

Pre-Departure Checklist

Before each trip, review a pre-departure checklist to make sure you have everything you need for a safe trip.

Weather

- Check the weather forecast for the area and timeframe during which you will be boating.

Boat Condition

- Check the hull for cracks or other damage.
- Make sure the steering and throttle controls are operating properly.
- Check the electrical system and that all lights are working properly.
- Check for any fuel leaks from the tank, fuel lines, and carburetor.
- Check the propulsion and cooling systems.
- Check the oil level, and inspect the engine compartment for oil leaks.
- Change the oil filter, water filter, and spark plugs, if needed.
- Check hose connections for leaks or cracks, and make sure hose clamps are tight.
- Drain all water from the engine compartment, and be sure the drainage plug is replaced and secure.
- Make sure you have enough fuel or know where you can refuel. Remember that you want $\frac{1}{3}$ to go out, $\frac{1}{3}$ to return, and $\frac{1}{3}$ in reserve.
- Check to be sure you have a fully charged engine battery and fire extinguishers.

Equipment

- Make sure that you have the required number of lifejackets or PFDs, that they are in good condition, and that they are the proper sizes for the persons on board. Encourage everyone to wear a lifejacket or PFD.
- Check that all required safety equipment is on board, is in good working order, and is easy to reach.
- Make sure you have a first-aid kit, basic tools, and spare parts, including plugs for all through-hull fittings.
- Make sure you have official nautical charts and related publications.