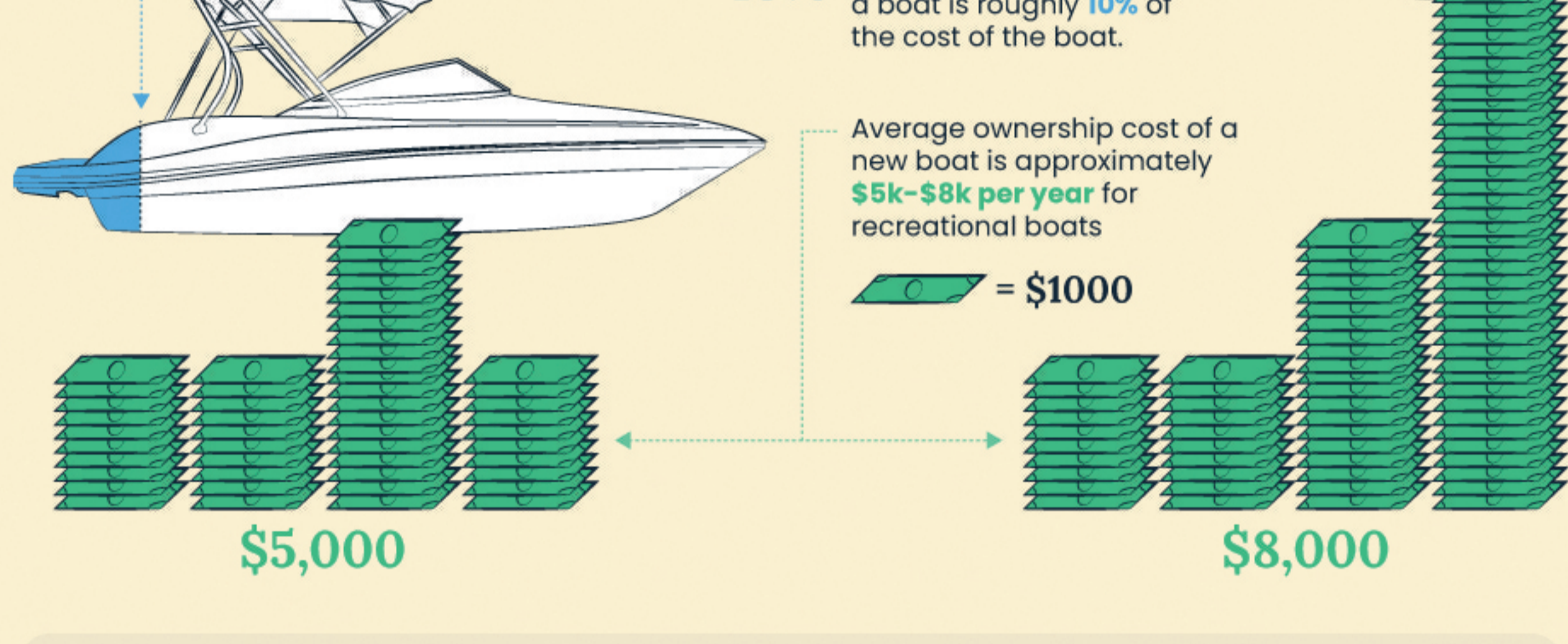
It's recommended that you should inspect key components such as oil, fuel and electrical systems, and propeller every 100 hours of boating (or recommended by the manufacturer).

Inspect your boat for leaks, looseness and corrosion or change/replace:

- Oil and filter
- Power trim and steering fluid
- Engine zincs
- Wiring and connectors
- Battery and electrical systems and connections
- Connections and fuel-delivery systems
- Sparkplugs (saltwater boats)
- Bolts, nuts and other fasteners

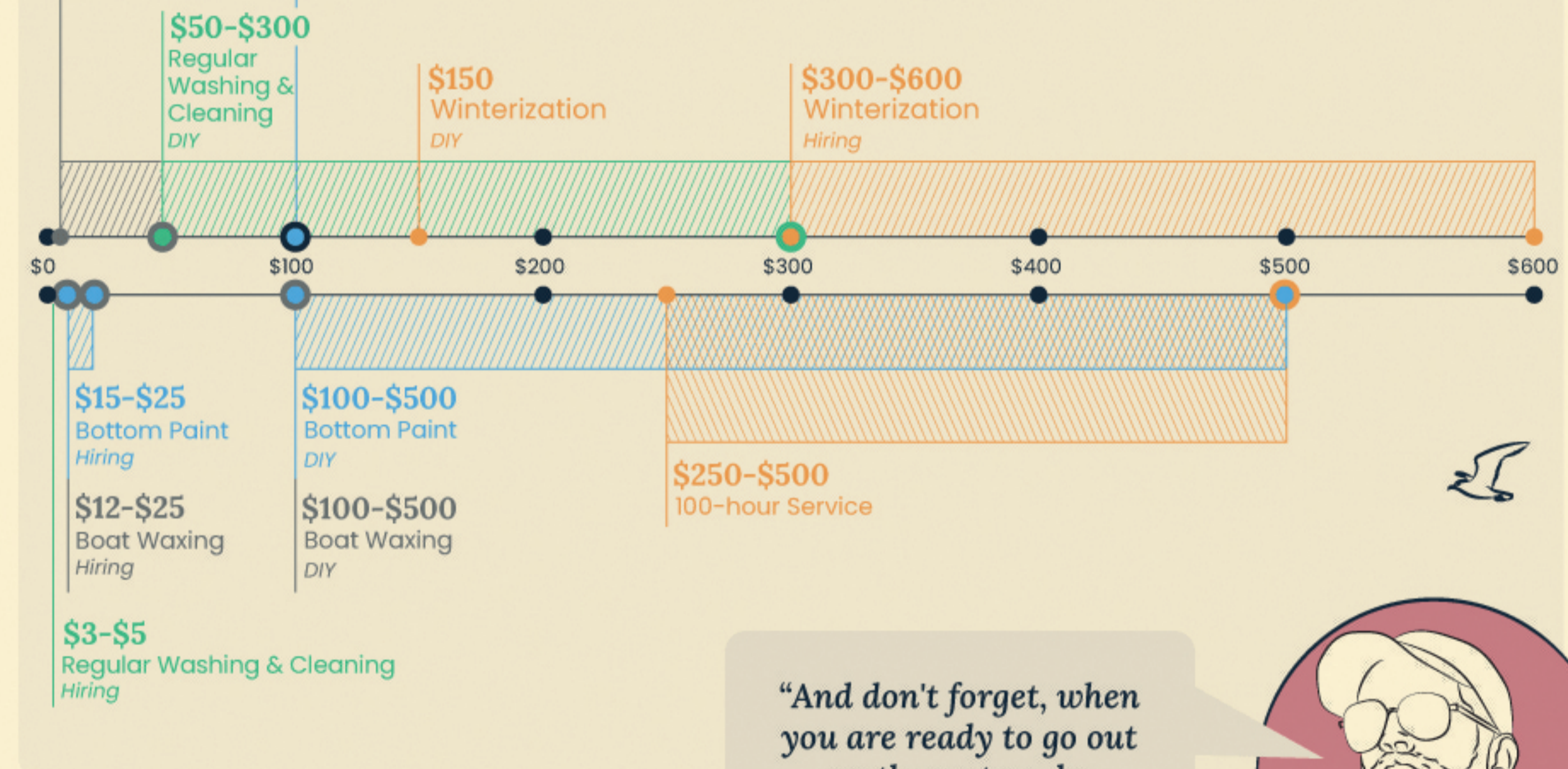
The Cost of Boating

"Owning a boat doesn't have to be expensive, but take it from Ol' Skipper, doing your homework will save in the long run!"



Maintenance Cost

And that was just the beginning. Boat maintenance can roughly cost the following:



"And don't forget, when you are out on the waters, be prepared for anything!"

Always inspect your boat first!

Inspect your boat for any damage, leaks, or overly tight or loose fittings by looking at:

- Propeller (grease 3 or 4 times/season)
- Fuel system
- Outboard
- Steering system
- Hydraulic steering fittings and hoses
- Rinse with fresh water (saltwater boats)

Be prepared for any problems that occur!

Inspect your boat for any damage, leaks, or overly tight or loose fittings by looking at:

- Boat will not start when turning the ignition key.
 - Check your kill switch.
 - Shift the boat into neutral and check out the actual starter switch to see if it's too loose.
 - After tightening, try turning the ignition again.
 - If it doesn't start and just groans, it could be a poor connection or low battery.
- Steering wheel doesn't work or feels locked.
 - Check hydraulic fluid and check for leaks. If there is, tighten the fitting so it airtight.
 - If it's a mechanical failure, it may mean mechanical failure. Check the cable system for loose connections (especially around the steering arm).
- Overheating engine.
 - Temperature gauge steadily climbs upwards.
 - This typically comes down to a water flow issue in the cooling loop. Check for any blockages and flush it out via the intake.
- Broken drive belt after seeing the alternator has stopped charging.
 - Always carry a spare belt!
- Losing power or sputtering.
 - Change our your in-line fuel filter.
 - Make sure to bent your engine box.
- Boat vibrates while accelerating.
 - Something could be wrong with your prop, so check for even minor distortions of objects that may be hitting or stuck to the prop.



"Don't earn your sea legs the hard way like me. Prepare yourself by knowing as much as possible so you're ready to hit the open waters the right way."