

Your summer getaway checklist



Heading out for some summer sailing? Follow PBO's essential summer sailing checklist. Engine checks and weather forecasts are over the page

No matter how organised you are, the days leading up to your summer cruise will always be a mad rush. You're trying to tie up all the loose ends at home, lay in provisions and equip your boat for a few weeks away – all the while scurrying back and forth to the computer to check whether you're in for a fortnight of sun or two weeks of thrashing to windward. Our brief guide should help you remember the essentials and make the whole process much smoother.

SAFETY CHECKS

You can't plan for every eventuality, but a few quick checks mean you can nip any potential problems in the bud.

- Do the nav lights work? Do you have spares?
- Check jackstays and guardrail lashings.
- Danbuoy lights – check batteries, bulbs and that there's no water in the lens.
- Lifejackets – do you have one for everyone on board? Check cylinders and make sure you have the correct rearming kits.



- Liferaft: has yours been serviced in line with the manufacturer's requirements? If you don't have one, have you arranged to hire a raft?
- Grab bag – do you have one? Are your flares in date?
- Check your VHF is working and you have a handheld radio as back up.
- Haul someone up the mast to do a quick visual survey. Check the shroud attachments and spreader roots for cracks

and check split pins, bottlescrews, sheaves, and nav lights for damage or movement. Look for chafe and tape up any sharp edges.

- While you're up there measure the height from your masthead, remembering to include any aerials, to the waterline. It's useful to know if you have to pass under a low bridge or powerline.
- Check your battery voltage. If you have old-style lead acid batteries, check the water levels inside and top up if necessary with de-ionised water.

NAVIGATION

- Are your charts up to date? Major corrections are published in PBO, or check the Imray or Admiralty websites for chart changes. Contact your supplier for updates to electronic charts.
- Do you have paper backups for your electronic charts?
- Tidal atlases
- An up-to-date almanac
- Check the latest notices to mariners. There are planned exclusion zones in the English Channel this summer around wreck recovery operations, with hefty fines for any yachts straying in to prohibited areas. Ignorance is no excuse!



COMMUNICATIONS

- Is your mobile phone enabled for foreign use ashore? Make sure you know your network's charges for roaming before you go to avoid eye-watering bills when you return. Vodafone have abolished most roaming charges this year – but others vary.
- You'll need an ATIS number (Automatic Transmission Identification System) if entering Europe's inland waterways. Your VHF may need reprogramming, but you'll need to be able to switch ATIS off when returning as it's illegal in UK waters – see www.pbo.co.uk for more details.

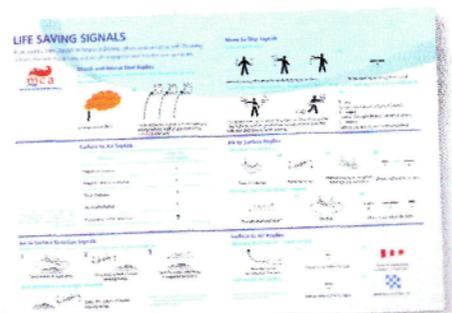
- A good bilingual dictionary is invaluable if you're heading for foreign climes. *The Yachtsman's Ten Language Dictionary* includes many useful technical words that you're unlikely to find in a standard translation dictionary. *The Yachtsman's Ten Language Dictionary*, Adlard Coles Nautical, £17.99, ISBN 9780713684407, available from www.pbo.co.uk, click on 'Books & charts'



SOLAS V

In 2002 new Solas V regulations came into force, governing safety at sea and enforceable by law. It's unlikely that you'll be checked up on, but it's worth taking note of the following points:

- Voyage planning: make a passage plan – check weather, tides and navigational dangers, taking into account limitations of the vessel and crew. Always have a contingency plan and make sure someone ashore knows your intended movements. File a CG66 form with the coastguard, either online (www.mcga.gov.uk) or by post.
- A radar reflector should be fitted.
- Illustrated table showing life-saving signals available to on-watch crew. This is printed in most Almanacs, or can be downloaded from the MCA's website: www.mcga.gov.uk/c4mca/signals.pdf



Going abroad

SPARES

It's usually the little things that will put paid to all your best-laid plans. Chandleries have a habit of closing just as you arrive and, especially abroad, it can be hard to find the exact part you need, so it's a good idea to take some spares with you.

- At least one spare engine cooling-water impeller.
- Replacement fuel and oil filters.
- Spare gas regulator.
- Spare shackles/batteries/bulbs/fuses.
- Rudimentary sail repair kit – sticky-backed Dacron, spinnaker repair tape, sailmaker's palm, needles and twine can get you home in all but the worst sail damage.
- You will need your own hose for most marinas on the continent – and, increasingly, in the UK too. A cassette hose is an easily-stowed solution, and it's worth taking a variety of adaptors.

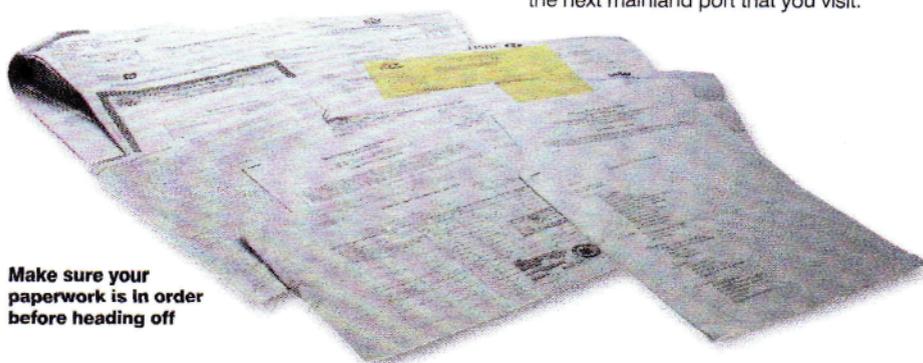
SEASICKNESS

If you suffer from seasickness, don't forget to take precautions before you go. There are many claimed 'cures' and treatments on the market, from electric-shock watches to sea bands and medication. Whatever you do, make sure you try out any new medication before you go afloat to check for any side-effects such as drowsiness. Stugeron pills and Scopoderm patches are among the most popular. It's also worth taking some food such as oatcakes, which are good to nibble on while feeling queasy.



DOCUMENTS

If you're heading abroad, it's vital you have the correct documentation with you. Many European countries will impose a hefty automatic fine if you're found to be lacking



Make sure your paperwork is in order before heading off

the correct pieces of paper. And don't forget that in most instances photocopies will not be valid.

- Passports
- European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) – this has replaced the old E111 form and entitles UK residents to free healthcare within the EU. www.ehic.org.uk
- Vessel's insurance certificate. Most UK policies cover the area from Brest to the Elbe, but check before you go and extend it if necessary.
- Ship's papers – either a Small Ships Register (SSR) certificate or full Part 1 registration. Remember that SSR documents expire every 5 years.
- Ship's radio licence and any operator's certificates you may hold.
- Proof that VAT has been paid on your yacht – ideally the original VAT receipt. For older yachts, proof that the vessel was taken into use before 1 January 1985 and was in the EU on 1 January 1993. Failing that, a Bill of Sale between private individuals should, in the words of HMRC, 'indicate that tax status is the responsibility of UK Customs' – in other words, not something that overseas customs officials should need to take an interest in.
- Any certificates of competence for the skipper and crew – an International Certificate of Competence (ICC) is ideal. If heading inland, it must be endorsed for inland waterways.
- If travelling on inland waterways, you should have a copy of the CEVNI rules. The RYA's book of EuroRegs is acceptable.
- It's polite to fly a courtesy flag – make sure that you have one for each country you plan to visit.
- If you're entering an EU country, it's generally not necessary to undertake any customs clearance. The Channel Islands are not part of the EU, however, so clearance must be obtained upon entry – as it must in the next mainland port that you visit.



CURRENCY

- Check charges for using debit/credit cards abroad. Nationwide's Flexaccount is a popular one and used to be free of charge abroad, but is now chargeable outside Europe.



Some local currency is essential when sailing abroad as cashpoint machines and banks can be few and far between

CHECK LOCAL REGULATIONS

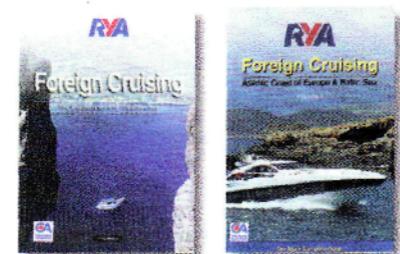
Each country has its own rules. Holding tanks, speed, antifouling and alcohol limits vary, so check the RYA's Foreign Cruising booklets before you leave.

- Holding tanks:** these are generally required for inland waterways, and you may not discharge sewage in Spanish or Dutch territorial waters. Different countries have different regulations, so be sure to check those you are visiting.



You may need to fit a heads holding tank for inland waterways and some countries in Europe

USEFUL INFORMATION



- More country-specific information on rules, regulations and guidelines can be found in the RYA's *Foreign Cruising* books: Vol 1 covers the Atlantic Coast of Europe and the Baltic Sea, and Vol 2 covers the area from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea. You can buy these books at £5.99 each from www.pbo.co.uk, click on 'Books & charts'.