

Boater's Pre-Departure Checklist

Credit to Key West S&P Squadron

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	Yes	No
State Registration Documentation		
State Numbering Displayed		
Certificate of Documentation		
Lifejackets (PFDs) - one for each person		
Throwable Type IV Cushion		
Visual Distress Signals		
Fire Extinguishers (fully charged)		
Proper Ventilation		
Backfire Flame Arrestor		
Sound Producing Device(s)		
Navigation lights		
Oil Pollution Placard (Vessels over 26 Ft)		
Garbage Placard (Vessels over 26 Ft)		
Marine Sanitation Device (Vessels under 26ft – Type I, II or III MSD)		
Navigation rules (Vessels 39.4 and above – Full Copy Required)		
Any Additional State Requirements		

Besides meeting the federal requirements, prudent boaters carry additional safety equipment. The following additional items are suggested depending on the size, location and use of your boat:

Recommended Equipment	Yes	No	N/A
VHF Marine Radio (Hand-held or Base Mounted)			
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)			

Recommended Equipment (Cont.)

Spare Propeller			
Extra Fuel & Oil			
Alternate Propulsion (paddles/oar)			
Flashlight & Batteries			
Search Light			
First Aid Kit			
Sunscreen (SPF 30+)			
Mirror (Computer CD or DVD is excellent)			
Food and Water			
Extra Clothing			
AM - FM Radio			
Cellular Phone			
Binoculars			

Safety Checks and Tests	Yes	No	N/A
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			
Compliments of your USPS Boating Friends			