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## Boat Ramp Etiquette

During peak boating season the ramps are crowded and people are anxious to get on the water. If you're an avid boater, chances are you've seen tempers flare between fellow boaters competing for a spot on the boat ramp. Spare yourself and others the unnecessary frustrations at the boat ramp by following these simple ramp etiquette do's and don'ts.

**DO use the staging area.** The best way to avoid congestion at the boat ramp is to make all of your final preparations before entering the ramp lanes.

**DO mount your navigation lights before you approach the ramp.** If you plan to launch when it's still dark outside, it's important to make sure your navigation lights are working to improve your visibility to other boaters.

**DO respect the traffic lines.** During peak season, it is not uncommon for popular boat ramps to fill up quickly. Approach the ramp with caution and be sure to respect the flow of other boaters making their way to the ramp.

**DO bring a friend.** Having an extra person who is familiar with the process of launching a boat can make a huge difference at the boat ramp. One person can stay with the boat while the other stays with the vehicle.

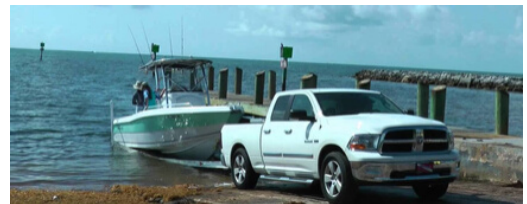
**DO turn off your headlights while getting into position at the boat ramp.** Backing into position requires the use of your mirrors to approach the water. If other boaters are approaching other lanes beside you, it's almost impossible for them to see where they are going with headlights pointing straight at them.



**DON'T load or prep your boat in the ramp lane.** We can't drive this point home enough. All final preparations should be completed before ever approaching the ramp.

**DON'T socialize while at the ramp.** If the ramp is packed, this is not the time to catch up with friends or other boaters. Focus on getting on or off the water first, then you can meet up and talk to your heart's content.

**DON'T hog the ramp.** Some boat ramps have designated lanes marked by curbs or dividers but many boat ramps do not. If you're using a ramp without designated lanes, be courteous to those around you by allowing adequate space for others to launch or retrieve their boats at the same time.



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**DON'T park your boat in the way of others trying to use the boat ramp.** Many boat ramp areas feature courtesy docks to retrieve passengers before setting off. Try to avoid tying up your boat here, as it will prevent the person behind you from launching their boat into the water. These areas should be reserved for quick approaches to pick up and drop off other passengers.



**DON'T tie-up to other people's boats without first asking for permission.** When the boat ramp is packed, it might be difficult to find a spot to pick up other passengers or to temporarily tie-up while parking your vehicle. It might seem harmless to tie-up to someone else's boat for a few minutes before setting off, but this can really rub people the wrong way if they didn't give you permission to do so. If you need to tie onto someone's boat, be respectful by asking them first and ensure your fenders are appropriately spaced to prevent any damage.

**DON'T power load your boat back onto your trailer while at the ramp.** When retrieving a boat from the water, avoid slamming the throttle down in an effort to snug your boat up against the edge of your trailer. The propeller wash from power loading can erode sediment just beyond the boat ramp. This creates a big hole over time that can damage trailers or cause trailer tires to get stuck. To prevent this, just approach your trailer at a normal loading speed and use the winch cable to pull your boat the rest of the way onto the trailer.

