

Get Your Boat Ready in Under an Hour

Pre-Departure Checklist

THE BOAT (HULL, ENGINE, BILGE)

~15 min

- ☐ Remove the T-top cover and store it on board
- ☐ Check bilge for standing water - run bilge pump if needed
- ☐ Check engine oil and coolant levels
- ☐ Inspect for fluid leaks around the engine
- ☐ Check fuel level - decide to fill up now or at marina
- ☐ Inspect the prop for fishing line, dings, or bent blades
- ☐ Test the battery charge (especially after time in storage)

SAFETY GEAR

~10 min

- ☐ Life jackets on board for every person - proper fit for kids
- ☐ Throwable flotation device present and accessible
- ☐ Fire extinguisher - check the gauge
- ☐ Flares - confirm within expiration date
- ☐ VHF radio powered on and set to channel 16
- ☐ Current registration and required documentation on board

ELECTRONICS & NAVIGATION

~10 min

- ☐ Chartplotter powered on and functioning
- ☐ Depth finder working
- ☐ Running lights tested (if any chance of being out after dark)
- ☐ VHF radio transmit/receive tested
- ☐ Phone fully charged - offline charts downloaded if needed

LOAD GEAR & SUPPLIES

~15 min

- ☐ Cooler iced down - food and drinks loaded
- ☐ Water - at least 16 oz per person per hour in hot conditions
- ☐ Sunscreen, hats, and sun shirts packed
- ☐ Dry bags for phones, wallets, and keys

- ❑ Towels, extra clothes, first aid kit
- ❑ Fishing gear, tackle, and valid fishing license (if applicable)
- ❑ All gear stowed so it won't shift underway

FINAL WALKTHROUGH BEFORE YOU BACK OUT

~10 min

- ❑ Dock lines and fenders on board
- ❑ Anchor and anchor line rigged and accessible
- ❑ All hatches closed and latched
- ❑ Nothing left on the dock
- ❑ Kill switch lanyard on the helm
- ❑ Float plan shared with someone onshore - where, who, when back

Pro tip: A 15-minute cleanup after every trip means your boat is always close to ready. Put gear back in the same place, note anything that needs attention, and the next departure takes care of itself.