



# Happy Trails While Trailering - Part I

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Back on May 16th, we wrote about commissioning (making ready) the boat for the summer months. And you may recall that we started with making sure that the trailer was capable of safely transporting your boat from the driveway to the boat ramp. This column expands considerably on that, now that the summer is in full swing! Since this is a topic that can take up lots of space just due to safety precautions, this is part I of a two-part series...

## Safety First!

I have an uncle that drives his boat pretty hard - WOT (Wide Open Throttle) and dead-stop are his two favorite speeds. As you might expect, the boat is wearing out around him from stress and strain. When he complained to me about it, I said, "If you constantly drove your brand-new car at full speed over a bumpy road, would you be surprised that it might start to shake loose?" He said, "Hmm..."

Well, that started me thinking about trailering - when you are driving your boat over many types of road (how about those winter-created potholes?) at relatively high speeds... Stresses from over-the-road travel can be more punishing than normal operation. A boat is designed to sit in water, along her waterline. While the manufacturer may even put some markings along the waterline that say "trailer strap goes

here", nothing "extra" is there - it is simply a mathematical recommendation about the weight displacement of the boat. And that is before you added all that gear... (see SSP, 5/23/07, "We all Get Heavier With Age - Including Our Boats!") So, trailering is, by its nature, more stressful on the boat than riding at anchor...

So, start with making sure that what the boat sits on isn't adding to the stress. You don't want your rollers or bunkers stressing, scratching or gouging the hull. Make sure that the tie-downs (and engine support) do not permit the boat to bounce on the trailer. How can you be sure? Well, you aren't going to be able to lift the boat up to see - too heavy by far. Unfortunately, the only way to be sure is by testing... Have someone follow you over a course and watch the boat. Speed limit only! If any air shows, stop and adjust the straps. Then, once all is secure, make some marks or apply some tell-tales so you can consistently have the boat sit snugly on her trailer.

But first - be sure she is sitting properly in the first place! What does that mean? No more than 7%-10% of the total weight of the boat should be on the trailer "tongue" - the part that attaches the ball and coupler together. This means that a 3,000 pound boat, including engine, cooler, etc, can have no more than 210lbs to 300lbs on the

tongue. Well, how do you tell that!? You'll need a couple of bathroom scales and a strong friend. Each of you stand on the scale(s) while lifting the tongue together. Note the combined weight. Step off, weigh yourselves and subtract... if that comes to more than 300 lbs, the boat is too far forward. If it is less than that, it is too far aft. Why is that important? Well, too much weight at the back (too light at the front), will tend to pry your car's rear tires up. Less traction than designed by the manufacturer! Too much weight on the tongue (too heavy at the front), will tend to pry your car's front tires up. Less steering control than designed by the manufacturer! Neither is going to be good for you...

## The car must be properly configured:

- Engine of adequate power.
- Transmission designed for towing.
- Larger cooling systems for the engine and transmission.
- Heavy duty brakes.
- Load bearing hitch attached to the frame, not the bumper.

The tow ball and coupler must be the same size, exactly. The boat may be properly secured to the trailer but the trailer has to be properly secured to your car or you may see her pass you on the highway...

The safety chains are attached and crisscrossed under the coupler to the frame of the tow vehicle. If the ball and

coupler were to break apart, the trailer would fall into the chains, which now are a safety net.

## Underway, Making Way...

Now you're ready to go. Before going too far, be sure that the lights on the trailer function properly. Remember, each time you come up that boat ramp, your lights have been in (cold) salt water. As have your brakes - so check them too. Drive forward and apply the brakes several times at increasing speeds to determine a safe stopping distance.

Check tires (including spare) and wheel bearings for proper inflation - and remember that the trailer tires are likely to be far smaller than the car or truck tires. This means that they will be spinning faster just to stay in place. Faster equals more stress on the bearings. And don't forget that the aft-most set of tires will be in salt water at least twice a day when you go boating!

Well, that will get you thinking. The next column will be on things to think about at the launch ramp...!

BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at USCGAUX2007@aol.com or go direct to MaryJo Cruickshank, who is in charge of new members matters, at FSO-PS@emcg.us and we will help you "get in this thing..."

Moriches Inlet Tide Table June 40.7650°N, 72.7533° W					
Day	High	Low	High	Low	High
Fri 1		1:55 AM/0.10 ft	7:56 AM/2.67 ft	1:47 PM/0.36 ft	8:05 PM/3.41 ft
Sat 2		2:36 AM/0.08 ft	8:35 AM/2.65 ft	2:27 PM/0.38 ft	8:41 PM/3.37 ft
Sun 3		3:16 AM/0.08 ft	9:16 AM/2.62 ft	3:07 PM/0.41 ft	9:20 PM/3.32 ft
Mon 4		3:55 AM/0.10 ft	10:00 AM/2.61 ft	3:46 PM/0.45 ft	10:05 PM/3.26 ft
Tue 5		4:35 AM/0.13 ft	10:50 AM/2.64 ft	4:29 PM/0.50 ft	10:55 PM/3.20 ft
Wed 6		5:18 AM/0.16 ft	11:42 AM/2.72 ft	5:21 PM/0.56 ft	11:49 PM/3.13 ft
Thu 7		6:07 AM/0.18 ft	12:35 PM/2.85 ft	6:26 PM/0.59 ft	
Fri 8	12:44 AM/3.06 ft	7:03 AM/0.17 ft	1:28 PM/3.01 ft	7:41 PM/0.55 ft	
Sat 9	1:42 AM/2.99 ft	8:03 AM/0.13 ft	2:24 PM/3.20 ft	8:52 PM/0.42 ft	
Sun 10	2:43 AM/2.92 ft	9:01 AM/0.06 ft	3:23 PM/3.39 ft	9:55 PM/0.23 ft	
Mon 11	3:48 AM/2.89 ft	9:56 AM/-0.01 ft	4:23 PM/3.58 ft	10:54 PM/0.04 ft	
Tue 12	4:53 AM/2.92 ft	10:51 AM/-0.07 ft	5:21 PM/3.74 ft	11:51 PM/-0.11 ft	
Wed 13	5:54 AM/2.97 ft	11:45 AM/-0.09 ft	6:16 PM/3.86 ft		
Thu 14		12:46 AM/-0.22 ft	6:50 AM/3.03 ft	12:40 PM/-0.09 ft	7:07 PM/3.89 ft
Fri 15		1:40 AM/-0.29 ft	7:43 AM/3.05 ft	1:34 PM/-0.06 ft	7:57 PM/3.84 ft
Sat 16		2:31 AM/-0.29 ft	8:36 AM/3.03 ft	2:27 PM/0.00 ft	8:48 PM/3.72 ft
Sun 17		3:20 AM/-0.24 ft	9:30 AM/2.98 ft	3:16 PM/0.11 ft	9:39 PM/3.54 ft
Mon 18		4:06 AM/-0.13 ft	10:24 AM/2.92 ft	4:04 PM/0.26 ft	10:31 PM/3.34 ft
Tue 19		4:51 AM/0.01 ft	11:17 AM/2.87 ft	4:52 PM/0.43 ft	11:22 PM/3.14 ft
Wed 20		5:36 AM/0.16 ft	12:08 PM/2.84 ft	5:43 PM/0.60 ft	
Thu 21	12:10 AM/2.94 ft	6:23 AM/0.31 ft	12:56 PM/2.83 ft	6:40 PM/0.72 ft	
Fri 22	12:57 AM/2.76 ft	7:12 AM/0.42 ft	1:43 PM/2.84 ft	7:42 PM/0.78 ft	
Sat 23	1:45 AM/2.60 ft	8:02 AM/0.48 ft	2:30 PM/2.88 ft	8:42 PM/0.75 ft	
Sun 24	2:34 AM/2.48 ft	8:51 AM/0.51 ft	3:18 PM/2.93 ft	9:36 PM/0.66 ft	
Mon 25	3:28 AM/2.41 ft	9:37 AM/0.51 ft	4:07 PM/3.01 ft	10:26 PM/0.54 ft	
Tue 26	4:25 AM/2.40 ft	10:21 AM/0.48 ft	4:56 PM/3.12 ft	11:13 PM/0.42 ft	
Wed 27	5:19 AM/2.44 ft	11:07 AM/0.45 ft	5:42 PM/3.23 ft		
Thu 28		12:01 AM/0.30 ft	6:08 AM/2.52 ft	11:52 AM/0.41 ft	6:24 PM/3.33 ft
Fri 29		12:47 AM/0.19 ft	6:52 AM/2.59 ft	12:38 PM/0.36 ft	7:05 PM/3.42 ft
Sat 30		1:32 AM/0.09 ft	7:34 AM/2.66 ft	1:24 PM/0.32 ft	7:44 PM/3.47 ft

## Suffolk County Purchases EC145 Medevac-Equipped Helicopter



Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy announced that the county's new Medevac-equipped emergency medical helicopter was incorporated into Suffolk's fleet just prior to the Memorial Day weekend. Pictured (l-r): Deputy Inspector Stuart Cameron, Commanding Officer, Special Patrol Bureau; Sgt. Brian Barrett, Commanding Officer of Aviation Section; and County Executive Steve Levy.

Suffolk County's new emergency medical helicopter was incorporated into the Police Department's fleet on Memorial Day Weekend, it was announced by County Executive Steve Levy and Police Commissioner Richard Dormer.

"The health and safety of Suffolk County residents will be enhanced with the addition of this EC145 Medevac-equipped helicopter," said Levy.

Suffolk has had four emergency medical helicopters in the fleet since 2005, when Levy authorized the purchase of an A-Star unit. All of Suffolk's choppers are multi-purpose for medical transport, search and rescue, and police and fire operations.

Two emergency police helicopters will be stationed at Long Island MacArthur Airport, and the other two

will operate out of Gabreski Airport in Westhampton Beach. Suffolk also has reciprocal backup agreements with Nassau County for additional coverage, if needed.

The critical need for emergency helicopter transportation was spotlighted in the media recently, through accounts of the Medevac transport of a construction worker who accidentally shot himself in the heart with a staple gun on May 7. Additionally, during the May 25 press conference to unveil the chopper, the new equipment was called into service to respond to an emergency call on Fire Island for toddler who had accidentally ingested a foreign substance.

The county's emergency medical helicopters respond to approximately 550 calls annually.