

Part 1--- Launching the Vessel

- Prepare the vessel for launch in an area not to impede ramp access for other boaters.
- Be sure the drain plug is properly installed and motor is trimmed up.
- Position vehicle straight at the top of the ramp to make backing less difficult.
- Back the vessel down slowly to the water line.
- Remove the winch strap from the bow eye.
- Continue down the ramp until the boat is ready to be floated off.
- Place vehicle in park and apply parking brake.

At this point, there are several ways to continue, and this is where the hands-on training begins. Whether alone, or with the help of another individual, learning how to safely get the boat off the trailer is a crucial learning point in vessel safety. Also, now is the time to learn and practice launch etiquette.

Part 2--- Vessel Maneuvering

- Always wear a life jacket and have a kill switch attached.
- Monitor surroundings at all times.
- Check for other vessels or obstructions that could prevent safe departure.
- Be mindful of wind and current when departing.
- Once it is determined that there is no danger, the vessel is ready to get underway.

The operator is now ready for the hands-on maneuvering training. Once underway, the operator will: learn safe idling speed for departing and approaching ramps, docks and other no wake zones. Practice getting the vessel on a plane and trimming the motor for optimum maneuverability. Execute turns and understand how the vessel responds to each type of turn at various speeds. Learn what to expect in close quarters circumstances. Experience proper handling and safe navigation through and around aids such as channel markers, no wake zones, and bridges. Practice safe docking and tying off the vessel, as well as, efficient anchoring methods.

Part 3--- Loading Vessel onto Trailer

- Upon safe approach to dock, tie off vessel and retrieve the vehicle.
- Check surroundings for vehicular/pedestrian traffic.
- Back the trailer straight down the ramp to the water level needed to float the vessel onto the trailer.

Now, just like launching, there are several ways to proceed getting the vessel onto the trailer. The goal is to accomplish this in the safest and least time-consuming method depending on traffic. If the operator chooses to float the vessel on, then the motor should be trimmed before pulling the vessel out of the water. If the vessel is to be driven on, then the operator should leave the motor trimmed down until the winch is connected to the vessel and it is sitting in the desired position on the trailer. This will also be a hands-on scenario practicing both methods.

Launching and retrieving and proper operation of a vessel in a safe and efficient manner is imperative to overall boater's safety. Practicing proper etiquette and respect for fellow boaters should also always be followed. Safety is paramount when operating a vessel on any waterway.