

Safe Boating Checklist

Pre-Departure

1. Check weather report and tides/currents
2. File a float plan with someone you know. Tell them where you're going and when you intend to return (and what to do if you don't)
3. VHF Radio: Turn on and demonstrate how to select Channel 16.
4. Ensure at least one other person knows how to transmit a Mayday
5. Turn on GPS and be sure it is functioning correctly
6. Ensure that one anchor and rode is ready for immediate use
7. Identify non-swimmers and supply non-swimmers with life jackets that fit and that they will wear while on the water
8. Identify second-in-command in case of skipper's incapacitation
9. Identify incremental recommended gear if fitted.
10. Demonstrate engine shutdown technique
11. Check bilges and pump dry if water is present
12. Identify the location and the operation of the following Coast Guard required safety items if fitted
 - a. Life jackets—should be readily accessible
 - b. Lifesling or throwable flotation—should be immediately accessible
 - c. Horn or sound-producing device as required
 - d. Fire extinguishers: Acquaint crew with operation: Pull the pin, Aim the fire extinguisher, Squeeze the two handles together, Sweep across the base of flames
 - e. Flares or other Visual Distress Signals
 - f. Check operation of Navigation Lights
 - g. Length of nylon line for a towline, perhaps 75' x 12"
13. Before engine is started
 - a. If gasoline inboard: run blower for at least four minutes • Check lubricating oil
 - b. Check fuel level
 - c. Make sure buzzers sound on engine panel
14. Once engine is started
 - a. Verify that cooling water is flowing and check for oil pressure
 - b. Attach kill switch lanyard if fitted
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 - b. Attach kill switch lanyard if fitted
16. Disconnect shore power cable
17. Upon leaving the harbor, store a "go home" waypoint on the GPS

While on the water

1. Drink responsibly, especially if you are the skipper!
2. Be weather aware
 - a. Use the weather channels on your VHF radio
 - b. Watch for changes in wind speed and cloud formations
3. Know where the nearest harbor or protected anchorage is
4. Monitor fuel consumption and remaining range
 - a. Use the "Three-Thirds Rule" (one-third outbound, one-third inbound, one-third reserve)
5. Monitor VHF radio Channel 16 for emergency traffic

- a. Be prepared to lend assistance if you are the nearest vessel
6. Know the waters in which you are navigating • Refer to local charts
 - a. Stay within marked channels
 - b. Be conscious of tides and currents

When you return to the dock

1. Moor boat correctly with bow, stern, spring lines and fenders • Ensure snubbers (if so equipped) are in place and ensure lines are protected from chafe
2. Pump holding tank. Add holding tank treatment
3. Always-on loads (automatic bilge pump, alarms, clocks) are on
4. Non-essential loads (running lights, VHF, Stereo, etc.) are off
5. Shore power cable is connected and protected from chafe
 - a. Battery charger is on
 - b. Inverter may need to be turned off
6. Logbook has been filled out, signed, and dated
7. Close float plan by calling person whom you originally contacted