

Lost a Kayak Hatch Cover? What now? PART II

Kayak Hatch Replacement Options Part II - Deck Plates

by Tom Holtey - images by author or supplied by manufacturers for use



Deck plates: Screw-in and toggle handle:

Many kayaks come with screw-in, or toggle handle, hatches that allow internal access. The cover seals the water out of the hull, when waves wash across, or if the kayak tips over. A hatch cover is often lost, hopefully not while on water. If your kayak has a missing hatch cover your kayak will not be safe to use until it is replaced.

In this part 2 of the replacement hatch series you will learn to determine the type of hatch cover your kayak is/was outfitted with, and how to replace the lost or damaged cover. Hopefully you can remember the hatch cover in detail, or get a part number from the manufacture of your kayak.



Deck plates are hatch covers made from hard plastic. They consist of a rim, or flange, bolted, screwed or glued, to the kayak deck, and a cover, that screws into the rim, like a jar lid. Some secure with a twist-toggle handle, or several latches. Some deck plates are purely pressure fit.

Most deck plates are round, about 5 to 10 inches in diameter. All screw-in deck plates are round. Larger hatches are rectangular; others are egg or odd shaped. Those that screw into place may have visible threads, much like a jar lid. Some have slots and tabs and only take a fraction of a turn to unscrew.



Some deck plates have toggles; turn the knob to open the hatch, turn again to close. The cover may have a single toggle, or it may have many. Many round covers come with a hanging bag, not water proof, and removable in most cases.

Deck plate covers are vulnerable to loss. In most cases they are not outfitted with a keeper cord, and will sink if dropped overboard while accessing cargo on the water. In general a deck plate will tend to stay put while car topping, but still needs to be secured well to prevent loss. All deck plates must be fully closed to prevent leaking while on the water.

Beckson and **Viking** brand hatch covers are very common. Not only found on kayaks, these covers are utilized on many types of boats. The **5-inch Beckson Twist Out Hatch** was common on Wilderness systems (WS) kayaks for many years, circa 2000 and before, often with a red fabric bag. (Some WS kayaks were outfitted with Viking brand hatches, particularly those of the 21st century.)

The **Beckson 5-inch Twist-Out Hatch** with cat bag is shown to the left. A Beckson twist-out does not have threads, it unscrews with a 1/8 turn. The bag version of the twist out is called the Stow-a-way. The lid of the Beckson five-inch twist-out covers the flange and the screws. Look for slots in the rim of the hatch to make ID.

The **Viking 5-inch Hatch**, pictured right, was common on Perception and Aquaterra kayaks of the 1990s. It was usually outfitted with a black net bag. A Viking hatch has threads, much like a jar lid, and unscrews with several turns. The lid does not cover the flange, the screws are exposed. Look for threads in the rim to make an ID. Both Beckson and Viking 5-inch covers have the same cutout in the deck and the same screw pattern. This means that the **rim**s are interchangeable on the kayak deck. You can try the new lid in the old rim on your deck. If it fits, great! If it does not fit you can remove the old rim and install the new rim without any cutting and drilling. The only challenge is removing the old adhesive sealant found on Wilderness Systems Kayaks. Remove as much as you can, A putty knife and flathead screwdriver will be useful. Perception Kayaks use a foam gasket that will need to be replaced with silicone sealant.

Viking and Beckson 6-inch Deckplates:

A **Viking 6-inch Hatch** is common on Necky and Ocean Kayak brand boats. This size is mostly used on sit-on-top kayaks as a center hatch. The Beckson version 6-inch was common on the old Aquaterra Chinook.

The **Beckson 6-inch Hatch** is shown to left. The Viking 6-inch hatch with fat bag is shown to the right. Beckson and Viking brand 6-inch screw-in hatches have the same cutout and bolt pattern, making them interchangeable too. The threads of modern Viking and Beckson brand hatch covers are NOT the same however.

Viking and Beckson 4-inch Deckplates:

Both Beckson and Viking make a 4 inch threaded hatch. The 4 inch is not commonly used on kayaks. They can be a useful hatch for small spaces.

The **Beckson 4-inch Hatch** is shown to left. The **Viking 4-inch Hatch** with cat bag is shown to the right. The Viking version was used as a rudder access port on the Necky sit-on-top kayaks.

Fat and Cat bags.

The hanging bag common on Viking and Beckson screw-in hatches must be supported by a small internal lip inside the hatch rim. Both Beckson and Viking make no-bag rims and bag-friendly rims.

A no-bag rim will not support a bag. (The same cover is used in both styles of rim.)

If your kayak was outfitted with a **hatch bag**, and you have lost it, chances are you can find a replacement, and slip it into the hatch rim. If your kayak does not have a bag-friendly rim you cannot use a bag.

Beckson 5-inch Deckplate:

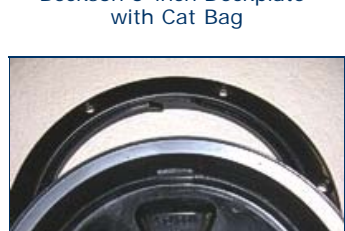


Beckson 5-inch Deckplate with Cat Bag

Viking 5-inch Deckplate:



Viking 5-inch Deckplate with Fat Bag



Close up of Beckson 5-inch Twist-Out



Close up of Viking 5-inch Deckplate Screw-in

Beckson 6-inch Deckplate:



Beckson 4-inch Twist-Out



Fat Bags

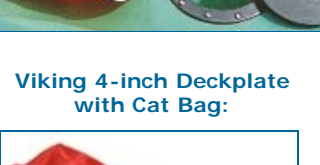


A VIDEO CLIP LINK:
[Beckson 5 inch Kayak Hatch or Deckplate](#)



Viking 6-inch Deckplate:

Viking 6-inch Deckplate with Fat Bag



Viking 4-inch Deckplate with Cat Bag:



Cat Bag



VIDEO CLIP LINK:

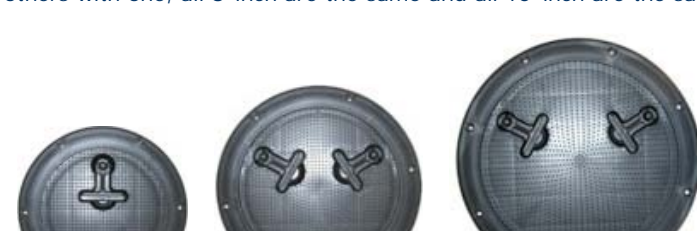
[Viking 5 inch Hatch](#)

Note: * Cat Bags are long and skinny and often have a draw-string top. * Fat Bags are fat and wide, with more cargo room. * The net bags of the 1990s are no longer available.

Viking Twist-Lock Deckplates:

Viking makes 3 sizes of Twist Lock hatch; **Six-inch**, **Eight-inch**, and **Ten-inch**, some with two handles, others with one, all 8-inch are the same and all 10-inch are the same, regardless of one or two handles.

A VIDEO CLIP LINK:
[Viking Twistlock Hatch](#)



A tab under the cover must be seated under the rim, before the lid can be closed. Viking Twist Lock hatches are common on the Heritage and Islander brand kayaks of the 1990s, as well as the Perception/Aquaterra Kahuna and Big Kahuna kayaks of the 90s.

Beckson and Viking make covers in colors, usually black and white, maybe ivory. Viking has clear covers for some of their screw-in hatches.

Cobra Deckplates:



Cobra has an excellent range of large deck plates: the 10-inch round, 2 sizes of rectangle (small and large), and the tapered "A" Hatch. They all take the same **twist lock toggle handles**, one for the 10 inch, and quite a few for the larger covers. They are very dry, so be thankful for that as you undo the many latches.

Cobra hatch toggles should always be folded flat immediately after use to prevent damage. The T handles are replaceable, but it is better to protect them by folding them flat.

Cobra hatches also need periodic cleaning, rinsing off salt water, and a tina drop of oil now and again.

The **10-inch round Cobra hatch** has many moving parts. The cams project four deadbolts into the hatch rim. The Cobra 10-inch round hatch must be aligned properly.

Look for the tiny arrows on the rim and the lid. Make sure that they are pointing at each other. Failure to do so may cause the tee handle or the cam device to break.

The Cobra 10-inch round hatch has a **bag or bucket option**, to hold small items. These are removable and interchangeable. They will only work with the Cobra brand hatch.

While Cobra does install some kayaks with a 6-inch Viking (often a with clear cover), most Cobra Brand kayaks are outfitted with Cobra brand hatches.

A VIDEO CLIP LINK:
[COBRA 10 INCH HATCH TOGGLE](#)

Ocean Kayak 8-inch Hatch:

Ocean Kayak used the 8-inch Rabud brand press-in hatch cover on the Scrambler, Zest Two and Zuma Two sit-on-top kayaks.

This style of cover does not screw in, nor does it have a latch. It simply fits very tightly and seals with a rubber o-ring. These were secured with a **one inch wide web strap, rivets and one-inch washers**.

Replacement of this o-ring may be difficult or impossible. These Rabud brand hatch covers were black, often purple in color. Rabud is a Florida company.



Old Town Space Hatch and Wilderness System's Orbix:

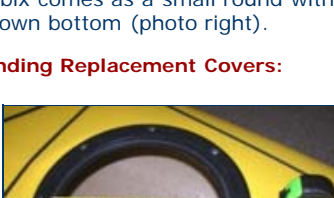
Old Town uses a proprietary hatch called the **Space Hatch**. The Space Hatch is hinged and has one or two latches.

The shape is oval; egg shaped, coming in two sizes, small with one latch shown to the right; and large with two latches shown to the left.

Wilderness Systems has a similar proprietary hatch system called the Orbix. It locks with a lever.

Orbix comes as a small round with a single lever shown top (photo right); or a large oval with two levers shown bottom (photo right).

Finding Replacement Covers:



For those who have lost a cover, you can identify a replacement round hatch cover by roughly matching the inside dimension of the rim to the outside dimension of the cover.

Identify a non-round deck plate style hatch the same way but with two dimensions, length x width.

Pay special attention to the rim screwed to the kayak's deck. Be on the look out for threads, slots and other clues to how the cover closed and was secured. The proof is in the fitting. Ultimately you will have to try a hatch in person, possibly re-install with a new rim.

Preventing Hatch Loss and Tips:

Prevent hatch loss by adding a keeper string to the cover, tied to the deck. Some covers are outfitted with an internal nipple to screw a line to. Viking makes both ABS and PolyPro covers, of the same models; some Viking covers have the nipple, others do not.

Nipple, or not, the hatch covers are interchangeable. A strap eye can be installed on or in the cover. This can be tied with deck line to a strap eye on, or under, the deck. You can also secure a webbing strap to the cover and deck.

Some covers, such as the Beckson, and Viking Twist lock, can be drilled for a cord inside the cover on the structure under the lid. The best way to prevent loss is to always fully close the hatch immediately after use.

Hatches with screw-in threads need to be clean and free of grit and sand to operate properly. Use a toothbrush to sweep out grit before you screw down the cover. Do not lubricate a screw-in hatch with oil. If you must lube it, consider a silicone spray, or UV protection spray. Use a pliers and screw driver to unscrew a stuck hatch cover.

Most deck plate type hatches have an o-ring seal, a soft rubber perimeter that the lid presses firmly onto. It can be hard to see. The o-ring is mandatory for a watertight seal. Take precaution not to disturb or damage the o-ring. In most cases it cannot be re-lubricated, or re-seated. If the o-ring is missing, or damaged, the hatch will leak. You will likely have to replace the flange.

Almost all deck plate style hatches come as a cover and rim/flange (bag is optional). Cobra seems to be the only company that offers a cover only as a replacement part. The rim is good to have; just in case the cover does not fit the old rim, and it may come in handy as a back-up for a cracked rim. 5-inch hatch rims are vulnerable to cracks.

We have covered the most popular deck plates in this story. If you have trouble making an ID, or finding a brand, contact The TopKayaker Shop for more information.

Article Resources:

- Kayak Hatch Replacement Options - [Part I - Rubber Covers](#)
- Kayak Hatch Replacement Options - [Part II - Deck Plates](#)
- Kayak Hatch Replacement Options - [Part III - Double Cover Hatch Systems](#)

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