

TOWING AND LAUNCHING BOATS FROM TRAILERS AND TRUCKS



When towing and launching a boat, be careful about connecting the trailer, placing and securing the boat on the trailer, road and weather conditions, overhead wires, traffic, parking, and launch procedure.

Hazard: Poor Road or Weather Conditions

Details

- Poor weather or road conditions can be even more hazardous when you are towing a trailer and there is a potential for jack-knifing or fishtailing
- When you add a trailer to a vehicle, you increase your stopping distance

Threat

- Severe injuries or death to a person towing or to other motorists
- Damage to property

Safe Work Guidelines

- Be aware of current and potential weather and road conditions
- Reduce your speed and follow other safe driving practices to compensate for poor road and weather conditions
- Leave extra space for braking and stopping

Hazard: Faulty Hitching and Connections

Details

- The trailer must be securely fastened to the towing vehicle or it may become separated
- Indicator lights may not be working

Threat

- Severe injuries or death to a person towing or to other motorists
- Damage to property

Safe Work Guidelines

- Make sure that the ball is the correct size for the socket on the trailer
- Inspect the ball and socket for cracks, flaws and corrosion – replace them if there are problems
- Inspect the locking device to make sure it is in good working order – replace it if there are problems

- Inspect and connect all safety chains – replace them if links are broken or corroded
- Inspect and clean all electrical connections
- Do a circle check of both the vehicle and the trailer using a standard checklist to make sure that all indicators are working and that the vehicle and trailer are in good repair
- If your load is more than 8ft. wide (2.6m), apply for appropriate permits and use a wide load sign
- Ensure that you load is not more than 13.5 feet high (4.15 metres)
- If you haul more than 4,500 kg, arrange for a safety inspection of your truck and trailer once a year
- If the hauling weight of the truck and trailer combined is more than 1,360 kg, ensure the you trailer has brakes
- Be sure that the trailer is rated properly for the size of boat you are hauling
- Secure the boat to the trailer using straps that are no more than 10 feet apart; the rated load of straps must equal the weight of the load (e.g., if a strap is capable of holding 3,000 lb. and your boat weighs 6,000 lb., you must have at least 2 straps)
- Tie both the bowline eye and transom to the trailer

Hazard: Improper Seating and Securing

Details

- The boat must be seated correctly and secured on the trailer or it may fall off the trailer

Threat

- Severe injuries or death to a person towing or to other motorists
- Damage to property

Safe Work Guidelines

- Make sure that the straps are not frayed or otherwise damaged – replace them if you suspect that they cannot hold the boat securely to the trailer
- Make sure that the boat is seated properly on the trailer
- Make sure that the straps are tight enough to ensure that the boat is securely strapped to the trailer

Hazard: Overhead Lines

Details

- May come into contact with masts, antennas, radar arches, and other parts of the boat

Threat

- Electrocution
- Burns
- Death

Safe Work Guidelines

- Make sure that you have adequate clearance from overhead lines before you enter an area
- If overhead lines come into contact with the vehicle, boat, or trailer, do not leave the vehicle – call for help

Hazard: Unsafe Parking

Details

- The vehicle may move while you are launching the boat

Threat

- Injury
- Death

Safe Work Guidelines

- Make sure that the parking brake is on in the vehicle
- Put chocks in front of or behind the tires to prevent the vehicle from rolling

Hazard: Traffic

Details

- People or vehicles may move in or into the launch area

Threat

- Sever injuries

Safe Work Guidelines

- Do not launch a boat without having a spotter present

Hazard: Damaged Launching Ramps

Details

- May cause the boat to bounce or jump off the trailer
- Floating debris in the ramp area may get trapped between the boat and the trailer causing the boat to get stuck on the trailer

Threat

- Injury
- Death

Safe Work Guidelines

- Before launching the boat, walk around the ramp doing a visual inspection for damage or debris

Hazard: Loose Lines and Straps

Details

- Can catch on the boat, people, or sides of the ramp
- Might get caught in the propeller when trying to move boat off the trailer and away from the ramp

Threat

- Injury
- Death

Safe Work Guidelines

- Do a circle check of the boat and trailer to make sure that all lines and straps are cleared and stowed before launching the boat

Hazard: Water

Details

- The boat may drift in the wind, causing you to lose your balance and footing and fall into the water

Threat

- Crushing or pinching injury
- Drowning

Safe Work Guidelines

- Wear an approved personal flotation device (PFD) and shoes with slip-resistant soles
- Do not use any part of your body to control or steer the boat while launching it
- Do not lean over the boat

Hazard: Missing Drain Plug

Details

- Missing drain plugs can cause the boat to fill with water and sink

Threat

- Drowning

Safe Work Guidelines

- Make sure that the drain plug is securely in place before launching the boat

Hazard: Boat Falling

Details

- If it is not properly blocked, the boat can tip over

Threat

- Crushing injuries
- Death

Safe Work Guidelines

- Block the boat at the proper locations underneath
 - One stand every 15 feet or every 10 feet for a heavier boat
 - Stands evenly distributed on both sides of the boat
 - One block supporting the boat on the keep right under the bulkhead – just past the windshield
 - One block on both sides under the transom

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