



Maritime &
Coastguard
Agency



Lifeboats

RYA

REDUCE THE RISK BOOST YOUR SKILLS



Boating Checklists

INTRODUCTION

As a boater, you'll know how quickly things can go wrong at sea. That's why it's so important to **stay prepared**.

Complacency and forgetfulness are two of the biggest risks you'll face. So, keep these **essential checklists** onboard and follow our **expert advice** for your best shot at trouble-free boating.



PRE-SEASON CHECKLIST:



- ☐ Boost your skills and complete any training you might need. You can find courses at **RYA.org.uk** and **sailing.ie**.
- ☐ Check and service your boat and equipment (for example: hull, engine, rigging and steering).
- ☐ Check and service your safety equipment (for example: lifejackets, liferafts and flares).
- ☐ Check and service your engine (including fuel and filters).

MY NOTES

BEFORE YOU GO AFLOAT:



- ☐ Check the weather forecast and tide times.
- ☐ Plan your passage, and tell someone ashore where you're going and how long you'll be gone.
- ☐ Check your lifejackets and make sure they're fitted correctly.
- ☐ Check onboard equipment and safety equipment.
- ☐ Check your engine, fluid levels and bilge.
- ☐ Check the kill cord is working if fitted.
- ☐ Check your engine for cooling water through the exhaust or tell tale.
- ☐ Let the engine warm up.
- ☐ Check the forward and reverse gears.
- ☐ Make sure your crew are wearing appropriate clothing for the conditions and the forecast.
- ☐ Brief your crew and include safety considerations (see **crew briefing card**).

MY NOTES

CREW BRIEFING CARD



- ☐ Discuss the passage plan and expected weather.
- ☐ Check whether your crew have any medical conditions or welfare concerns.
- ☐ Make sure your crew are wearing appropriate clothing for the conditions and the forecast.
- ☐ Check lifejackets are fitted correctly.
- ☐ Share the location of emergency equipment (such as the liferaft, flares and fire extinguishers).
- ☐ Discuss man overboard procedures and how to call for help.
- ☐ Identify a second in command and ensure they know how to call for help and operate the engine.

MY NOTES

WHILE YOU'RE UNDERWAY:



- ☐ Wear your lifejacket.
- ☐ Always keep a lookout.
- ☐ Make sure your speed is appropriate for the weather conditions and environment you're in.
- ☐ Check the gauges and fuel levels regularly.
- ☐ Monitor VHF channel 16 and local channels/the harbour master channel.
- ☐ Regularly check in with your crew.
- ☐ Check for lines over the side.
- ☐ Always operate at a safe speed.
- ☐ Monitor the weather conditions and pay attention to the forecast and visibility.
- ☐ Have a means of calling for help, like a handheld VHF or mobile phone in a waterproof pouch.

MY NOTES

EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN



MAN OVERBOARD:

- ☐ Throw a flotation aid.
- ☐ Point to the person in the water while maintaining visual contact with them.
- ☐ Mark the position using the MOB button on the chart plotter.
- ☐ Send a distress message using the DSC distress alert and voice message.
- ☐ Recover the person from the water.

IF THE SKIPPER IS INCAPACITATED:

- ☐ Nominated second in command to take control.
- ☐ Call for help.

MY NOTES

EMERGENCY VHF RADIO CALLING PROCEDURE



☐ If your radio is equipped with Digital Selective Calling (DSC) press and hold the Distress Alert button(s) until the transmission sends.

☐ Set the VHF Radio to Channel 16, High Power.

☐ Hold the Press to Talk (PTT) button and say:

MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY

THIS IS ...

[Your name 3 times, Callsign, MMSI]

MAYDAY,

[Your name, Callsign, MMSI]

MY POSITION IS...

[Describe position and give GPS location if possible]

WE ARE...

[Nature of distress e.g. sinking, fire etc]

REQUIRE IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE

THERE ARE ____ PERSONS ONBOARD

[Give information or intentions]

OVER

☐ Release the PTT button and await a response.

For more tips and advice scan here
or visit: **RNLI.org/StayPrepared**



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Photos: RNLI, Andrew Parish

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