Pre-Departure Checklist



Life Jackets

- [ ] Have at least one Coast Guard-approved life jacket per passenger and a minimum of two on board.
- [ ] An additional throwable device is required if the vessel is more than 16 feet long.
- [ ] Explain the location and use of all life jackets to passengers and crew that may be new to the vessel.

Sound Producing Devices

- [ ] Have a horn capable of producing a four-second blast audible for at least 1/2 mile on board.
- [ ] If you use portable air horn, have a spare can of air or an alternate device
- [ ] Attach a whistle to each life jacket.

Lights and Shapes

- [ ] Have all navigation lights as required for your boat.
- [ ] Make sure all instrument lights are working.
- [ ] If you intend to engage in a recreational boating activity that requires a day-shape, have the required shapes.
- [ ] Have aboard a flashlight and spare batteries.

Distress Signals

- [ ] Make flares, day signals, etc., accessible and ensure they are stored in a dry location.
- [ ] Inform the crew and passengers of their location and safety rules for proper usage.

Tools and Spares

- [ ] Carry a basic toolbox with tools appropriate for your boat.
- [ ] Carry a box of spares including fuel filter, light bulbs, head parts, through-hull plugs, etc.
- [ ] Check to ensure you have a standard first-aid kit onboard

Fuel and Oil

- [ ] Top off your fuel tanks.
- [ ] If you can't, have enough fuel to provide a reasonable margin of safety for your return.
- [ ] Check the engine oil and coolant levels.

Fire Extinguishers

- [ ] Carry at least one fire extinguisher and make sure it is accessible. Make sure you have at least the number required by Coast Guard rules.
- [ ] Check to be sure mounts are secure and functional before departure.
- [ ] Take the time to point out locations to passengers and crew.

Ventilation

- [ ] On any powered vessel or auxiliary powered sailboat, or vessels using LPG for cooking or heat, check that all interior spaces are well ventilated before departure.
- [ ] If fuel smells are detected before ventilating, check after running the blowers for several minutes before starting.
- [ ] If odor persists, shut down the engine and look for the source of the leak.
- [ ] For any enclosed or semi-enclosed area, ensure you have at least one properly installed and working carbon monoxide detector

Bilges

- [ ] Check to be sure bilges are reasonably dry and that pumps are not running excessively.
- [ ] Clean up any spilled oil or waste in bilges to prevent overboard discharge.

Weather Forecast

- [ ] Always check the weather forecast before boating.
- [ ] Have a radio on board to receive weather updates.

Battery Care

- [ ] If you have a dual charging system, make sure the selector switch in the proper position.
- [ ] Make sure the power is on to the entire vessel.

- [ ] Have aboard spare batteries for accessories such as your handheld radio, flashlight, portable navigational aid, etc.
- [ ] If the batteries are rechargeable, make sure they're charged.

Docking and Anchoring Tips

- [ ] Have at least one anchor set up and bent-on to your anchor line.
- [ ] Carry two or three extra dock lines in case you encounter unusual conditions dockside.
- [ ] Visually inspect the lines you use for chafe or wear.
- [ ] Carry at least two fenders on-board for docking or towing if required.

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