

MOORAGE, STORAGE, & TRAILERS

As much as we enjoy our boats in the Pacific NW, we all need someplace to keep or store the a boat between uses. In the cases of the very largest boats, there really aren't a lot of options to renting a slip in a marina and leaving the boat in the water year 'round. For boats between car-top size and as large as 45-50 feet, there are now more options than before.

Trailers; for small and medium size boats

For boaters with an available off-the-water storage facility, it can make sense to put the boat onto a trailer between uses. Boats less than 8'6" wide can be trailered without a special permit, and inexpensive "wide load" permits are available for moving boats up to 10' wide. Most trailered boats will be under 25 feet LOA, but some larger boats are seen on trailers as well.

One of the great debates among trailer aficionados is "bunks vs. rollers". Bunks are flat horizontal surfaces upon which a boat will rest on a trailer, usually covered with carpet or rubber to prevent scuffing the hull. Bunks are thought to provide better structural support for a boat sitting on a trailer. Rollers make it easier to launch and retrieve a boat, as the trailer does not have to be submerged so deeply that the boat entirely floats free. Critics of rollers are skeptical about distributing the weight of the boat over a much smaller surface area on the trailer.

Advantages of trailer storage:

1. Less costly than slip rental
2. Boat can be relocated to other cruising areas
3. Less maintenance below the waterline

Disadvantages of trailer storage:

1. Trailer will require regular maintenance
2. Larger boats will require a heavy duty tow vehicle
 - costs to acquire and insure a dedicated truck
 - poor fuel economy when driving the tow vehicle
3. Difficulty of maneuvering a trailer in heavy traffic

Dry storage; becoming more popular

Boats in climates where the waters freeze over during the winter months have long been hauled out and stored "on the hard" for a portion of the year. The concept is becoming popular in the Pacific NW, and not just for winter storage. Specialized modern launch and retrieval technologies are making it possible for even relatively large boats to be stored on shore between uses. Most dry storage operations permit multiple launchings per month. Many will offer to have a boat placed in the water before the owner arrives to use it, if given prior notice of an hour or so. Some boat owners combine trailer and dry storage options, placing a boat in dry storage during the spring and summer months and then hauling it home on a trailer during the winter.

Advantages of dry storage:

1. Less costly than renting a slip
2. Less maintenance below the waterline
3. Storage areas are typically fenced, somewhat secure

Disadvantages of dry storage:

1. Boat more susceptible to freezing when out of the water
2. Slightly elevated risk of damage
 - from failed support stands or cradle
 - during transportation over ground
3. Possible wait for launch or haul out during peak summer or holiday weekends

Mooring in a slip; a popular tradition

Some boats are simply too large to consider hauling on a trailer or storing "dry". In those cases, the only option is renting (or buying) a slip in a marina. Options in the Pacific NW include both covered and uncovered moorages. Covered slips protect gelcoat or paint and brightwork from the relentless degradation of sun and rain. Boaters not found of covered moorage often compare being onboard the boat while at the slip to sitting in a warehouse or a

continued on next page



barn. It has been demonstrated, tragically, that boats in covered moorage are at greater risk of damage from fire. Some boaters prefer covered, and others uncovered moorage.

Advantages of slip moorage:

1. Boat is always in the water and ready to go
2. No waiting lines for launching or hauling
3. Covered protection is often available, if preferred
4. Boat is naturally supported, less stress on hull
5. Less potential for damage from a slight freeze

Disadvantages of slip moorage:

1. Typically the most costly option
2. More maintenance below the waterline
 - zinc replacement
 - bottom cleaning and painting
3. Resale of a condo slip if purchasing a larger boat
4. Continuing cost even when boat is not in active use

