

MAFES Dawg Tracks



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Power and Manual Winch Safety



MISSISSIPPI STATE
UNIVERSITY

Winch use safety, both power and manual, are subjects that we rarely discuss or consider, but should. A recent accident involved a worker loading a boat on a trailer. The automatic latch was working properly, but the worker's hand slipped. At this point, the winch handle was obviously spinning and caught his shoulder, which resulted in an injury and a few lost workdays.

I believe it is worth the time to discuss some safety points and precautions that just might save an injury to someone in the future.

Tips for towing trailers and/boat and trailers – MAKE SURE THAT:

- The coupler, hitch and hitch ball are all matched in size.
- The coupler and safety chains are secured to the hitch.
- You check all fasteners for proper tightness.
- The boat is securely tied down to the trailer (the winch line is not a tie down).
- The trailer wheel nuts are securely tightened.
- The trailer wheel bearings are properly adjusted and maintained.
- The load is within the maximum load limit according to the instruction manual.
- The towing vehicle and the trailer have the tires properly inflated.
- Lighting on the towing vehicle and the trailer are in good working order.
- The trailer brakes are in good working order (if the trailer is so equipped).
- There is a ready-to-use fire extinguisher in the tow vehicle or mounted on the tongue or winch brace of the trailer. Bearings can become overheated and cause a fire - or a bystander could throw a lit cigarette toward the load or in your boat.

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Excerpts: www.commanderbob.com/trailer.htm
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USING THE TRAILER WINCH –

High forces are created when using a hand-cranked or an electric winch, creating potential safety hazards:

- ~Never allow children or anyone else unfamiliar with the operation of the winch to use it.
- ~Check the winch before each use. If it is damaged - don't use it. Get it repaired.
- ~Maintain a firm grip on the winch handle at all times. Never release the handle when the ratchet is in the unlocked position with a load on the winch. The handle will spin violently which could cause serious injury.
- ~Never use the winch handle for pulling or positioning the trailer.
- ~Don't exceed the capacity of the winch. Excess loads may cause premature failure and result in serious injury.
- ~Never apply a load on the winch with the line fully extended. Keep at least three full turns of line on the reel.
- ~Secure the load properly, regardless of the length of the trip. When the winching is complete, don't depend on the winch to support the load.
- ~As you are checking the winch for good working conditions, always check the line as well. A damaged winch line or hook can result in serious personal injury or damage to your load, whether it is a boat or other items.
- ~Always stand clear of wire rope or whatever material is on the spool when loading. And make sure that other folks are out of the way.
- ~Never touch the wire rope or other type of spool material while it is under pressure.

BE AWARE—TAKE CARE!

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PLAY IT SAFE

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**NEVER GIVE SAFETY A
DAY OFF!!**