Boater’s Pre-Departure Checklist

Know your vessel.Before departure, always be sure your vessel is in good working condition and properly equipped for emergencies. Avoid inconvenience and potential danger by taking a few minutes to check the following:



Minimum Federal Required Equipment

- [ ] State Registration Documentation
- [ ] State Numbering Displayed
- [ ] Certificate of Documentation
- [ ] Lifejackets (PFDs) - one for each person
- [ ] Throwable PFD
- [ ] Visual Distress Signals
- [ ] Fire Extinguishers (fully charged)
- [ ] Proper Ventilation
- [ ] Backfire Flame Arrestor
- [ ] Sound Producing Device(s)
- [ ] Navigation lights
- [ ] Oil Pollution Placard
- [ ] Garbage Placard
- [ ] Marine Sanitation Device
- [ ] Navigation rules

- [ ] Any Additional State Requirements

Recommended Equipment

- [ ] VHF Marine Radio
- [ ] Anchor and Tackle
- [ ] Chart(s) of Area & Navigation Tools
- [ ] Magnetic Compass
- [ ] Fenders and Boat Hook
- [ ] Mooring Lines and Heaving line
- [ ] Manual Bilge Pump or Bailing Device
- [ ] Tool Kit
- [ ] Spare Parts (fuses, spark plugs, belts, etc)
- [ ] Spare Battery (fully charged)
- [ ] Spare Propeller
- [ ] Spare Propeller
- [ ] Alternate Propulsion (paddles/oar)
- [ ] Flashlight & Batteries
- [ ] Search Light
- [ ] First Aid Kit
- [ ] Sunscreen (SPF 30+)
- [ ] Mirror
- [ ] Food and Water
- [ ] Extra Clothing
- [ ] AM - FM Radio
- [ ] Cellular Phone
- [ ] Binoculars

Safety Checks and Tests

- [ ] Test Marine Radio (voice call)
- [ ] Test Navigation and Anchor Lights
- [ ] Test Steering (free movement)
- [ ] Test Tilt / Trim

- [ ] Test Bilge Pump
- [ ] Check for any excessive water in bilges
- [ ] Check Fuel System for any leaks
- [ ] Check Engine Fluids
- [ ] Ensure Boat Plug is properly installed
- [ ] Check Electrical System
- [ ] Check Galley / Heating Systems
- [ ] Check Gauges (i.e. batteries)
- [ ] Check Fuel Amount
- [ ] Ensure Anchor is ready for use
- [ ] Check load of vessel and secure gear from shifting
- [ ] Ensure passengers know Emergency Procedures and Equipment Location
- [ ] Everyone put on a Lifejacket to check for proper fitting.
- [ ] Check the Weather Forecast
- [ ] File a Float Plan with family or friend

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