

OSYC Boat Launch and Retrieval Safety Guidelines.

Tow vehicle must be capable of the job.

Make sure ramp is free of pine straw, leaves, dirt and other loose gravel. Use electric blower in basement if needed.

Trailer

- must be structurally sound and capable of the job.
- check bunks and rollers.
- fixed keel boat trailers need to have a keel pad and keel guides.
- check winch and winch strap/cable.
- tires must be in good condition and have proper air pressure.
- must have safety chains from trailer to vehicle.
- check that wheels turn freely and have no side-to-side motion due to bad wheel bearings.
- check that trailer tongue jack is working properly.
- need to have safety chain between trailer and bow of the boat.

When attaching trailer to vehicle make sure:

- hitch ball is correct size for trailer.
- latch is secure and safety pin is installed thru latch.
- safety chains are attached to vehicle.
- if using tongue extension, that it is securely locked in place.

Before launch or retrieval:

- make sure swing keel of center board is up and secure.
- raise or remove rudder or motor if needed.
- install launch line to bow and stern, make sure they are long enough so as not to pull dock help into the water.
- remove fenders if trailer has vertical guidepost.
- have boat hook on dock ready to be used.

Launching and retrieval

ramp can be very slippery at waterline, hold on to vehicle or dock when entering water

- when vehicle and trailer are on ramp do not allow anyone to be behind trailer or in between trailer and vehicle unless necessary to operate winch. In this situation, put vehicle in park and apply parking brakes.
- do not allow anyone between the boat and dock.
- if driver needs to exit vehicle put in park, apply parking brakes and chock wheels.
- when backing in the water do it slowly especially if boat is on the trailer.
- when pulling boat out of the water do it slowly to avoid spinning the tires which can cause loss of traction sometimes causing vehicle and boat to slide back towards the water.
- when launching swing keel boat do not disconnect winch or safety chain until at least one third of the boat is over the water. Fixed keel boats should be at least half over the water before unclipping. This will help preventing damage to boat if it slides off the trailer.

- if a trailer has slick bunks due to lack of carpet, being treated with friction reduction spray or polymer strips, the boat should be touching the water before the clips are undone. The same applies to trailers with roller pad.
- when hauling boat out of water make sure winch is locked in place and safety chain is attached
- when operating a winch make sure it is locked into ratchet mode in the proper direction this will prevent it from free spinning. If a winch starts to free spin even for one turn Do Not try to grab or stop it, it can easily break your hand or arm.