

## Hull Identification Numbers

*By Keith Wohltman, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 95*

MARCO ISLAND, FL – Did you ever notice the series of numbers and letters that appear on the hull of your boat? No, not the big 3” ones found near the bow, but the small 1/4” ones located on the back of your boat on the right side. Sometimes stamped right into the fiberglass or on a tiny plate fastened to the hull. These numbers and letters are the Hull Identification Number (HIN) for your boat. It is unique to your boat and identifies it like the VIN for your car.

There is a secret code locked in the HIN's 12 characters. Not only is it unique to your boat, but it can tell you an amazing amount of information about your boat. Let's look at the example and see what we can learn from the HIN.

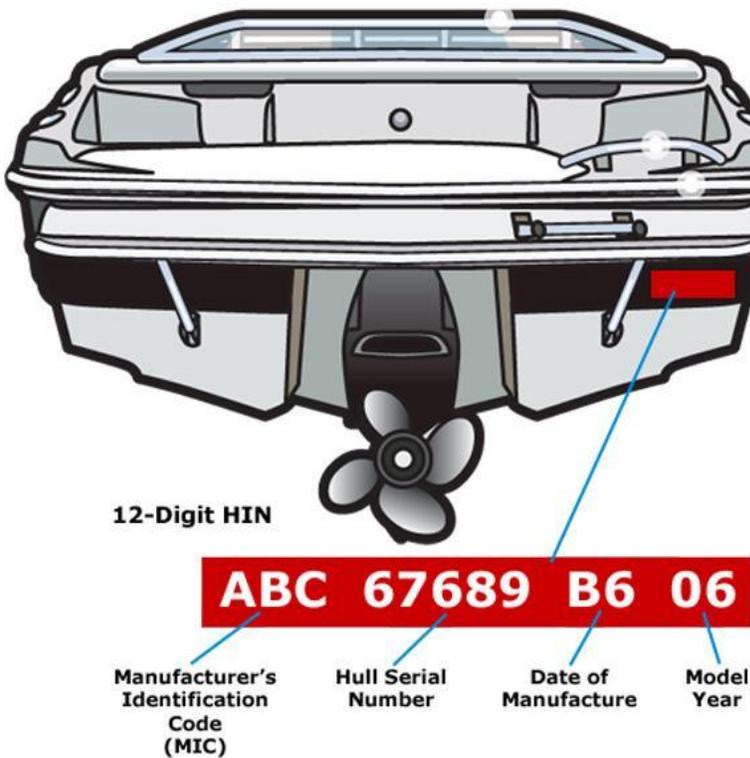


Image courtesy of boat-ed.com

The 12 characters will tell you the Manufacturer Identification Code (MIC); the hull serial number; the month of production; the year of production; and the model year. The 3-letter manufacturer's index code can be searched on the Coast Guard's Boating Safety Center website (<http://uscgboating.org/content/manufacturers-identification.php>).

But wait... what month is "B"? The following is the key to the production month:

A -January	D-April	G-July	J-October
B -February	E-May	H-August	K- November
C -March	F-June	I-September	L-December

We can see that this boat was built in February of 2006 and that it is the 2006 model.

But why do we have to have these numbers on our boats? Well, it is a Federal Law that all watercraft built or imported after November 1, 1972 must have a HID. In addition, any watercraft built after August 1, 1984 must have the HIN in a secondary/hidden location on the boat. This requirement was added to help Law Enforcement investigate stolen watercraft. The HIN is also important should the manufacturer have a recall or identify a boat defect.

The location of the HIN is also specified as follows:

Starboard (right hand) outboard side of the transom within two inches of the top of the transom, gunwale, or hull/deck joint, whichever is lowest. Watercraft without a transom, on the starboard outboard side of the hull, aft, within one foot of the stern and within two inches of the top of the hull side, gunwale or hull/deck joint, whichever is lowest. On catamarans and pontoon boats, to the aft crossbeam within one foot of the starboard hull attachment.

You should also check to ensure that the HIN on your boat matches the HIN listed on your registration. An easy way to get the number from your boat hull - is to create a pencil tracing, place a piece of paper on top of the HIN and rub a pencil across the paper so that an impression of the number appears. Digital pictures are also good - but don't drop your camera or cell phone in the water.

This rubbing was done on my old boat... can you figure out the build date and model year? Can you find the name of the Manufacturer from the MIC data search website?

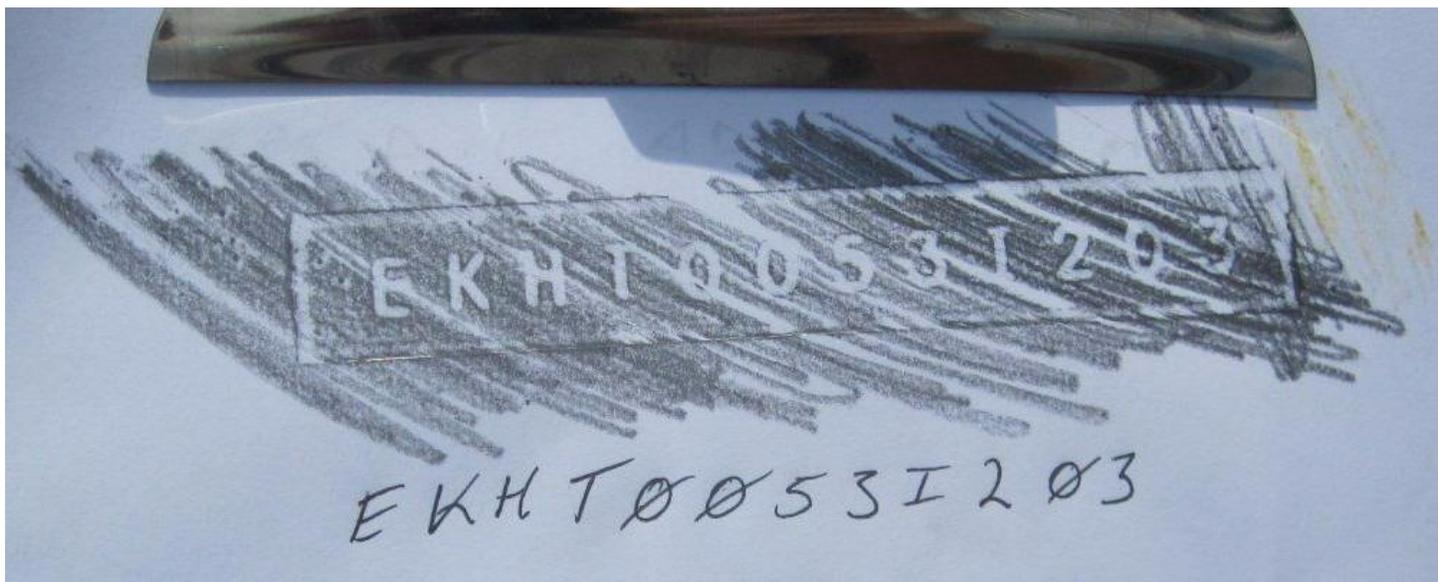


Photo by Keith Wohltman

A quick search of the MIC database shows this to be a Carolina Skiff boat built in September of 2002, for the model year 2003.

Did you find yours yet?

For more information about safe boating courses Joe Riccio, (239)-384-7416 or [CGAUXCOURSES@GMAIL.COM](mailto:CGAUXCOURSES@GMAIL.COM).

To schedule your **FREE** Vessel Safety Check, please call: John Moyer, (239)-248-7078 or Coast Guard Auxiliary Station – Flotilla 95, (239) 394-5911 or email John at [jmoyer1528@aol.com](mailto:jmoyer1528@aol.com).

For those interested in joining Flotilla 95, USCG Auxiliary, please call Bob Shmihluk at (215) – 694-3305

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