

Launch and recovery tips



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It is important to have a plan and a set routine with a checklist that encompasses the order of tasks, as well as things that are too extensive to just remember. Sunscreen, beach towels, wallet, boat keys, sunglasses, camera, life jackets, water skis are just a few things that will be on your master checklist.

There is often a line at launches, so be considerate, and launch quickly and efficiently. You can use the parking area to get ready to launch. When you go to actually launch your boat, you should be launching it, not loading or fiddling with the engine.

If bringing along guests, brief them on where to go and what tasks to do. Children and pets should be supervised by an adult at all times, away from the launch ramp. Ensure you stop young children and pets from playing or loitering on a boat launch ramp - this is a roadway that transitions into a waterway. NEVER let children or pets play or be unattended at a boat launch ramp.

Steps to a safe launch

- Unplug the trailer towing light assembly from the vehicle's electrical system. Put the drain plug in the boat. This is very important!
- Undo and stow the hold down straps, but leave the winch hook in the bow eye. Have your dock lines and fenders ready to go for immediate use.
- Back the trailer slowly down the ramp – ideally a two person job – one driving and one spotter.
- How far to back the boat trailer into the water depends on many factors, but a good rule of thumb is until the water is just above the hubs on the trailer. Be careful about backing in too far otherwise the tow vehicle might become stuck.

- Ensure your parking brake is on before leaving the vehicle and lower the lower unit (for boats with outboard and inboard-outboard engines).
- Ensure no-one is near the engine before starting it and that no person or boat is in your path before you put the boat in reverse. Pay attention to currents, wind and waves that can easily pull your boat off course and into a collision course with another boat or dock.
- Make sure the engine is in the water and start the engine. Once it's running, undo the winch hook from the bow eye, and back the boat out of the trailer. For smaller boats, you can just push the boat out while holding a mooring line.
- Secure the boat to the dock. Tie the mooring lines to cleats on the dock. Use fenders to prevent the hull from being scratched.
- Slowly pull the vehicle out. Boat ramps can be slippery with moss and algae and it is important to not let the vehicles tires to spin. If your tow vehicle is equipped with four-wheel drive, this can be useful if your back tyres start spinning.
- Once the boat is afloat and secured to the dock, drive the vehicle back up the ramp and park it in the designated parking area.
- Make sure that you have pushed away several feet from the boat dock before driving away, so that your stern has ample room to turn the boat without scraping the boat alongside of the dock.
- When pulling away from the dock, it is important to understand that unlike a car, the stern of the boat is pushed to one side or the other, whereas a car's pivot point is in the front.
- Do not turn the boat steering wheel in the opposite direction of the dock. Hitting the throttle with the boat just few inches from the dock will cause your engine's outdrive to push your boat right into the dock and damaging.



Further information

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Out of office hours phone **01227 781 879**

**In an emergency, dial 999 or 112 and ask
for the Coastguard**

canterbury.gov.uk/coast