

# Before Checklist

Pre-filing and pre-trip review for boat registration paperwork. Updated 2026-05-26.

## Before Paying State Fees

1. Confirm the state, boat length, propulsion type, use type, residency, tax status, title requirement, and renewal or first-registration path.
2. Compare the calculator estimate with the official fee schedule, including title fee, lien fee, local tax, conservation fee, invasive-species fee, and online service fee when applicable.
3. Check whether the boat is exempt, documented by the U.S. Coast Guard, homemade, out-of-state, inherited, business-owned, or purchased without a title.

## Before A Used-Boat Purchase

1. Match the HIN on the hull with title, registration, bill of sale, lien release, and seller identification before final payment.
2. Ask for duplicate-title or lien-release proof before closing if any owner, lender, estate, company, or previous state record does not match.
3. Keep a signed bill of sale showing buyer, seller, price, date, HIN, trailer, motor, and title or registration document status.

## Before The Trip

1. Check whether temporary operation is allowed while paperwork is pending and whether decals, validation card, boater education, or local water permits are required.
2. Store receipts, agency confirmations, old registration, insurance/marina paperwork, and contact notes in one folder for inspection or follow-up.

Use this checklist before using the official agency path. It does not replace agency forms, legal advice, tax advice, or title/registration decisions made by a state office.