

2011 Lakes Festival of Lights Boat Parade

Have you seen The Lakes Festival of Lights Boat Parade?

In past years there have been some very clever and colorful floating displays. The boats have been all sizes and kinds, from 18-foot Party Boats to illuminated pedal boats and even sail boats (using electric power of course).

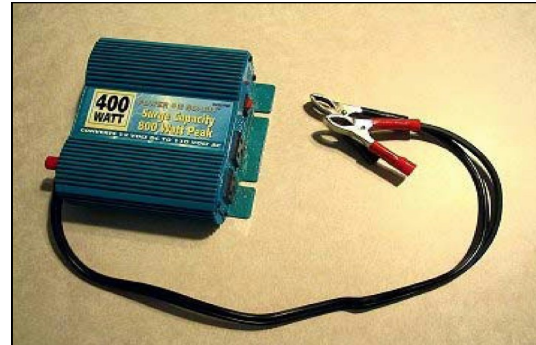
If you have a boat, please join in this year's fun.



How Do We Do It? Inverters!

Folks who haven't done this before have asked how to power all their lights and animated toys. You can rent portable generators but they can be noisy and smelly. The best way to provide 'quiet, clean' power is the use of a *inverters*. They are relatively inexpensive. An inverter converts 12 volt DC power from your boat batteries to 110 volts AC to power your lights. You can purchase inverters in output power ratings ranging from 250 watts to 1500 watts or more, depending on the amount of electric service you plan to use. The cost ranges from about \$30 up. Check the total sum of the watts you plan on having. The wattage should be listed on all packaging for electrical devices and strings of lights. Add up all the watts you will need and use that figure to determine the size of inverter's you will need. To provide a safety margin, use a sum that is no more than about 70% to 75% of the output rating of your inverter.

Tip. Use LED lights instead of incandescent. They use over 50% less power, so your batteries will last much longer.



This is a typical inverter. This one came from Sam's Club and it cost a little over \$30. We recommend two (2) 400-watt units and that seems to handle a reasonable amount of lights for an 18-foot boat.

Each 12-volt inverter requires two (2) 6-volt batteries. Four batteries will support two inverters. Six batteries will support three inverters, etc.

Batteries. Batteries. Batteries.

Some people have expressed concern that all the lights might drain their batteries and leave them stranded on the lake. Not to worry... inverters automatically cut out when the battery voltage drops below 10 volts. So even though your lights might go out, your boat will still have plenty of power to get you home.

Keep in mind that the more lights you have, the more quickly your batteries will drain. Be sure to charge your batteries! To obtain a full charge: run your boat until the batteries get low, charge the batteries, run the boat again and then give the batteries a final charge. This will help give your batteries a full charge.

Decorate your boat and take it out on the lake to see how long your lights stay lit. If your batteries are in decent condition, you should have no problem keeping your lights lit for 1-2 hours. If your lights won't stay lit long enough, you have only three options: get new batteries, reduce the number of lights, or get another inverter so you can spread the load over more batteries. You're much better off using several inverters rather than one with high wattage inverter.

Another way to put Holiday lights on your boat is to use battery powered Christmas lights that are available at *Michael's Craft supplies*, *WalMart* and several of the drug stores. These lights use flashlight batteries for power and are limited in time use but work okay.

IMPORTANT NOTICE—for Boat Owners:

Please check the voltage of your primary batteries. Some newer boats use 8-volt drive batteries. Regular 12-volt inverters will not work on two 8 volt batteries. But most of the newer boats also have a 12-volt accessory battery and the inverter will work on that battery.

You can plug your lights directly into your dock's power outlet and have your boat's festive lights illuminated all through the Holidays for all your lakeside and boating neighbors to enjoy. When you're ready to leave port, just unplug them from the dock and plug them into the inverters. You're ready to go.

The Lakes Festival of Lights will be a lot of fun, so be sure to decorate your boat and register it for the parade using the attached registration form.

Emergencies

We'll have an emergency boat on the water to help you SHOULD YOU HAVE ANY KIND OF PROBLEM OR NEED ASSISTANCE RETURNING TO YOUR DOCK, CALL 461-0477. This emergency number will be available only on the day of the Festival of Lights. So bring your cell phone.

Boat Judging

On December 7th from 5:30 p.m. till 9:00 p.m. we'll be out judging boat and home decorations. All designs will receive an official certificate. The best designs will receive beautiful trophies. One could be yours so make sure your boat is decorated and fully lit for the judges on December 7th.

See you all at the Boat Parade

December 10th.

It starts promptly at 5:00 p.m. at the north-center of the lake. Look for Danny Sims in the Work Boat.

Call Danny Sims at 461-0477 for boat issues. I can be reached at 283-1022 or by email at uncfes@gmail.com.

Larry Robbins

