

# Boat Towing and Trailering Checklist

## Pre-Tow Checklist: Setting Up for a Safe Journey

Before you tow your boat, thorough preparation is critical. This section covers the essential checks for your trailer, tow vehicle, and boat to ensure a safe and smooth trip.

### 1. Trailer Lights:

Check brake lights, turn signals, tail lights, and side markers. Upgrade to LED lights, apply dielectric grease, and clean connectors.

### 2. Trailer Brakes:

Check brake fluid levels, seals, and brake pad wear. Follow manual for adjustments.

### 3. Tires:

Check pressure (cold), tread depth, sidewalls, and use ST trailer tires.

Example Sizes:

- ST205/75R14 (50-65 PSI)
- ST225/75R15 (65-80 PSI)
- ST235/80R16 (80-90 PSI)

### 4. Wheel Bearings:

Lubricate, check for noise/play, inspect seals, and test hub temperature.

### 5. Hitch and Coupler:

Ensure correct hitch ball size, secure coupler, trailer is level, safety chains are crossed and connected, and breakaway cable is attached.

### 6. Boat Security:

Tighten bow strap, attach transom tie-downs, stow loose gear, secure boat cover.

### 7. Outboard or Sterndrive:

Raise to avoid pavement contact, use a transom saver.

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### 8. Trailer Tongue Jack:

Retract and secure in travel position.

### 9. Tow Vehicle Mirrors:

Adjust for full trailer visibility.

### 10. Legal Compliance:

Confirm trailer brakes, permits for wide loads, and current registration. Carry BoatUS membership for roadside help.

## **Pre-Launch Checklist: Preparing to Hit the Water**

At the ramp, complete the following:

1. Drain Plug: Install and check.

2. Trailer Lights: Disconnect and secure plugs.

3. Battery Switch: Turn on.

4. Outboard/Sterndrive: Lower and remove brackets.

5. Tie-Downs: Remove all but bow strap.

6. Dock Lines/Fenders: Attach before launch.

### 7. Equipment Check:

Life jackets, extinguisher, bilge pump, radio, nav lights.

8. Passenger Briefing: Emergency procedures and safety.

9. Additional:

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Raise antennas/Bimini. Run blower or prime fuel bulb.

## **Retrieval and Trailing Home: Securing for the Return Trip**

After boating, follow these steps:

### **1. Prepare the Boat:**

Raise engine, lower antennas/Bimini, remove drain plug.

### **2. Load the Boat:**

Back trailer, align boat, attach bow strap and chain, check hull position.

### **3. Secure the Boat:**

Reattach straps, install engine bracket, stow gear/cover.

### **4. Trailer Checks:**

Reconnect lights, inspect tires/bearings/hitch, tighten lug nuts.

### **5. Clean and Maintain:**

Rinse boat/trailer, flush engine, remove plant material.