

About your trailer

The trailer must be suitable for the intended boat. Before loading your boat onto the trailer you should consider, as a minimum:

- suitability for
 - weight /size of boat
 - slipway to be used
- roadworthiness
 - lights
 - Tyres & wheels (including jockey wheel and any spare wheels)
 - brakes (including suitability to enter the water)
 - number plate (including any separate lighting board)
- winch and tie down points to secure the boat

About your boat

Please ensure you have appropriate insurance in place before you use our slipways, this should cover your towing vehicle, the boat & trailer and include third party liability cover.

Before launching or removing your boat from the water:

- ensure your boat is watertight
- any onboard equipment is secure, remove or fasten all free standing equipment
- fuel supplies are switched off
- masts are de-rigged and properly secured
- drop keels are raised and locked in the raised position
- please ensure you secure a rope from the boat to the bank when launching or retrieving your boat

What do I do if things go wrong?

When planning the slipway operation you must also consider what you would do if things go wrong. Your emergency plan should include:

Details/location for the local:

- hospital Accident & Emergency department
- police/Fire Station
- BW Office

You should also consider how you can contact any or all of the above, noting that not all locations have a telephone or mobile phone reception.

Please remember

- if you plan to use the slipway alone let someone know your plans and arrange to contact them prior to and after completing the operation
- allow wheel bearings to cool down before entering the water, especially after long journeys
- slipway operations should only take place in daylight hours
- children under the age of 16 are not permitted to enter the slipway area during use
- please use appropriate protective clothing and equipment
- please observe the speed limit for the waterway you will be using

BW* SLIPWAYS A USER'S GUIDE

*INCLUDING BRITISH WATERWAYS MARINAS LTD SLIPWAYS



INTRODUCTION

Reading this guide will help you safely use our slipways.

It includes information on:

- types of slipways
- what you should think about before you use a slipway
- towing vehicles
- trailers
- boats
- what to do if things go wrong

The guidance is applicable to slipways owned/operated by British Waterways (BW) & British Waterways Marinas Limited (BWML). Whilst we take all reasonable care to ensure safe launching and removal via our slipways, we are unaware as to the physical condition of the boat, hull and any equipment it may have. Consequently we cannot accept any responsibility whatsoever for any damage which may be caused, and the operation is entirely at the boat owner's risk.

The guidance is neither specific to a particular location nor exhaustive and should be used as an aid to safe use of our slipways. Local knowledge and on-site conditions will also contribute to safe use of the facility; therefore, we ask that you seek advice from the local BW office before using any of our slipway facilities.

Before using our slipways you must:

- gain our permission to use them
- ensure you have a current boat licence

When placing your boat in BW waters you must ensure you have a current boat licence. Please note: You may, depending on the type of craft, also require a Boat Safety Certificate. Further guidance on these requirements can be found on waterscape.com.

Where are BW's slipways?

Slipways are identified on individual waterway maps at www.waterscape.com/boating/guides

About slipways

Slipways are built to two main designs:

Larger slipways in newer marinas are normally built to a slope of 1 in 8 and intended for heavy tractor or winch towing. These may be suitable for car trailers, but the car may need to go further into the water to allow the boat to float off the trailer.

Smaller slipways are often for car trailers, such as the Inland Waterways Association design, and are built to a slope of 1 in 4. These should allow the boat to float off without the car entering the water.

Please ensure you are aware of the slope before backing into the water.

Adequate planning

Anyone who uses our slipways must be competent to carry out operations in a safe and organised manner.

If you need to use a slipway to launch or retrieve your boat from the water, please make sure you have planned the operation.

Before you begin, ask yourself:

- am I competent to plan/manage the operation?
- can I carry out the operation alone or do I need assistance?

- have I sufficient skills and knowledge to carry out the work safely?
- am I familiar with the towing vehicle, trailer, winches, tie down equipment etc?
- do I have sufficient information about the slipway?
- have I discussed how I will communicate with others assisting me? (verbally or by hand signals)
- can I carry out the operation in poor weather conditions?

If you answer **NO** to any of the above points, or are unsure about aspects of slipway operations, contact your local British Waterways office before proceeding.

About your towing vehicle

Have you considered if the vehicle is suitable?

- towing capacity
 - maximum towing weight with a braked /unbraked trailer
 - ground clearance

- engine size/gear ratio
- suitability for use in water
- correctly wired up for trailer operations

(Where this is not available, the vehicle manufacturer can provide you with information about its towing capabilities)

You must also consider:

- the incline of the slipway
- depth of water required to float the boat
- conditions of the slipway surface such as weed growth and grip