POWERBOAT EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST (26 FEET TO UNDER 40 FEET)

Confident and safe boating relies upon the boat and each person aboard being properly equipped. This powerboat equipment checklist (boats over 26 feet and under 40 feet) outlines U.S. Coast Guard minimum requirements and other suggested equipment for boaters and their boat. For more information, please check with local Marine Law Enforcement Authorities and schedule a vessel safety check.

THE BOATER

**Federal requirement:**
- Life jacket (right size life jacket on board for each person appropriate for the boating activity)
*Please note, many states require a life jacket worn for waterskiing or PWC operators and passengers.*

**Other essential gear:**
- Engine cut-off device
- Inflatable re-arming kit (if wearing inflatable life jacket)
- Boat shoes
- Whistle (for life jacket)
- Waterproof flashlight or strobe (for life jacket)
- Basic handheld VHF-DSC with GPS
- Protective clothing
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen

THE BOAT

**Federal requirement:**
- Navigation rules
  - Basic: [USCG Navigation Rules and Regulations Handbook](#)
- Sound producing device
  - Basic: Whistle
  - Upgrade level 1: Handheld air horn
  - Upgrade level 2: Electric horn
- Visual distress signals in required jurisdictions (see [U.S. Coast Guard: A Boater's Guide to the Federal Requirements for Recreational Boats](#))
  - Basic: 3 day/night handheld flares
  - Upgrade level 1: 3 day/night handheld flares, 3 meteor flares, 1 orange smoke
  - Upgrade level 2: SOLAS flares or kit, SOS distress light, plus parachute flares, signal mirror, day distress flag
- Throwable flotation
  - Basic: Cushion, recommend 30 feet of line
  - Upgrade level 1: Life ring or horseshoe +30 feet of line
  - Upgrade level 2: Lifesling®
THE BOAT

**Federal requirement (continued):**

- Fire extinguisher
  - Basic: Two B-I’s or one B-2
  - Upgrade level 1: (2+) type BC-I, (1+) type BC-II
  - Upgrade level 2: (2+) type BC-II
  - Upgrade level 3: (2+) type BC-II and engine compartment fire suppressor
- Backfire flame arrestors (required for inboard motor boats)
- Ventilation
- Navigation lights
- Marine sanitation devices
- Pollution regulations (5” x 8” oil discharge placard and 4” x 9” MARPOL trash placard)

**Other essential gear:**

- Engine cut-off device
- Anchor and line (required by some states)
- VHF radio
  - Basic: Handheld
  - Upgrade level 1: Fixed VHF-DSC
  - Upgrade level 2: Fixed VHF-DSC and handheld
  - Upgrade level 3: VHF-DSC/GPS combo
- Emergency indicating beacon
  - Basic: [Personal Locator Beacon](http://example.com) (registered to the boater)
  - Upgrade level 1: [Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon](http://example.com) (registered to the boat)
- Paddle
- Bailor or pump (required by some states, hand or electric bailer)
- Dock lines
  - Basic: (4) basic laid line
  - Upgrade level 1: (6+) braided lines
  - Upgrade level 2: (6-8) braided lines
- Boat fenders
- Compass
  - Basic: Handheld
  - Upgrade level 1: 3” fixed front-reading
  - Upgrade level 2: 4” fixed flat card
  - Upgrade level 3: 4+” fixed flat card
- GPS
  - Basic: Handheld
  - Upgrade level 1: Fixed 3-4” chartplotter
  - Upgrade level 2: Fixed 5-7” chartplotter
  - Upgrade level 3: Fixed 10+” chartplotter + external GPS

[www.boatbeat.org](http://www.boatbeat.org)
THE BOAT

**Other essential gear (continued):**

- **Charts**
  - Basic: Chartbook
  - Upgrade level 1: NOAA charts
  - Upgrade level 2: Charts On Demand
- **Boat hook**
- **Boarding ladder** (required by some states)
- **Spare parts** (engine, propeller, batteries)
- **Depth sounder**
  - Basic: Sounder
  - Upgrade level 1: Chart sounder and fishfinder
- **Radar**
  - Basic: 2kw, 18” radome
  - Upgrade level 1: 2k2, 24” radome
  - Upgrade level 2: 4kw, 24” radome
  - Upgrade level 3: 4kw, 4’ open array
- **AIS**
  - Basic: AIS receiver
  - Upgrade level 1: AIS receive + display
  - Upgrade level 2: Class B AIS
  - Upgrade level 3: Class A AIS
- **Water ski or dive flags** (required by some states – deploy flags to indicate a diver location or waterskiing)
- **Search light** (essential for night boating as long as it does not interfere with navigation rules)
- **First aid kit** (basic or appropriate for your destination, such as local, distance and offshore boating)
- **Toolbox**
- **Float plans** ([floatplancentral.org](http://floatplancentral.org))

*Please note, the opinions and recommendations are not necessarily those of the U.S. Coast Guard and National Safe Boating Council, or endorsed by the U.S. Coast Guard and National Safe Boating Council.*

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