

pre-departure passenger safety briefing

The captain's primary responsibility is for the safety of the vessel, passengers and crew. A prudent skipper always conducts a safety briefing prior to departure. At minimum, **the following should be covered with all passengers prior to departure:**

- ❑ Boarding and disembarking safely
- ❑ Location, proper adjustment and use of PFDs
- ❑ Location and use of fire extinguishers
- ❑ Deck hazards such as cleats and slippery surfaces
- ❑ Underway safety including location of secure handholds, proper seating areas (no riding on bow or sitting on gunwales, seat backs, etc.) and dangers related to vessel motion such as powering up, slowing down/stopping and turning

For guests with little or no boating experience who are going to help crew the vessel:

- ❑ Assign responsibilities and fully explain how to safely perform their duties
- ❑ Explain and demonstrate line handling safety measures
- ❑ When casting off, fully explain the process and the undocking plan and do likewise when docking
- ❑ Demonstrate the proper use of fenders and dangers of fending off with hands, feet, etc.

Make certain someone other than the skipper knows how to:

- ❑ Use the VHF radio properly to get help or assistance if necessary
- ❑ Start and stop the engine(s)
- ❑ Engage forward and reverse with the shifters/clutches
- ❑ Operate the throttles
- ❑ Get the vessel back to and alongside a dock

Boating safety is no accident – the best preparation for emergencies is a well-trained crew. Crew training is the responsibility of the skipper and it is prudent to conduct drills with the crew to include: man overboard recovery, fire and abandon ship procedures.

vessel checkout

PRE-DEPARTURE

Administrative

- Check weather forecast
- Leave float plan/passenger list with someone on shore
- Review COB procedures
- Ship's papers (registration, documentation)
- Waste management plan
- Navigation Rules

Ventilation

- "Sniff" test (gasoline engines)
- Run blowers for 4 minutes
(check exhaust ducts, cowling/vents)

Safety/emergency

- Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)
– one properly fitting for each person aboard
- Buoyant heaving line (15m)
- 5BC Fire extinguisher(s) (one for engine and additional for cooking appliances)
- Flares (Within 4 years of manufacture)
- Sound signaling device (whistle or horn)
- First aid kit
- Watertight flashlight with batteries
- Manual propelling device (two oars or one paddle)
OR One anchor with 15m of rode
- Magnetic compass
(if you are not within sight of navigation marks)
- Reboarding device/ladder
(if freeboard is more than 0.5m)
- Manual bilge pump/bailer

General vessel condition/equipment

- Running lights (sidelights, stern light, mast light)
- Anchor light
- Bilge and bilge pumps (check float switch)
- Fenders, boat hook and traveling dock lines
- VHF Radio (complete radio check on channel 16)
- Paper towels, bucket and sponge

ENGINE

Before start-up

- Fuel system integrity (check for leaks) and fuel shutoff switch/valves
- Flame arrestor (clean, secure and undistorted)
- Batteries (connectors, water, switches)
- Engine oil – colour, smell, level
- Belts, hoses and clamps
- Strainers – clean, no leaks
- Seacocks – no leaks, operate easily
- Stuffing boxes – shafts and rudders

After start-up

- Exhaust discharge
- Shifters
- Gauges – oil pressure, water temperature, volts, other
- Fuel level: follow rule of thirds –
1/3 out, 1/3 back, 1/3 reserve
- Listen for unusual noises
- Inspect engine for leaks – fuel, oil, water
- Shore power disconnect – follow proper procedures

POST CRUISE

- Inspect engine compartment visually
- Stuffing boxes – check for leaks
- Position of switches – AC & DC panels
- Reconnect shore – follow proper procedures
- Master AC switch – on
- Battery charger – on
- Bilge pumps – automatic
- Lines secured and flemished
- Gear stowed
- Trash removed
- Notations in ship's log
- Wash down
- Lock up

Disclaimer: Boating laws change from time to time, so be sure to check the regulations for the latest required equipment by boat type and size.