

SURVEYOR'S CHECK LIST**10 Things to Check Before You Call Us**

Buying a boat is emotional; surveying it is technical. Use this list during your first viewing to decide if a boat is worth the cost of a professional survey.

1. The "Sniff Test" (Interior)

Open the floorboards and lockers. If you smell heavy mildew or, worse, raw sewage, there are likely deep-seated plumbing or leak issues. A strong "air freshener" scent is often a red flag used to mask these smells.

2. The Bilge Inspection

Is it bone dry, or is there standing water? If there is water, there might be a problem. Saltwater suggests a hull/through-hull leak; freshwater suggests a window or deck hardware leak. Look for oily residue which indicates engine trouble.

3. Window & Portlight Streaks

Look for staining on the woodwork or curtains around the windows. Re-bedding leaking windows is a labor-intensive and expensive job that many owners ignore.

4. Engine Service Records

Don't just look at the engine; look at the paperwork. A clean engine can be wiped down in 10 minutes, but a folder full of receipts for oil changes, impellers, and heat exchanger descaling proves a history of care.

5. The "Tap Test" on Decks

Walk firmly over the deck, especially around cleats and stanchion bases. If the deck feels "spongy" or soft underfoot, the core is likely delaminated or rotten from water ingress.

6. Rigging Age (Sailing Yachts)

Ask for the age of the standing rigging. Most insurers require replacement every 10–12 years, regardless of how "shiny" the wires look. If it's older, factor the replacement cost into your offer.

7. Keel Bolts & Hull Grid

Check where the keel meets the hull. If there is a "smile" (a crack at the leading edge) or if the bolts inside are heavily rusted, the boat may have had a grounding that requires structural repair.

8. Electrical "Rat's Nests"

Open the electrical panel. The wiring should be neat and labeled. If you see "birds' nests" of loose wires and electrical tape, it's a sign of amateur DIY work that can be a fire hazard.

9. Through-Hull Valves (Seacocks)

Try to turn them. If they are frozen or green with heavy corrosion, they are a safety risk. Replacing all through-hulls requires a haul-out and significant expense.

10. The "Owner's Vibe"

Ask the owner: "What is the one thing on this boat that doesn't work perfectly?" An honest owner will have an answer. If they say "Everything is perfect," they might be hiding something.

Don't Buy Blind!

Found a boat that passed your initial check? Now it's time for the experts. We don't just find problems; we find solutions and peace of mind.

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