

# West Marine's 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. Identify non-swimmers
  - Supply non-swimmers with life jackets that fit and that they will wear while on the water
4. Identify second-in-command in case of skipper's incapacitation
5. Identify the location and the operation of the following Coast Guard required safety items if fitted
  - Life jackets—should be readily accessible
  - Lifesling or throwable flotation—should be immediately accessible
  - Horn or sound-producing device as required
  - Fire extinguishers: Acquaint crew with operation: Pull the pin, Aim the fire extinguisher, Squeeze the two handles together, Sweep across the base of flames
  - Flares or other Visual Distress Signals
  - Check operation of Navigation Lights
6. Identify incremental recommended gear if fitted
  - VHF Radio: Turn on and demonstrate how to select Channel 16. Ensure at least one other person knows how to transmit a Mayday
  - Ensure that one anchor and rode is ready for immediate use
  - Turn on GPS
  - Length of nylon line for a topline, perhaps 75' x 1/2"
7. Demonstrate engine shutdown technique
8. Check bilges and pump dry if water is present
9. Before engine is started
  - If gasoline inboard: run blower for at least four minutes
  - Check lubricating oil
  - Check fuel level
  - Make sure buzzers sound on engine panel
10. Once engine is started
  - Verify that cooling water is flowing and check for oil pressure
  - Attach kill switch lanyard if fitted



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## While on the water

1. Drink responsibly, especially if you are the skipper!
2. Be weather aware
  - Use the weather channels on your VHF radio
  - 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
  - Use the "Three-Thirds Rule" (one-third outbound, one-third inbound, one-third reserve)
5. Monitor VHF radio Channel 16 for emergency traffic
  - Be prepared to lend assistance if you are the nearest vessel
6. Know the waters in which you are navigating
  - Refer to local charts
  - Stay within marked channels
  - 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
  - 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
  - Battery charger is on
  - 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



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This checklist was created by West Marine as a public service. We practice and encourage safe boating and seamanship. Additional information on safe boating can be found on [www.westmarine.com](http://www.westmarine.com), at our stores, in our catalogs, or by calling 1-800-BOATING (262-8464).

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