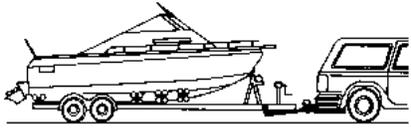


## **SAFETY TIPS FOR TRAILERING YOUR BOAT.**



Choose the proper trailer for your boat. More damage can be done to a boat by the stresses of road travel than by normal operation. A boat hull is designed to be supported evenly by water. When transported on a trailer, your boat should be supported structurally as evenly across the hull as possible. This will allow for even distribution of the weight of the hull, engine and equipment. It should be long enough to support the whole length of the hull but short enough to allow the lower unit of the boat's engine to extend freely.

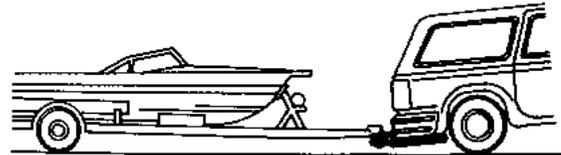
- Rollers and bolsters must be kept in good condition to prevent scratching and gouging of the hull.
- Tie-downs and lower unit supports must be adjusted properly to prevent the boat from bouncing on the trailer. The bow eye on the boat should be secured with either a rope, chain or turnbuckle in addition to the winch cable. Additional straps may be required across the beam of the boat.
- The capacity of the trailer should be greater than the combined weight of the boat, motor, and equipment. The tow vehicle must be capable of handling the weight of the trailer, boat, equipment, as well as the weight of the passengers and equipment which will be carried inside. This may require that the tow vehicle may need to be specially equipped with a(n):
  - \* Engine of adequate power.
  - \* Transmission designed for towing.

- \* Larger cooling systems for the engine and transmission.
- \* Heavy duty brakes.
- \* Load bearing hitch attached to the frame, not the bumper. (Check your vehicle owner's manual for specific information.)

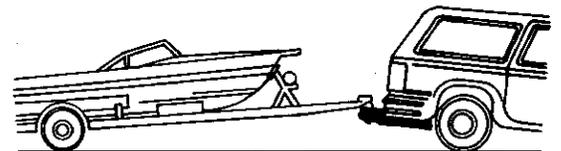
## **Check Before You Go Out On The Highway**

- The tow ball and coupler are the same size and bolts with washers are tightly secured. (The vibration of road travel can loosen them.)
- The coupler is completely over the ball and the latching mechanism is locked.
- The trailer is loaded evenly from front to rear as well as side to side.

*Too much weight on the hitch will cause the rear wheels of the tow vehicle to drag and may make steering more difficult.*

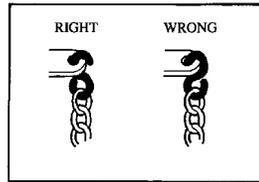
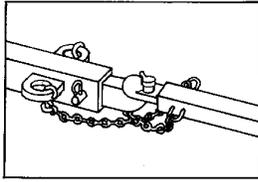


*Too much weight on the rear of the trailer will cause the trailer to "fishtail" and may reduce traction or even lift the rear wheels of the tow vehicle off the ground.*



- The safety chains are attached crisscrossing under the coupler to the frame of the tow vehicle. If the ball were to break, the trailer would follow

in a straight line and prevent the coupler from dragging on the road.



- The lights on the trailer function properly.
- Check the brakes. On a level parking area roll forward and apply the brakes several times at increasing speeds to determine a safe stopping distance.
- The side view mirrors are large enough to provide an unobstructed rear view on both sides of the vehicle.
- Check tires (including spare) and wheel bearings. Improper inflation may cause difficulty in steering. When trailer wheels are immersed in water (especially salt water), the bearings should be inspected and greased after each use.
- Make certain water from rain or cleaning has been removed from the boat. Water weighs approximately four pounds per gallon and can add weight that will shift with the movement of the trailer.

### **Towing Precautions.**

- Allow more time to brake, accelerate, pass, and stop.
- Remember the turning radius is also much greater, curbs and roadside barriers must be given a wide berth when negotiating corners.
- Prior to operating on the open road, practice turning, backing up, etc. on a level uncongested parking area.

### **Pre-Launching Preparations.**

For the courtesy of others and to prevent rushing, prepare your boat for launching away from the ramp.

- Check the boat to ensure no damage was caused by the trip.
- Raise the lower unit (remove supports) to proper height for launching so it will not hit bottom.
- Remove tie-downs and make sure the winch is properly attached to the bow eye and locked in position.
- Put the drain plug in securely.
- Disconnect the trailer lights to prevent shorting of electrical system or burning out a bulb.
- Attach a line to the bow and the stern of the boat so the boat cannot drift away after launching and it can be easily maneuvered to docking area.
- Visually inspect the launch ramp for hazards such as a steep drop off, slippery area and sharp objects.

When everything has been double checked, proceed slowly to the ramp remembering that your boat is just resting on the trailer and attached only at the bow. The ideal situation is to have one person in the boat and one observer at the water's edge to help guide the driver of the tow vehicle.

### **Launching.**

- Keep the rear wheels of the tow vehicle out of the water. This will generally keep the exhaust pipes out of the water. If the exhaust pipes become immersed in the water, the engine may stall.
- Set the parking brake and place tire chocks behind rear wheels.

- Make sure someone else on shore is holding the lines attached to the boat.
- Lower the motor and prepare to start the engine (after running blowers and checking for fuel leaks).
- Start the boat motor and make sure water is passing through the engine cooling system.
- Release the winch and disconnect the winch line from the bow when the boat operator is ready.

Since your boat may be sitting on its trailer for quite some time before it is used again, it is important to store it properly. To avoid damage from sun and weather, cover the boat with a tarp. To remove weight from the wheels, put cinderblocks or wood beams under the tongue and all four corners of the trailer frame.

At this point, the boat should be able to be launched with a light shove or by backing off the trailer under power. Finish loading your boat at a sufficient distance from the ramp so others may use it.

### **Retrieval.**

The steps for removing your boat from the water are basically the reverse of those taken to launch it. However, keep in mind certain conditions may exist during retrieval that did not exist during launching. As you approach the takeout ramp, take special care to note such factors as:

- Change in wind direction and/or velocity.
- Change in current and/or tide.
- Increase in boating traffic.
- Visibility, etc.

First, unload the boat at dock or mooring if possible. Next, maneuver the boat carefully to the submerged trailer and raise the lower unit of the engine. Then, winch the boat onto the trailer and secure it. Finally, drive the trailer with boat aboard carefully out of the ramp to a designated parking area for cleanup, reloading, and an equipment safety check. Practice will make launch and retrieval a simple procedure. The best advice is just, "do it cautiously with safety as your main concern."

### **Storage.**