

Check List for Stepping Aboard a Boat

Besides the obvious signs of wear and neglect upon stepping aboard a boat. Here are the things you should check or know about a boat before heading offshore. Please feel free to print the checklist and take it with you on your next passage.



What you should be able to put your hands on:

- ☐ Lifejackets & Safety Harnesses
- ☐ EBIRB (Know how to activate it)
- ☐ Ditch Bag (see "what to look for in an offshore boat")
- ☐ Life raft and how to deploy
- ☐ Emergency Steering (how to set up. Is there a special tool to get access to the steering quadrant? Where is it?)
- ☐ Flashlights (keep at least one on deck at night)
- ☐ Tools
- ☐ Fire extinguishers
- ☐ Duct Tape
- ☐ Manual Bilge Pump Handles
- ☐ Fog Horn
- ☐ First Aid Kit
- ☐ Spare Oil and Filters
- ☐ Extra lashings and tie downs
- ☐ Every Seacock (or at least know every location)

- ☐ Wooden Plugs & Hammer
- ☐ Engine Inlet and strainer: (Know how to clear the strainer)
- ☐ Check Engine Fluids (Oil/Transmission)
- ☐ How do the belts look?
- ☐ Check liquid in the batteries.
- ☐ Do you have spare filters and impellers?
- ☐ Spare Jerry Jugs of fuel

On Deck:

- ☐ A Knife
- ☐ Check Turnbuckles
- ☐ Check for chafe in furling return lines.
- ☐ Check all Halyards are clear and secure.
- ☐ How to launch the MOB
- ☐ Make sure the anchor is very secure, but know how to deploy it quickly in an emergency.
- ☐ Check Running Lights
- ☐ Check Compass Light
- ☐ (Do you have a backup light for the compass light?)
- ☐ Flashlight on deck at night.

What you should know how to do:

- ☐ Start (Stop) and operate the main engine
- ☐ Reef the sails
- ☐ Rig Jack lines
- ☐ Understand the Electrical Panel
- ☐ Operate the VHF or SSB in an emergency.
- ☐ Operate Bilge pumps (both electrical and Manual)
- ☐ Garbage Plan - What goes where (Besides an oil pollution placard many boats also require a garbage placard noting what can and what cannot be thrown overboard).
- ☐ Rig Preventer
- ☐ Release halyards

What to look out for:

- ☐ Each other
- ☐ The boom
- ☐ Tripping on deck (one hand for you and one for the boat).
- ☐ Don't block the helm when docking, underway in port or near busy channels
- ☐ Placing things like open drinks on the counter.
- ☐ Know not to turn the battery switch off with the engine is running.
- ☐ Don't be afraid to tell the helmsman about anything ahead (Lobster pots, floating logs) or coming up from behind (faster/bigger boats).
- ☐ When off watch make sure you get enough rest.
- ☐ Make sure to take your seasickness medicine if you are prone.
- ☐ Clean up after yourself in the head and galley.
- ☐ Make sure to turn off the propane safety switch after using the stove.
- ☐ If the boat policy is to keep the main water panel switch off when not in use, make sure it is on.

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