KIKI MARINE
Precise Surveys for Confident Decisions

Marine Surveys: More Than a Checklist

A marine survey is far more than just a checklist of items to inspect—it's a comprehensive evaluation of each item's condition. A proper survey examines the boat holistically. It assesses everything from the integrity of the hull and deck, including moisture readings, to the safety of electrical systems, an evaluation of the engines and propulsion systems, and the appropriateness and condition of safety equipment. This process ensures that any deficiencies or worn-out components are identified and documented, giving you a full picture of the boat's seaworthiness and what can be expected in the short and long-term maintenance-wise.

That said, I have provided this checklist because, understandably, many people would like to save money on a professional survey. Boating is, of course, expensive. So here is a checklist. But please don't consider it a replacement for a thorough, professional survey.

The following are descriptors generally used by surveyors to describe the condition of items on a boat. These descriptors are then placed in tables at the end of the survey according to their severity.

Condition descriptors for this report

Good	The item or area appears well-maintained with no obvious damage or issues.
Fair	The item or area shows normal wear or aging but remains functional and safe under current conditions.
Requires attention	The item or area shows significant wear, damage, or deterioration, possibly close to end-of-life **OR** is a critical safety concern that could not be checked adequately.
Powered Up Only	Equipment was turned on, and basic operation (e.g., display lights) was observed, but no full performance test was done.
Not Tested / Not Verified	No operation or inspection was performed beyond a basic visual check (or the item was inaccessible / beyond the survey scope).

Deficiency Severity (A, B, C, or N/A)

A (Critical)	Immediate attention required. Needed before safe use. Examples: severe leaks, unsafe fuel lines, major structural failures or components related to safety that could not be checked.

B (Important)	Significant but not immediately hazardous. Repair soon to avoid bigger problems. Examples: worn rigging, moderate leaks, or outdated fire extinguishers.
C (Minor)	Cosmetic or minor issues that do not currently affect safety or performance. Examples: light rust, minor gelcoat cracks, or small cosmetic flaws. This classification may also include mechanical, electric, and electronic components that were only powered up but whose full functionality was not confirmed. Examples: Generator or engine that starts, VHF radio that turns on.
N/A (No Deficiency)	No problem noted based on current observations (even if the item is older or only briefly tested).

Hull exterior and propulsion				
Items	**Condition**	**A,B,C**	**Remarks**	**Photos**
Visual Inspection				
Primer, Barrier Coat, Anti-Fouling Paint				
Keel Joint				
Keel				
Hull Impact and Resonance Test				
Hull Humidity Testing				
Rub Rail				
Hull-Deck Joint				
Hull Anode(s)				
Thru-Hulls				
Rudder, rudder bearing and shaft				
Propeller Shaft(s)				
Shaft Support				
Propeller(s)				
Cutlass Bearing				
Propeller/Drive Anode(s)				
Porthole(s) in the Hull				
Fixed Lateral/Moon Windows in the Hull				
Sail drive (external)				
Stern Tube (external)				
Keel Bolts				

Spars and rigging

Items	Condition	A,B,C	Remarks	Photos
Rigging description				
Jib/Genoa Furler				
Forestay (as inspected from the deck)				
Spinnaker/Whisker Pole				
Shrouds (as seen from deck)				
Chainplates, pins and bolts				
Turnbuckles				
Main Mast				
Mast Base Support				
Boom				
Gooseneck				
Boomvang				
Winch (main mast)				
Deck Line Organizers				
Fairleads				
Genoa (Jib) Tracks and Cars				
Rope Clutches & Cleats				
Halyards				
Winches (halyards)				
Sheets (Genoa/jib)				
Winches (cockpit)				
Sheet (main)				
Traveller and tackle				
Backstay (as inspected from the deck)				
Aft Mast				
Winches at the Mizzen Mast				
Other Running Rigging				

Sails Items	Condition	A,B,C	Remarks	Photos
Main				
Genoa 1				

Genoa 2	
Genoa 3	
Spinnaker	
Staysail	
Misen	
Other sail(s)	

Deck, coachroof and swim platform				
Items	**Condition**	**A,B,C**	**Remarks**	**Photos**
Deck Construction				
Visual Inspection				
Deck, coachhouse, cockpit and swim platform humidity testing				
Pulpit				
Bow Roller				
Primary Anchor				
Windlass				
Anchor Locker				
Anchor Chain and Rode				
Deck Hatch(es)				
Stanchions				
Lifelines				
Mooring cleats				
Toe Rail/Gunwale				
Handrails				
Exterior Woodwork				
Coachroof portholes				
Coachroof fixed Lateral/Moon Windows				
Windshields, Frames, and Studs				
Cockpit Bimini and Dodger				
Cockpit Table(s)				
Sliding Roof/Companionway Hatch				
Helm/Binnacle				
Steering Tensioner/Lock				
Cockpit Flooring				

Fuel and Water Fill Ports and Waste Deck Pump-Out Port	
Cockpit Drains	
Cockpit Lockers/Lazarettes	
Propane/LPG Components and Storage Compartment	
Rear Pushpit	
Propane/LPG	
BBQ/grill	
Swimming Platform Shower	
Swimming Ladder	
Swim Platform	
Davits	

Gauges and instrumentation summary				
Items	**Condition**	**A,B,C**	**Remarks**	**Photos**
Fuel Gauge				
Engine Temperature Gauge/Alarm				
VHF Radio				
GPS Map Chartplotter 1				
Depth Sounder				
Autopilot				
Tachometer				
Digital Selective Calling (DSC)				
Engine Start				
Log Meter				
Wind direction indicator				
Engine Stop				
Engine Controls				
Voltmeter/Ammeter				
Other Gauges				
HF/SSD Radio				
GPS Map Chartplotter 2				
Radar				
Wind Speed Indicator				
AIS Transponder				
Magnetic Compass				

VHF Antenna	
Anemometer	
Other(s)	

Engine Summary				
Items	**Condition**	**A,B,C**	**Remarks**	**Photos**
Exhaust – Type				
Cooling Type				
Stuffing Box/Packing Gland				
High Water Alarm				
Primary Fuel Filter/Water Separator				
Secondary Fuel Filter				
Manual Fuel Pump				
Coolant Level and Quality				
Engine Compartment Extraction Blower				
Engine(s)				
Engine Model				
Engine Serial Number(s)				
Horsepower				
Condition				
Exhaust Outboard Discharge Position				
Engine Hours				
Battery Charging Alternator				
Saildrive Model				
Saildrive Serial Number				
Propeller Shaft (Interior)				
Drive Coupling(s)				
Inboard Shaft Support				
Stern Tube				
Throttle and Gear Controls				
Transmission				
Engine Anti-Vibration Mounts				
Belts and Pulleys				
Hoses				

Air Filter	
Seacock for Cooling Water	
Raw Water Strainer	
Cooling Canister	
Firewall Installed on Air Entrance	
Gas Vapor Detector	
Automatic Engine Compartment Fire Extinguisher System	
Oil Level and Condition	
Fuel Tank Anti-Siphon	
Engine/Transmission Oil Leak?	
Fuel Leak?	

Engine summary				
Items	**Condition**	**A,B,C**	**Remarks**	**Photos**
Exhaust – Type				
Fuel Tank Level Indicator				
Fresh Water Level Indicator				
Engine Water Inlet				
Toilet Inlet				
Bathroom Sink Drain Outlet				
Kitchen Water Drain Outlet				
Fuel Tank				
Fuel Tank Piping				
Fuel Tank Bracing				
Fuel Tank Cut-off Valve(s)				
Fuel Tank Sealing				
Fuel Tank Anti-siphoning Valve				
Fresh Water Tank				
Fresh Water Piping				
ABYC Potable Water Systems H-23 Compliant				
Black Water Tank				
Black Water Indicator				

Black Water Piping				
Grey Water Tank				
Grey Water Indicator				
Grey Water Piping				
Hot Water Tank				
Overpressure Valve				
Seacocks - Under the Waterline – Type, Quantity, and Condition				
Toilet Outlet				
Shower Outlet				
Refrigerator Compressor Cooling Inlet				
Graywater Outlet				
Pressure Wash Inlet				
Graywater Outlet				
Pressure Wash Inlet				

Cabin and conveniences summary				
Items	**Condition**	**A,B,C**	**Remarks**	**Photos**
Propane gas vapor detector				
Lining				
Sign of water ingress inside the cabin?				
Washroom sink faucet				
Shower				
Kitchen sink faucet				
Refrigerator/Icebox drain				
Woodwork				
Upholstery				
Kitchen counter				
Storage cabinet/furniture				
Floor				
Ceilings				
Doors/framing				
Head toilet				
Seawater pump for galley sink				
Refrigerator/Icebox				

DC marine refrigerator compressor				
Stove				
Microwave				
Cabin ventilation				
Air conditioning				
Heating				
Television				
Fan(s)				

Electrical summary				
Items	**Condition**	**A,B,C**	**Remarks**	**Photos**
Distribution panel 110V				
Reverse polarity light				
Shore power receptacle				
Shore power cable				
Shore power overcurrent protection				
Galvanic isolator				
Isolation transformer				
Inverter				
Terminal connections				
Bundling support				
110V outlet receptacle(s) - GFCI equipped?				
110V sockets				
Battery test, conductance				
Batteries - same style and age				
Terminal connections				
Other electrical				
Freshwater pump(s)				
Port and starboard navigation lights				
Stern light				
Anchor light				
Steaming light				
Battery electronic insulator/combiner				

External speakers	
Cabin lighting	
Starter battery(ies)	
House battery(ies)	
Battery test, electrolyte	
Battery selector(s) / Battery switch(s)	
Battery(ies) overcurrent protective device	
Breaker panel voltmeter/ battery monitor ammeter	
Shore battery charger 110V	
Wiring	
Washdown pump(s)	
Shower drain pump	
Macerator pump	
Electric toilet	
Radio AM/FM CD	
Socket 12V outlet	
Cabin fans	
Electric horn	
Water maker	
Bow thruster	
Windlass	

Electrical summary				
Items	**Condition**	**A,B,C**	**Remarks**	**Photos**
Generator				
Solar panels				
Generator manufacturer				
Generator sea strainer				
Generator hoses				
Generator anti-siphon				
Generator cooling				
Wind generator				
Other				
Methanol fuel cell				

Safety equipment summary

Items	Condition	A,B,C	Remarks	Photos
Flares				
Smoke detectors				
Carbon monoxide detector				
Bilge pump, manual				
High water alarm				
Extra anchor				
Fire extinguishers				
Radar reflector				
Sound signal				
Life jackets				
LPG cut-off solenoid valve switch				
Bilge pump, automatic				
Emergency tiller connection				
Emergency tiller				
Liferaft				
Distress 406 Mhz Radio beacon				
Strobe light hi intensity				
Burglar safety				
Motion alarm system				
GPS tracking system				
Anti Theft marking				

Surveyor’s conclusion regarding condition grading

After organizing the findings from the survey, and based on the surveyors experience, an overall opinion on the vessel's condition will be formed. This would then be detailed in the REPORT OF MARINE SURVEY & FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS sections of the report (These are the A,B,C's and associated remarks).

Marine Vessel Condition Grading

Then the vessel is "graded". BUC RESEARCH’s condition grading, widely recognized in the marine industry, is used to adjust the base value range.

1. "EXCELLENT (BRISTOL) CONDITION", is a vessel that is maintained in mint or bristol fashion (usually better than factory new, loaded with extras, a rarity).

2. 'ABOVE AVERAGE CONDITION", has had above average care and is equipped with extra electrical and electronic gear.
3. "AVERAGE CONDITION", ready for sale requiring no additional work and normally equipped for her size.
4. "FAIR CONDITION", requires usual maintenance to prepare for sale.
5. "POOR CONDITION", substantial yard work required and devoid of extras.
6. "RESTORABLE CONDITION", enough hull and engine exists to restore the boat to usable condition.

Marine vessel appraisal
comparative sources

Finally, the approximate value of the vessel is determined. Such sources as the following often help with this:

• boats.com
• boattrader.com
• yachtworld.com
• bucvalu.com

Additional insights are obtained through consultations with knowledgeable boat brokers and marine surveyors, personal experience, and current listings of similar vessels. Note that boat values vary significantly due to local market demands—for example, fresh water vessels in exceptional condition may command premiums.

Determination of fair local market value

Current fair market value is defined as the price that a willing seller would accept from a willing buyer—both acting prudently, knowledgeably, and without undue pressure. This valuation assumes that any components, systems, sails, or equipment not inspected are in serviceable condition commensurate with their age. Furthermore, for a vessel to achieve its fair market value in a competitive, open market, it is assumed that:

- Motivation: Both buyer and seller are motivated.
- Informed Decision-Making: Both parties are well informed or advised and act in their own best interest.
- Market Exposure: The vessel is allowed a reasonable time for exposure on the open market.
- Payment Terms: Payment is made in cash (U.S. dollars) or via comparable financial arrangements.
- Normal Consideration: The price reflects a typical market transaction, unaffected by special financing or sales concessions.

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Market analysis

Vessel	Location	Price	Description

Valuation Conclusion

After taking into account all of the foregoing, the fair market value of the boat is estimated.