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Launch in 60 Seconds

Nothing raises the level of frustration for an experienced boater more than a trip to the launch ramp. The reason, of course, is that so many boaters are clueless as to how to get on and off the ramp quickly. Next time you have a few minutes on your hands, grab a cold one and hang out at a ramp for some pure entertainment. You'll see action, comedy, and maybe even some random violence.

For our sake, as well as yours, we'd rather you not become a bit player in these ramp-side dramas. With just a little preparation and common sense, we can show you how a knowledgeable boater and tow vehicle driver can get on and off the ramp in under 60 seconds.

Don't think it's possible? Start the clock.

SPEED BUNKS

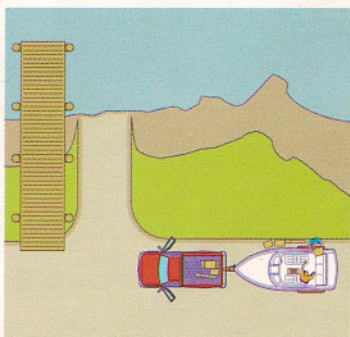
Bunk trailers give good support because they make so much contact with the hull. Which is the same reason why boats often resist sliding off them—too much surface friction. To make launching and retrieval easier try Marykate's Liquid Rollers, for about \$10. It's a clear silicone-based lubricant that keeps bunks as slippery as ice. We spray it on after every fourth launching.

ZAPPED

Trailer lightbulbs are notorious for breaking when the highly heated bulbs are introduced to a cold dunking. It's called thermal shock, and you can avoid it by unplugging your trailer lights while in the launch prep area. Or upgrade to sealed LEDs, which are more impervious to the sudden transition.

STEP

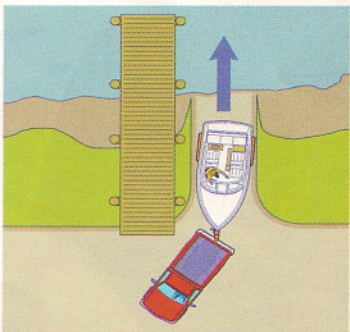
1



Get ready. The key to getting on and off the ramp quickly is getting the boat and rig ready before it's your turn to back down the ramp. Pull into the designated prep area, or a quiet section of the parking lot, and load everything aboard you plan to take with you. Also, make sure the boat starts. The best place to do this is at home with the engine attached to a flush hose. Starting the boat at home also makes certain that you won't find yourself on the ramp without the key or safety lanyard.

STEP

2

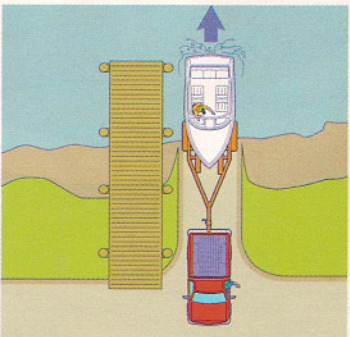


Down the ramp. With the safety chains removed, and the winch strap loose, wait for the ramp to become free. Then move into position. The boat driver should be at the helm with the blower on. The car driver should back down the ramp until the boat is deep enough in the water to start and set the parking brake. The boat driver then unhooks the winch strap and starts the engine.

Elapsed time: 30 seconds.

STEP

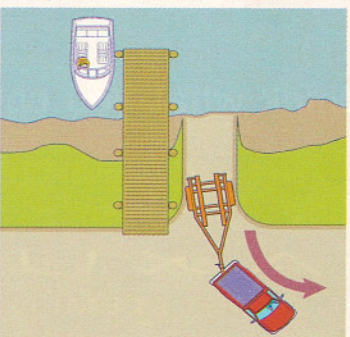
3



Move the boat away. With the engine running smoothly enough that it won't stall when shifted into reverse, the boat driver backs the boat away from the trailer, and pulls out of the launching area. Meanwhile, the car driver waits until the boat is safely clear of the trailer, then shifts into drive and pulls up the ramp's incline. Briefly hesitating before the ramp levels out allows any water in the trailer's tubing to drain away. *Elapsed time: 45 seconds.*

STEP

4



Park and go. The boat driver now brings the boat to the opposite side of the dock, so that others may use the clear ramp. If another ramp adjoins the dock, motor away from the immediate launch area, then return to the dock once your crew is waiting. If you're driving the tow vehicle, quickly clear the lane, pull out of the launch area and proceed to the parking lot.

Elapsed time: 60 seconds.

Once you've parked, stroll back to the dock and climb aboard.