

SIX THINGS TO DO FOR YOUR NEW BOAT

Welcome to the deep end of the pool, CONGRADULATIONS! Now you need to learn how to swim. Here are tips from the Ministry of Sailing of the Six things to do before you leave the dock.

1. **A Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI)** is a unique nine-digit number used to identify maritime entities like ships, coast stations, and search and rescue craft. It's primarily used with [Digital Selective Calling \(DSC\)](#) and [Automatic Identification System \(AIS\)](#) equipment. An MMSI number acts as a unique identifier for emergency situations, allowing for efficient search and rescue operations.
 - a. If this is a new boat, it is easy. All you need to do is go [Boat US](#) and register to get one. This will be programmed into some radio's, Automatic Identification Service (AIS) and safety devices. For International travel or for Commercial Operations you will need to obtain an MMSI from the FCC.
 - b. For a vessel that already has an MMSI, the previous owner will need to deactivate the MMSI to make the process easier for the new boat owner.
2. **Radio License.** For recreational purposes traveling along the coastal waters of the United States you will not necessarily need a Radio Operators License or a "Call Sign". However, if you ever intend to travel to another country, the likelihood is high that this may be a requirement. Yes, you will likely need an FCC license if you plan on sailing internationally with your vessel.
 - a. Here's why and what you'll need:
 - i. **FCC Ship Station License:** This license is generally required for vessels engaged in international voyages or those with certain types of radio equipment, such as HF single sideband radiotelephone or marine satellite terminals.
 - ii. **Restricted Radiotelephone Operator Permit (RROP):** At least one person on board the vessel sailing or communicating internationally must hold this permit. This permit authorizes an individual to use certain radio equipment (e.g., VHF or HF radiotelephone) and communicate with foreign stations.
 - iii. You will also need a Radio Operators License.
 - iv. **MF/HF and Satellite Communications:** If your vessel has equipment like an HF single sideband radiotelephone or marine satellite terminal, you need a Ship Station License even for domestic voyages.

- v. The Restricted Radiotelephone Operator Permit does not require a test and is valid for a lifetime.
- vi. You can apply for both the Ship Station License and the Restricted Radiotelephone Operator Permit through the FCC's online Universal Licensing System (ULS).
- vii. Contact the FCC directly for any specific questions or clarifications regarding your situation.

3. **Safety Training.** Safety training is crucial for new boat owners as it equips them with the knowledge and skills to operate a boat safely, prevent accidents, and respond effectively in emergencies. This training enhances confidence, ensures compliance with regulations, and ultimately contributes to a more enjoyable and safer experience on the water.

Here's why it's so important:

- a. **Knowledge of boat operation:** Safety courses teach the fundamentals of boat handling, including steering, maneuvering, and using various controls, which are essential for safe operation.
- b. **Understanding navigation rules:** Learning navigation rules and regulations ensures boaters can safely navigate waterways and avoid collisions with other vessels.
- c. **Emergency preparedness:** Emergency services always take longer while on a boat. Emergency and First Aid courses cover essential safety skills, such as responding to man overboard situations, handling common emergencies, and administering basic first aid, ensuring boaters are prepared for unexpected events.
- d. **Reduced accident risk:** By understanding potential hazards and how to avoid them, boaters can significantly lower the risk of accidents and injuries.
- e. **Meeting legal requirements:** Many states require boaters to complete a safety course before operating a boat, particularly those with motors.
- f. **Avoiding legal repercussions:** Compliance with state laws and regulations is crucial, and safety training ensures boaters are aware of and adhere to these requirements.
- g. **Cost Savings - Insurance discounts:** Many insurance companies offer discounts on boat insurance to boaters who have completed a safety course, leading to potential cost savings.
- h. **Reduced risk of damages:** By operating the boat safely and responsibly, boaters can minimize the risk of accidents and the associated costs of repairs and damages.

- i. **Increased Confidence and Enjoyment:** Safety training builds confidence in boat handling skills and knowledge of safety procedures, allowing boaters to feel more comfortable and relaxed on the water. With proper training, boaters can focus on enjoying their time on the water, without the worry of potential dangers or emergencies.
4. **Understand Basic Maintenance:**
- a. **Preventing breakdowns:** Regular maintenance, like checking fluids, belts, and hoses, can prevent unexpected mechanical failures while on the water, which can be dangerous.
 - b. **Ensuring proper operation:** Properly maintained steering, navigation, and safety equipment are essential for safe boating.
 - c. **Early detection:** Identifying and addressing minor issues early, like a loose fitting or a potential leak, can prevent them from escalating into major safety hazards.
 - d. **Preserving Value and Preventing Costly Repairs:** Regular maintenance, like oil changes and filter replacements, keeps the engine running efficiently, extending its lifespan and improving fuel economy. Cleaning and protecting the hull and other components from saltwater and other elements can prevent costly repairs down the road.
 - e. **Preventing long-term damage:** Ignoring maintenance can lead to rust, corrosion, and other forms of deterioration that can be expensive to repair.
5. **STARLINK** – If the boat has STARLINK, the previous owner, and only the owner, must un-register the Starlink from their name. If this is not done, STARLINK will be inoperable. Once it is un-registered, only then can a new registration activate the device.
6. **Go to** [Ministry of Sailing](https://www.ministryofsailing.com) and Download and Customize Checklists. Its Free!