



U.S. Army Corps
of Engineers
Little Rock District

News Release

Back to [News Release Index](#)

Release No. 29-05
Contact: P.J. Spaul
Phone: (501) 324-5551

BOAT LAUNCHING SAFETY

LITTLE ROCK, Ark., March 22 – The weather is warming, and boaters are headed to water after a winter hiatus. Some are buying new boats and are itching to try them. All boaters should review a few launching tips, especially since equipment may be untested and the water is still cold.

Look over your boat's mechanical condition and safety equipment before setting out. After you've launched is not the time to learn the motor won't start.

Also inspect your tow vehicle and trailer beforehand -- brakes, parking brake, transmission, tires, wheel bearings, etc. Mechanical failure can cause your vehicle and you to end up in the water.

Unhook tie-downs to prevent floating the trailer and vehicle with the boat. Use your mirrors and turn around to view behind you before backing down the ramp. Consider backing with the tow vehicle in neutral to prevent accidental acceleration.

Never leave children unattended in the vehicle or boat while you launch -- not for a second.

Cut your wheels sharply before getting out of the vehicle on the ramp to help prevent it from entering deep water if it accidentally rolls backward. Use your parking brake in addition to placing the transmission in park (place standard transmissions in gear and turn off engine).

Hook your boat to a tether so it doesn't drift away. If it does get free, do not swim to catch it. Wind can push the boat beyond your reach. Cold water (even on a warm spring day) can leave you unable to swim normally, and you can drown. Instead, enlist the aid of another boater to retrieve it. .

The US Army Corps of Engineers wants you to have a safe and enjoyable boating experience. Remember to always wear your life jacket when on the water. Your safety is our concern.