

# BOAT RAMP ETIQUETTE

A GUIDE TO ASSIST BOAT OWNERS IN THE PROPER ETIQUETTE FOR LAUNCHING AND RETRIEVING VESSELS

## Back at the ramp

The preferred method of retrieving a vessel is by winching onto the trailer. Driving onto a trailer has the potential for damage to the vessel but more importantly, undermines the ramp concrete pad resulting in damage and often rendering boat ramps unserviceable, leaving large holes just off the concrete area.

If your ramp provides wash down facilities it is recommended that you flush your engine and wash the trailer's running gear. Remember that others will wish to use the facilities and you should be as quick as possible. Also remember that water is a precious commodity and you should use it sparingly. Once you have washed your vessel move away from the cleaning bay.

Make a last check of your vessel and trailer couplings before moving off.

When you get home always remember to check your safety equipment and give it a clean before storing ready for the next trip.



Info Line on **13 12 56**  
[www.maritime.nsw.gov.au](http://www.maritime.nsw.gov.au)

Maritime is a division of Roads and Maritime Services.

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Recreational boating is a wonderful activity for families and friends to enjoy in their leisure time together. Whether it is fishing, water-skiing or sailing, more and more people are enjoying the beautiful waterways of NSW.

It is estimated that some 1.5 million people statewide get out in some form of boat each year.

A good day on the water, however, can be spoilt by a lack of boat ramp etiquette. This refers to someone who has insufficient consideration for other ramp users, isn't prepared and takes too long to either launch or retrieve a vessel.

By applying care, courtesy and commonsense – known as the 3 Cs – launching and retrieving vessels becomes a simple, quick and safe process. Here are a few tips:

## At home

- Check all safety equipment is on board the vessel including suitable lifejackets for everyone.
- Check the battery is secure and fully charged.
- If possible run the motor for a short time to ensure ease of starting.
- Check the vessel is properly secured to the trailer.
- Check to ensure the trailer is properly connected to the car.
- Check the fuel level to ensure you have enough.

## Near the boat ramp

- Park well clear of the ramp in an area where you are not blocking traffic.
- Remove all the items you may be carrying in the car that you want to take with you and store them neatly in the boat. Remember to keep them well clear of where the driver and passengers need to stand or walk.
- If needed, turn the battery master switch on.
- Ensure keys are in vessel ignition.
- Raise the engine and remove the travel lock and/or leg support.
- Remember to pump the fuel bulb to get fuel to the engine.
- Remove and store vessel tie-down straps.
- Connect the winch handle to the trailer winch, or locate in a suitable easy-to-access position.
- Remember to have a painter or bow rope connected and ready for use.
- Don't forget the bungs.

## Ready to launch

- Move your vehicle into the line waiting to launch.
- Have your lifejackets handy, and make sure all children are wearing one. For more information on lifejacket rules, visit [www.lifejacketwearit.com.au](http://www.lifejacketwearit.com.au).
- When your turn arrives, move to the ramp and reverse the trailer into the water.
- Disconnect the safety chain.
- Disconnect the winch brake, and under control, push the vessel into the water using the bow rope to maintain control. Move to the side of the ramp or jetty if one is available.

## Alternatively:

- If a driver is aboard, lower the engine, remembering to be careful not to lower too far to avoid striking the ramp.
- Start the engine and after being pushed from the trailer, manoeuvre away from the ramp to your pickup point.



Remember to avoid damage and control what your vessel is doing at all times, particularly if other vessels are also being launched or retrieved.

- Once the vessel is clear of the trailer, immediately move your vehicle to the designated car park area.
- Remember to secure your vehicle and never leave valuables inside.

## Ready to retrieve

Retrieving your vessel is simply applying the launch principles in reverse. Once again, care, courtesy and commonsense need to be applied.

- Before moving your vehicle always check to ensure the trailer hasn't been tampered with and that it is properly secured to your vehicle.
- Make sure the winch rope is played out sufficiently to reach the vessel winch eye and have the winch handle close by.
- Position your vehicle and trailer ready to retrieve the boat.
- Winch the vessel into position and secure the winch brake.
- Connect the safety chain.
- Tow the vessel to a safe area away from the ramp, ensuring you don't impede the traffic flow.
- Resecure the tie-down straps and all safety equipment.
- Raise the motor and apply the tow lock or leg support.
- Turn off any master switch and/or radios.