The Pilot's Walkaround

A preflight checklist for boat showings, from a Navy pilot turned airline pilot. Excitement is the enemy of thoroughness, and a checklist beats a memory every time. Work it top to bottom, challenge and response.

BEFORE YOU DRIVE

☐ Exact model and year vs the listing title	CONFIRMED
☐ This generation vs its predecessor (different boats, different records)	KNOWN
☐ Engine make, model and rating as listed	WRITTEN DOWN
☐ Height and draft figures in the listing	MARKED UNVERIFIED
☐ Your own must-haves, in writing	IN HAND
☐ Questions this listing left unanswered	LISTED

ON THE DOCK

☐ Waterline and boot stripe, bow to stern	WALKED
☐ Hull sides in low light, sighting down the length	SIGHTED
☐ Side decks and handholds, walked like a seaway	WALKED
☐ Canvas, rails, hatches, ground tackle condition	NOTED
☐ What is on top: arch, mast, antennas, what folds	PHOTOGRAPHED

ENGINE ROOM

☐ Engine make and model plates vs the listing	PHOTOGRAPHED
☐ Hour meters, all engines and generator	PHOTOGRAPHED
☐ Belts, hoses, clamps, visible wiring	EYES ON
☐ Bilge: dry, oily, or wet, and where from	NOTED
☐ Fuel tank surfaces and fittings, where reachable	EYES ON
☐ Generator checked where it lives, run if allowed	RUN / NOTED
☐ Access: could you service this at anchor?	JUDGED

INSIDE

☐ Every head flushed, every faucet run	RUN
☐ Berths laid on, not just looked at	TRIED
☐ Headroom and passage at your real height	WALKED
☐ Soft spots: decks, soles, around windows	PRESSED
☐ Smell honestly: fuel, mildew, holding tank	NOTED
☐ Electronics powered up, ages noted	NOTED

THE ASKS

☐ Service records: engines, generator, transmission	REQUESTED
☐ Typical fuel burn per hour, and at what rpm	ASKED
☐ Prior survey, if one exists	REQUESTED
☐ What has been replaced, and when	ASKED
☐ Why the boat is for sale	ASKED
☐ Anything the owner would fix next	ASKED

BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE DOCK

☐ Photos reviewed against your must-haves	REVIEWED
☐ The one thing you'd verify next, named	NAMED
☐ Emotion check: are you buying the sunset or the boat?	HONEST ANSWER

A walkaround is not a survey and does not pretend to be one. It keeps you from paying for a survey on a boat you'd have walked away from at the dock, and it sends you home with photos and notes instead of impressions.

WALKAROUND COMPLETE — free from Can I Loop?, the boat-vetting tool for the Great Loop — www.caniloop.net/walkaround. Copy it, print it, pass it on.

Are we missing something? Submit a suggestion: support@caniloop.net — if it earns a line, the next printing carries it.