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## **LEAKING ANDERSEN BAILER REPAIR**

**by Steve Sherman**

There are several internet articles on repairing leaking bailers. They all involve removing the bailer from the boat and drilling out the rivets. I thought this or replacing the bailer was the only solution. I was wrong. Christian Zenger of Melges Boatworks educated me on how simple the repair can be.

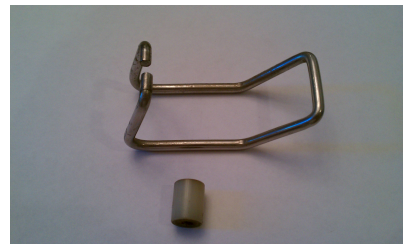
There are two designs of bailers manufactured by Andersen. They each have a slightly different method of repair. What they have in common is that once the bailer slide is removed the sealing gasket can be taken out and replaced without removing the bailer from the boat.

### **Where is the bailer leaking?**

Normally the inner gasket that presses against the bailer slide has been worn out. In this case you will see water bubbling up around the slide. In rare cases the bedding compound and outer body gaskets leak. You should be able to see water coming in from outside the body flange. Try tightening the installation screws to see if this stops the leak. If this does not stop the leak you will have to remove and re-bed the bailer. A sealant such as 3M 5200 works best on this type of repair.

### **REPAIR OF THE SUPER MINI, SUPER MEDIUM AND SUPER MAX BAILERS**

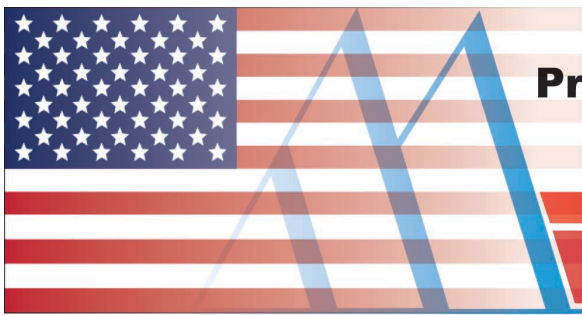
1. Remove the wire handle and rod spacer by springing the handle outward.



2. The only thing preventing the bailer from dropping out of the bottom is the bent stopper tab at the rear of the bailer slide. Carefully use vise grips or pliers to bend it straight.



3. Push the bailer out of the bottom or lie on your back and pull it out. While you may think the front of the slide is hinged, it is not and the slide and door come out easily.
4. From underneath you can see the 5 mm sealing gasket. Using a pocket knife or needle nose pliers grab and remove the gasket. Take note of how the old gasket was positioned.
5. There are 4 ways to reinstall the gasket. Only one is correct. The front is obvious because it is narrow. There is a shiny side and a dull side to the material. The dull side faces downward. Lubricating the new



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gasket with Vaseline, silicone spray, or dish washing liquid will help it slide into place easier. Put the ends in first by starting with the gasket 45 degrees to the boat. The sides will then slip into place.



6.

7. Reinstall the stainless slide by pushing it forward and upward. If it goes partially in and will go no further, most likely the place where you bent the tab is interfering. Don't get frustrated and hit it with a hammer just bend it further forward. There is a good chance bending the tab straight and then back again will cause it to break off. This does not affect the function of the bailer as the handle prevents the bailer slide from going down too far.
8. Reinstall the bailer handle.

## REPAIR OF THE MINI AND NEW LARGE BAILERS

These are the original older style bailers that install from the outside bottom of the boat.

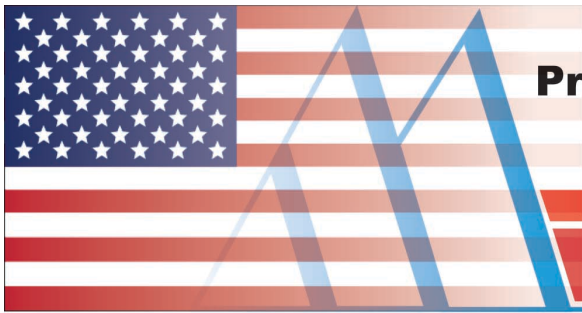
1. Remove the handle and the bailer slide can be pushed out of the bottom of the boat. Note that there is no metal tab that will need to be bent as required above. The gasket is now fully exposed.
2. These gaskets are sponge rubber. The ones above are hard rubber. The gasket is held in place by an adhesive. Using a knife, chisel or screwdriver remove the old gasket completely. If the old adhesive is still in place remove it with a solvent like lacquer thinner.



3. Remove the protective paper from the replacement gasket. Carefully position the gasket and glue it in place.
4. Replace the bailer slide and handle to finish the installation.

## OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Once or twice a year put Vaseline on the sides of the slide and door and then open and close repeatedly. This lubricates making it easier to operate and the gasket last years longer. Don't worry about putting a petroleum



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based product on the rubber, because it does not seem to have a negative affect. I have not tried this on the sponge rubber. You could also use a synthetic lubricant.

The door is precision shaped. When open water pressure pushes it against the body so tight it does not leak. If the stainless sheet metal on the bailer body or the flap door is bent many times they can be straightened and fixed while still in the boat. If they cannot be repaired it is possible to special order the part.

If you buy an Andersen Bailer service kit you will receive a number of outer gaskets of varying thickness. These are the gaskets the builder uses during installation to control the height of the bailer in relationship with the boat bottom. Unless you are reinstalling the bailer and making it flush with the bottom of the boat all you need is the 5 mm sealing gasket.

McLaughlin Boat Works is a US wholesale distributor of Andersen bailers and gaskets. McLaughlin can be reached at 800 784 6478, or online at [www.optistuff.com](http://www.optistuff.com).