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PRE-SURVEY TIPS

Preparing your vessel for a surveyor's inspection makes all the difference. This is especially true in case of a vessel for sale being surveyed on behalf of a buyer. The better you present your boat, the better your chance of a successful sale. Even routine insurance surveys go smoother if the vessel owner has taken the trouble of preparing his yacht and made sure all systems are operational.

Here are some tips:

Appointment time

Please be on time and make sure you are clear on what the surveyor wants to do and in what following order. No point in rigging up your best tarpaulin to create a shaded work environment for the surveyor (always appreciated!) only to be told we are going to do the sea trial first.

Visitors

During a survey it is best if there are not too many people on board. Of course the owner, captain, chief engineer or prospective buyer are welcome but the fewer, the merrier.

Vessel documentation

Have all paperwork ready, including vessel registration and specifications, inventory, owner's manuals, bills for recent repairs, insurance papers etc. Make photocopies of anything that may be useful to the surveyor.

Batteries

Make sure all batteries are charged and the connections clean and securely fastened. Check the water levels.

Instruments

Check all your instruments to see if they power up and function. Re-install any instrument you may have disconnected and stored.

Life Saving Equipment & Pyrotechnics

Often these are buried deep in the vessel's storage space. Dig them up and lay them out for inspection, including portable fire extinguishers and the first aid kit.

Engine(s) and generator(s)

Check each piece of machinery to make sure it can be started and tested. Check oil and fluid levels, fan belts, alternators and other peripherals.

Sails

If you carry a large inventory of sails remove them from where they are stowed but leave them in their bags until inspection. If you keep a record of their sizes and date of purchase have a copy available.

Temperature

Remove hatch covers and open all hatches to air out the interior. Put up a sunshade if you have one. If your boat has air-con turn it on. Cold drinking water on board is much appreciated.

Clutter

Some surveyors charge extra in case of very cluttered vessels. Waterline Marine does not but having to dig through mountains of stuff just to inspect a switch or a pump is guaranteed to put us in a less-than-favorable frame of mind. Use an upcoming survey as an excuse to do some serious spring-cleaning and get rid of all the unwanted stuff that accumulated on board. You'll be glad you did it and it's good seamanship too.

HOW LONG DOES A SURVEY TAKE?

This depends largely on the type of survey, the size of the vessel and the number of systems to be inspected. A typical 45ft vessel takes one whole day to survey, including haul out for the wetted surface inspection. Larger vessels may take longer. A sea trial, if required, can easily take half a day. Writing the Survey Report (25-30 pages) can take another two or three days.

Some surveyors spend only 2 hours on board and whip out a 5-page checklist report on the same day. Waterline Marine does not operate this way. Proper marine surveying is all about details, standards and procedures. Caveat Emptor.

THE ROLE OF THE SURVEYOR

A Marine Surveyor's most important assets are sharp eyes, experience and integrity.

The surveyor works for *you*, his client, the person that hired his services. The surveyor does not work for the boatyard, the yacht broker or the person trying to sell you his boat.

A professional surveyor has a methodical approach to inspecting a vessel and the ability to convey his findings in a properly constructed Survey Report.

A Survey Report is a confidential document written exclusively for the surveyor's client without whose permission the contents cannot be disclosed to other parties.

Foremost on any surveyor's mind is whether the vessel being inspected is safe and "fit for her intended purpose".