

Trailer: It's a skill that needs to be practiced

([PRWEB](#)) August 15, 2005 -- Ever spend some time at the boat ramp? It can evoke all the emotions of the theatre. Pathos, humor, drama, action, and a whole lot of the "World's funniest video" thrown in for good measure.

Why do many people make the boat ramp a day's entertainment, at rock bottom prices? Because many boaters just don't practice, don't plan, and don't expect the unexpected.

Practice

To do something well, you need to practice. Whether it's playing the piano, using your jig saw to cut a straight line or backing up a boat on a trailer, you need to practice the skills that will make you an impresario.

And, if you took piano lessons as I did, I'm sure you heard your teacher say, "It takes more than one time." This of course was in response to your emphatic statement that you played it once!

Pick a large parking lot and set-up cones or empty plastic garbage pails and practice backing into a "spot". This spot could be a parking spot or the side of a boat ramp. In either case, you need to be able to control your vehicle and trailer to make an effortless entry into the ramp, and then releasing your boat.

Planning

Plan each step of your boat launch, before you leave your driveway. Do you have new crew with you? If so, spend some time with them so they know exactly what will happen at the boat ramp, and what is required of each of them. It is a great idea to perform this in an out of the way place (not on the ramp itself), so your tires and bearings cool down before entering the water.

Make sure you've prepared the boat before you head down the ramp, by removing the tie-downs, placing lines in the appropriate places, and double-checking your sea-cock and drain plug. Make sure your crew knows exactly where they will walk the boat, and remember to secure the boat to the dock, so it doesn't float away.

Safety

Every step of the way, during planning, during practice, and especially during execution, you need to be ever mindful of safety. Remember the safety chain (making sure it's either secured when trailering or unsecured at the bottom of the launch ramp, as determined by what you are doing). And don't let your crew get behind the boat and trailer, or between the boat and the dock.

Before you leave home, make sure you check your tires, and hubs/bearings. Make sure they are greased, filled and in good working condition. Also make sure to check your lights and your breaks. Remember, a safe trip is the best trip.

Courtesy and Common Sense

It never hurts to be courteous to your fellow boaters. These people are a great resource while you and your boat are in the water or at the ramp.

You've heard of road rage. There is also "ramp rage." Don't hog the ramp. Don't hog the parking



lot. Don't tie up the wash station. If everyone shows a little courtesy, the process of unloading and loading of all the boats will go smoothly and safely.

Last and certainly not least, use common sense. Don't use your hands and feet, or life jackets, to fend the boat off from the dock. Use high quality fenders instead. You're your cool, even if someone cuts in line. Any confrontations isn't worth the trouble.

To learn more about trailering and boating safety, why not take a boating safety course? For more information about safe boating courses, why not contact the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary at www.cgaux.org or call 1-877-875-6296.

The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary is the uniformed volunteer component of Team Coast Guard. Founded in 1939 by an Act of Congress as the US Coast Guard Reserves and re-designated the Auxiliary in 1941. The 31,000 volunteer members (men and women) donate thousands of hours in support of Coast Guard missions.

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