

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 off.

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