

# Josh Post's Checklist for Looking at a Used Sailboat

Note: This list is not exhaustive. If you think of other items not listed, please contact me and I'll make updates to the list. We, as a community, can continue to update and improve the checklist to help others.

---

- **Bottom** (if boat is in the water, dive in with your snorkeling gear, but best to inspect out of water if possible)
  - Check for blisters
  - Check for any soft spots in hull
  - When was last time bottom was painted and barrier coat?
  - Check Rudder Pintles
  - Check rudder strength (pull on it and try to wiggle it, see if any play in rudder)
  - Does rudder feel solid. Any soft spots. Pull on rudder with some force. (Any moisture in the rudder. Moisture test is most likely for surveyor)
  - Check cutlass bearing near prop. Wiggle prop shaft to see if there is play.
  - What type of prop (folding or fixed type)?
  - Check for zincs. Have they been changed recently?
  - What is the condition of bottom paint?
  
- **In Cabin:**
  - Thru hull fittings, check all for corrosion, grounded, weakness, do the valve handles function.

- Locate all thru-hull fittings and make note where they are located. And how many?
- Check chain plates, any leaks, corrosion, solid fiberglass?
- How is bilge (wet, oil, dirty); Does automatic bilge pump work?
- Ceiling and portholes / windows: any leaks, damage from leaks, probe around ceiling for any soft spots.
- Electrical system
  - Circuit panel, does everything work.
  - How's the wiring? Organized or like a rat's nest?
  - Batteries - how old. Do they work? Location?
  - Do lights work, LED or halogen
  - Check navigation lights and mast / anchor lights (top of mast)
  - Does it have VHF radio, does it work?
  - Does it have radar and/or AIS?
  - Does it have GPS?
  - Does it have depth meter, does it work?
  - Does it have speed gauge, does it work?
  - Does it have wind speed gauge, does it work?
  - Does it have NMEA 2000 or older system?
- Fresh water system
  - Do sinks work?

- Is there a shower? Does it work?
- What is the fresh water tank capacity?
- Where are fresh water tanks?
- Any leaks in fresh water system?
- Is there a fresh water heater? Does it work?
- Is there a fresh water maker?
- How are the clamps on the hoses? Rusted? Need replaced?
- Refrigerator:
  - Does it work?
- Flooring and bilge, any soft spots.
  - Check keel bolts (any rust / corrosion)
  - Any components under floorboard that are corroded?
- Toilet / head: does it work?
  - How old is toilet system?
  - Is there holding tank?
  - Where is holding tank access?
  - Check hoses? How old?
  - How are clamps on hoses?
  - Is there a "Y" valve to switch from overboard to holding tank?

- **Steering**

- Locate helm cables, how are they (rusty, clean)?
- Turn helm all the way to both sides, how are the stoppers on the helm cables? Any play? Any corrosion?

- **Engine (or outboard motor):**

- Check oil (does it look like tar (no good), does it look fairly fresh like it has had regular oil changes)?
- How many hours on the engine?
- How does engine look? Clean and well-maintained or neglected?
- Check for oil leaks after engine has been running for a bit.
- Check for any fuel leaks. Check fuel system at engine
- Fuel tank. Where is it located, what is the size? Any major corrosion at fuel tank?
- Check fuel filter area for clean fuel (if it has Racor filter system, use flashlight to check how clean).
- Check belts (worn, cracked, good condition)
- Check water pump: is water circulating? Is there a lot of corrosion at water pump?
- Check exhaust at back of boat. Is there black or gray smoke? Is water discharged through exhaust from cooling system, as it should?

- **Check prop shaft from under helm**

- How much corrosion where shaft goes into stuffing box?

- Check stuffing box for corrosion and how often water drips. Too much water coming through is not good.

- **Ground tackle**

- Look at anchor chain locker
- What is the condition of the anchor chain?
- How long is chain?
- How long is rode?
- Is chain secured to boat?
- How is anchor (large enough for boat, corroded)?
- Check connections between chain and anchor and between rode and chain.
- What about windlass, does it function? Is it in good condition?

- **On the deck:**

- Check standing rigging, any rust, how long since it has been serviced.
- Standing rigging, check tension, too tight, too loose.
- Check mast step, any leaks, any corrosion
- Check running rigging, condition of lines, condition of halyards.
- Check the deck for any soft spots.
- How is deck overall. Wood, Fiberglass? Explain condition?
- How is toerail, secure, any weakness?

- How are winches (smooth turning)? Where are winch handles located?

- **Sails:**

- Inventory
- Condition of sails
- Roller furling condition (check to see if any problems)
- Raise mainsail, how is mainsail track and halyard (smooth or stiff)
- Can you raise mainsail from cockpit or do you need to go to mast.
- Condition of sail covers?

-----

As mentioned above, this list is not exhaustive, but it's a good starting point. Please contact me with any additional suggestions to add to this list, and I'll make updates. After doing an initial check of the boat and if you are interested in making an offer, the next step would be to hire a surveyor for a more thorough inspection of the vessel.

Happy Sailing!

*Josh Post*