

## Boat transport

### Trailer Loading

If this is your first tour, you may not be familiar with rigging and derigging boats and loading the trailer. Even if your club is not supplying boats, you will need to help to unload the trailer(s) and prepare the boats when you arrive at the start point and load them again at the end of the tour. It's everyone's responsibility – don't assume that the tour organisers will do it for you!

### Preparing the boats for transport

1. Remove the riggers. You will need a 10 mm spanner for this, and you **MUST** replace the nuts and washers after you have taken the riggers off and tighten them with a spanner so that don't work off during transit. It's a good idea to put them in the shoes or on top of the hatch covers while you are working so that you don't lose them. If a backstay is included on a rigger, remember to tighten the top nut for transit. Make sure that the riggers have some identification so you know which riggers go with which boat and in what position. Coloured electrical tape is ideal – 4 stripes on the stroke riggers, 3 stripes on position 3, 2 on position 2 and 1 on bow. Do the gates up and ideally tie the riggers together in sets so it's easier to load and unload them.
2. Make sure the footplates are securely screwed down and straps fastened. Remember that things have a habit of shaking themselves loose when the trailer is bouncing along the motorway and you won't be able to row the boat with a missing footplate!
3. Either fasten the seats down or remove them – you don't want to lose these either! Some boats have bungee cords that hook onto the slides - but have a place to put them when not in use or you will lose them
4. Make sure you have all the rudders, cox's seat (if it comes off) and enough sculls or oars for all the boats, plus a couple of spare ones in case of accidents, and any boat hooks, paddles or other equipment you might need. Light items, such as buoyancy aids, are better transported in vehicles as they might get blown off the trailer.

### Loading the trailer

1. Have a plan for the load which ensures the weight is distributed evenly over the axle(s) so that the required nose weight on the tow ball is achieved, the overhang at the rear is within limits and the load clears the back and roof of the towing vehicle - allow for tight turns and hills. See [British Rowing RowSafe](#) for regulations and how to check nose weight, which varies with the towing vehicle and the height of the towball if towing a twin axle trailer.
2. Load the equipment box in accordance with your plan e.g. riggers one end blades the other. Remember space for trestles, rudders, paddles etc. Put very light items in a vehicle as they are likely to blow off in transit.
3. Lay the sculls or oars in tidily so they stack well and tie them together so they don't slide around when the trailer is moving. Put riggers in sets and secure them also.
4. Place trestles, rudders, paddles and any other equipment in remaining space.

5. Decide which boat is going on which rack of the trailer. If the trailer isn't going to be full, use the lower racks to avoid it being top-heavy.
6. Load the boats starting at the top and working downwards, with the bows pointing forwards (towards the towing vehicle). Tie each one down before you load the next one, making sure the bows of the boats align with the plan to achieve the required nose weight. Ensure the sides of the boats are not tight against the trailer uprights as they will chafe in transit and cause damage to the boat.
7. If possible, remove and load the boats from the side of the trailer, not end-on, as this may cause damage to the splash-guard (V section at the bow end) and/or the cox's seat if it is caught on a trailer arm.
8. Ensure that you have sufficient people to lift the boats. There should be ONE PERSON issuing commands to ensure that everyone lifts at the same time. Take great care that nobody's fingers are trapped between the boat and the trailer arm.
9. When tying the boats down, run the boat tie underneath the trailer arm next to the upright stanchion and tight against side of the boat, pass both ends over the boat and underneath the arm on the outside edge. Fasten the buckle as tightly as possible, making sure that the buckle is not against the hull of the boat to avoid scratching the paintwork. **DO NOT RUN THE TIE ROUND THE STANCHION OR WRAP IT AROUND THE SUPPORT ARM BEFORE TIGHTENING THE BUCKLE AS IT WILL WORK LOOSE IN TRANSPORT.** Extra tension can be achieved by wrapping the free end after the buckle around the two straps over the boat and drawing tight before tying off and wrapping any spare around the trailer arm to avoid the loose end flapping about - see diagram.
10. Tie a red flag or piece of red and white tape onto the stern of the boats to act as a warning to following traffic.
11. Check that everything is secure. Then check it again.

#### **At the end of a tour**

1. Check that you have YOUR boats on your trailer, together with their riggers, rudders, blades and any other loose items. You do not want to be driving to the other end of the country to return other clubs' equipment which has been loaded in error!

#### **Trailer Driving**

You should read [this guidance](#) in British Rowing's RowSafe

***The trailer driver is legally responsible for the security and safety of the load so must ensure the loading is correct and always personally check that it is securely fastened.***

