

pre-departure checklist

PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES (PFDs)

- Have onboard one PFD per passenger, minimum of two
- Have onboard a throwable device (for vessels larger than 16 ft.)
- Discuss proper use/location of PFDs

SOUND PRODUCING DEVICES

- Have onboard a horn that can emit a four-second blast audible for 1/2 mile
- Bring a spare can of air or an alternate device
- Attach a whistle to each PFD

LIGHTS & SHAPES

- Test navigation lights
- Check instrument lights
- Be sure to use day-shapes (mast-head signals) if your boating activities require day-shapes
- Bring a flashlight and spare batteries

DISTRESS SIGNALS

- Ensure that flares, day signals, etc., are accessible and stored in a dry location
- Discuss location, proper use and safety rules

TOOLS & SPARES

- Be sure to have a basic toolbox with boat-appropriate tools
- Be sure to bring a spare fuel filter, light bulbs, head parts, through-hull plugs, etc.

FUEL & OIL

- Check fuel levels
- Check the engine oil and coolant levels

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

- Make sure you have a fully charged, accessible fire extinguisher(s) as specified in Coast Guard rules
- Ensure mounts are secure and functional
- Discuss location with passengers and crew

VENTILATION

- On any powered vessel or vessels using LPG, check that interior spaces are well ventilated
- If you smell fuel before ventilating, run blowers for several minutes and re-check before starting
- If odors persist, shut down the engine and look for the source of the leak

BILGES

- Ensure bilges are reasonably dry and pumps are not running excessively
- Clean any spilled oil or waste in bilges to prevent overboard discharge

WEATHER FORECAST

- Check the weather forecast before departure
- Have portable radio onboard for weather updates

BATTERY CARE

- For dual charging systems, check that the selector switch is in the proper position
- Ensure power is on to the entire vessel
- Bring spare batteries for handheld radio, flashlight, portable navigational aid, etc.
- Ensure rechargeable batteries are charged

DOCKING & ANCHORING TIPS

- Be sure to have one anchor set up and bent-on the anchor line
- Bring two or three extra dock lines
- Visually inspect lines for chafe or wear
- Bring fenders (minimum 2) for docking or towing

RULES & DOCUMENTATION

- Bring ship's papers, radio license, fishing permit, etc.
- Bring chart(s) for the area you intend to cruise

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