

# CONVAIR WATER SKI CLUB

## LAUNCHER PACKET

LAUNCHER: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>SEQUENTIAL STEPS</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>LAUNCHER ADVANTAGES</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>LAUNCHER VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS/GUIDELINES</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>INITIAL CHECK LAUNCH</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>BOAT/TRAILER HANDLING</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>CHECK DRIVING</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>CHECK LAUNCHES</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>LAUNCHING PROCEDURES</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>At Boat Storage Facility</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>At Gas Stop</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>At Boat Ramp</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>At the Beach</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Upon Leaving the Beach</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>At Ramp</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Return To Boat Storage Facility</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>CHECK LAUNCHER EVALUATION</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>RIVER TRIP LAUNCHER CHECKLIST</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>BAY LAUNCHER CHECKLIST</b>	<b>20</b>

# INTRODUCTION

Congratulations!! You have taken another step in advancing your status within the ranks of the Convair Water Ski Club. Your very action of obtaining this packet and beginning your launcher training is looked upon with very high regard by your fellow launchers. It shows that you are an extremely responsible person who is willing to make a significant contribution in the operation at the bay, share in the responsibility of hauling the boats and make a very valuable contribution to the overall membership. It also means that you can obtain permission to take a boat out on a private limited use for your own skiing sessions or haul the boat to the river. Note that launchers that haul boats to the river on club sponsored river trips are entitled to a reimbursement to offset the extra gas cost and wear and tear on their special tow package vehicles.

However, being a launcher is a serious responsibility and should never be taken lightly. As the launcher, you are responsible for the entire operation at the bay, and for the safe conduct of all of the boat activity in conjunction with the other boats in the water.

## SEQUENTIAL STEPS

The sequence of steps that a student launcher must utilize is presented below. It is required that you follow these steps in the order listed, and for your own benefit, use the check-off column preceding each paragraph to keep track of your progress.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Print your full name on the cover sheet of this packet to identify that it is yours. It is your responsibility to get all of the checkoffs and signatures. Keep this packet with you, have it with you when you perform all of your check launches, and bring it to the board meeting for your launcher approval.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Read through the packet and become thoroughly familiar with it's contents.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Enter your Driver Status Approval date in the space allotted at the top of the signoff sheet (primarily intended to provide verification of a minimum of three months as a driver if there is any question of the duration of being a driver).
4. \_\_\_\_\_ When you feel confident enough to initiate your training, contact the scheduled launcher for the next club launch. Identify yourself as a student launcher and tell them that you would like to go through the initial check launch. Arrange to meet the launcher at the boat storage facility to perform the initial check launch.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Upon completion of the initial check launch, have the launcher sign the signoff sheet as having completed it.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Begin your check launching, and be sure to bring this packet with you each time you launch. Upon completion of each check launch, obtain the launcher's comments and signature on the signoff sheet.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Upon completion of your check launches, you have successfully passed all of the training required by the club. The next step is to get approval from the Executive Board.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone the President and inform him/her of your successful completion of all of your check launching. The President will then queue your name into the next Board of Director's meeting agenda as a launcher approval candidate. Ask the President for the time, date and location of the next meeting and plan to attend.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Attend the meeting and turn your packet into the President. When your name comes up for approval, you will be asked to leave the room and your packet will be examined by the Board for completeness and comments. With a unanimous vote from the board, you will be approved as a launcher. Obtain your launcher key from the Vice President.

## LAUNCHER ADVANTAGES

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Launchers are entitled to the privilege of “limited use”, which basically entails a non-club use of the boat. The launcher must only obtain approval to take a boat out from either the Club President or Commissioner. Note that the President also has the added task of coordinating boats to the activity or the launcher. Therefore, it is recommended that all limited use approval be routed through the President. Refer to the latest version of the Club bylaws regarding the most current rules and regulations regarding limited use.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Launchers are reimbursed for the extra gas cost and the wear and tear imposed on their vehicles by towing a boat to the river. The amount of reimbursement is set by the Executive Board. A launch to and from the river allows the launcher to attend the trip at no cost.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Launchers are entitled to a discount at the bay for their ski ride. Whether you launch or retrieve (or both) on a Thursday or Sunday regularly scheduled Club operation, you are entitled to a free or discounted ski ride. For those launching and retrieving the launcher is entitled to one free ride. For those launching or retrieving the cost is one-half the price of a members ride cost.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Launchers are also entitled to what is known as “Launcher Prerogative”. This simply means that the launcher of the day can take his/her ski turn regardless of the sign-up list; however, non-launchers may not know about this policy, and it is advised that before the launcher takes his/her turn, people immediately on the sign-up list be made aware of this privilege and understand that it is because the launchers put a lot of time and effort into the club, and that this is only a minor way of paying them back for their efforts.

# LAUNCHER VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS/GUIDELINES

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Your towing vehicle must have a towing hitch with a minimum capability of hauling 2000 pounds. The club uses 2-inch diameter ball hitches. Sailboat hitches normally use 1-7/8 inch diameter and they are usually lighter and, therefore, don't require the extra safety factor of the larger diameter ball.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ The hitch must have some provision to securely attach the trailer safety chain.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ If you do not have a hitch on your towing vehicle, it is permissible to perform your check launches with another vehicle that does have one.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ The cost of installation of a trailer hitch is at your own expense. The club will not reimburse you for this expense. Note that there is no guarantee that you will be approved as a launcher just because you have spent the money to have the hitch installed. Therefore, it may be financially wiser to perform the check launches with a borrowed vehicle, thereby foregoing the cost to install a hitch to your vehicle until you are actually approved.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ The electrical connection to operate the trailer lights are "tapped" off from the towing vehicle. A 4-pin connector is used for this function, available at most auto parts stores. The towing vehicle has the receptacle with a hinged cover plate and male pins within, and the trailer has the plug with the female sockets, and is connected to the lights with a single, heavy-duty four-conductor cable.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ There is one item of the towing hitch that the club will pay for and that is the electrical connector. When you purchase the 4-pin connector you can either buy the receptacle alone or you can buy the receptacle along with the mating plug. The club uses these same mating plugs as replacement for the ones that are on the boat lights. The deal is, when you buy your receptacle, buy the one with the mating plug. Obtain a receipt for the purchase and turn it in along with the plug, and you will be reimbursed for the cost of both. In this way, the club gets replacement plugs for only a nominal price difference of buying the plug only and the launcher gets his receptacle paid for by the club.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ It is recommended to position the receptacle as close to the trailer's point of pivot as possible as this would preclude any undue stress on the cable when you make turns while towing the boat. Consider that if the receptacle is near the left turn light, when making a right turn, if there isn't enough slack in the cable between the trailer and the towing vehicle, the cable will be put into tension until it fails or it gets pulled out of the receptacle. Once it leaves the receptacle, the plug usually drags and grinds itself to death on the ground (one of the reasons why the club needs replacement plugs).



## INITIAL CHECK LAUNCH

The purpose of the initial check launch is to provide an introduction to the actual workings of the launching procedure. The initial check launch is intended to show the trainee the entire sequence of launching the boat for the club. You are expected to help the launcher throughout the entire process of launching; from the boat storage facility to the bay, throughout the bay operation, and retrieval back to the boat storage facility. The launch must be conducted during the course of an official club operation, and limited use launches are not acceptable as they do not provide sufficient check launch instruction/examples.

This is the time to ask any questions and to clear up any confusion with the launching procedure that you may have. Ask questions about how to back up a trailer, things to watch for when launching, and anything else.

Upon satisfactory completion of this initial check launch, obtain the launcher's comments and signature on the checkout list.

## BOAT/TRAILER HANDLING

When the boat is secured to the trailer and all gear stowed so that it will ride smoothly, you're ready to roll. It is wise to take a few practice spins before any trips are undertaken to see how the trailer handles, and to observe the effects of braking, road curves and crosswinds.

The most important thing to remember is that your vehicle and trailer are at least 20 feet longer than the vehicle alone, and together they weight considerably more. It takes longer to stop and to accelerate. This means that it is necessary to anticipate stop signs, changing traffic lights, and dangerous, unguarded intersections. Swing wide when passing and make sure that the road ahead is clear of oncoming vehicles. At crossings, make extra wide turns to clear high curbs after giving a hand signal to warn other drivers. Use an outside rearview mirror since the bulk of the boat will make the inside types impractical, and keep an eye out for pedestrians and jaywalkers who may inadvertently walk into the side of the trailer. In other words, you have to allow another six inches or so at the curb when turning corners and, in passing other vehicles, take a good long lead before pulling back into the right-hand lane. Remember, you're driving two vehicles.

Backing up is the trickiest part of driving with a trailer. The trailer turns in the opposite direction from the rear wheels of the towing vehicle, calling for a technique that can be learned only with practice. A good way is to practice with the empty trailer in a secluded, wide-open spot until the maneuver is mastered. Most truck drivers learn to back a three-axle semi-trailer to within inches of where they want it, so the technique can be learned and mastered through practice. In a pinch, the trailer can always be unhitched, turned by hand, and reconnected to the vehicle.

When backing toward water, remember that if you want the rear of the trailer to go to the right, turn your steering wheel to the left; if you want the trailer to go to the left, turn the wheel to the right. One way to make turning easier is to twist around in the car seat so that you're looking backward over your right shoulder, through the rear window. This places the boat's bow directly in line with your vision, and you "aim" the trailer at the selected point, using the craft's bow as a gun sight. Or you may use a guide to assist in backing up. Have him/her watch the rear of the trailer as you back up and don't back up too fast.

With a little practice, most drivers quickly learn what speeds are safe and comfortable when towing a trailer over various types of roads and on hills and curves. Extra care is called for when driving after dark (it is easy to overdrive the headlights) and when driving on wet or slippery roads the extra wheels retard skidding, but stopping is more difficult. Some other common sense precautions are:

1. When starting, accelerate slowly and then drive at a steady speed about one-third slower than the posted speed.
2. Watch the outside rear-view mirror frequently, particularly for the driver who follows too close. Let him pass to avoid a rear end collision.
3. If the vehicle has automatic transmission, shift to the low driving range when going up or down steep hills.
4. Plan ahead when preparing to stop, especially because the club trailers are not equipped with independent brakes.
5. It is recommended to stop every two hours to inspect that the boat is still tightly secured to the trailer; trailer is still properly hitched; trailer tires are still properly inflated; and all lights and directional signals on the trailer are working properly.

# CHECK DRIVING

1. As an adjunct of launcher approval, you automatically become a “Check Driver”.
2. The check driver is a person designated by the club who is capable of providing instruction to student drivers. This includes walking a student driver through the preliminary checkout, all of the student driving and also the oral and practical.
3. The primary responsibility of the check driver is to enlist and cultivate good drivers within the club. However, this must be done within the guidelines of the club operating principles of safety, care of the equipment, club constitution and the club bylaws.
4. The check driver shall ride in the boat with a student driver during the 10-hour driver training period and show the student driver how to properly drive the boats for club operation.
5. The check driver shall monitor the student driver at all times.
6. The check driver shall sit in the boat facing forward, and be aware of all boat traffic in the immediate vicinity in conjunction with the student driver’s cognizance of the situation.
7. The check driver shall provide guidance and direction to assist student drivers as required.
8. In the event the student driver fails to avoid a potentially dangerous hazard, the check driver shall assume command of the boat to preclude any damage or injury. This may take the form of either cutting the engine or turning the steering wheel.
9. The check driver should insure that the student driver does not turn his/her head to watch the skier on starts. This is the number one no-no in the club. The only major accident in club history was due to this type of error. One of the club boats ran into another club boat on takeoff with the driver looking backward. Remember, the observer’s job is to watch the skier and the driver should always look forward to watch for oncoming boats.
10. The check driver should insure that the student driver is making turns consistent with the club policy. The standard boat turn policy is to signal the turning direction, quickly look to see that the skier is not going to be on the inside of the turn and then execute the turn. The turn should be made with the skier’s capability in mind.

11. The check driver should point helpful criticism to the student driver as needed to expand the knowledge of the student driver as much as possible.
12. All comments that are involved in nature should be noted and then patiently explained to the student driver when his/her full attention is obtained. During the course of the driving experience, the student driver may be too engrossed to heed your comments.
13. A good training technique to check out the capability of the student driver is to tell him/her to pretend that the skier that is being towed is a beginner. The driver should in general drive the boat so that a beginning skier would be comfortable and safe. The driver should make easy turns, avoid situations that would be hazardous to the skier should he/she fall, etc.
14. You as the check driver should be constantly aware of the entire boat situation/activity surrounding your boat at all times, and should impress this onto the student driver. Remember, too many accidents are caused because the driver just wasn't paying attention to what was going on at the time.
15. Another aspect of good driving is the ability to think ahead to potential situations or conditions. The driver should be able to mentally project where the other boats are going to be. For example, if there are six boats projected to be in Crown Point by the time your boat gets there, you can decide whether you really want to go to Crown Point also.
16. Remember that the inputs you give to a student driver will ultimately determine the caliber of the drivers in the club. Therefore, to maintain a high standard of excellence in driving capability, you must insure that your student driver is being given the utmost in guidance from you.
17. The check driver should monitor and assist the student's driving capability. Additional instruction should be given to the student on how to handle the boat under the conditions of slow speed maneuvering, rough water conditions, wind conditions, high traffic, current conditions (at river), or any combination of the above.
18. The student driver should be given instruction on how to maneuver a boat around a skier with respect to speed and direction. Especially tricky is the technique of returning to a skier after a missed shore start and setting up for another attempt. The turn should be made well wide of the skier in order to end of aligned with the skier. Depending on how strong the wind is blowing, the size of the turn should be adjusted to accommodate for it.

# CHECK LAUNCHES

1. Perform your check launches under the guidance of an approved launcher. The check launches must be conducted during official club operation launches. Limited use launches are not permitted.
2. You will be expected to “run the show” starting from preparing the boat for towing out of the boat space and loading the boat, all the way to retrieving the boat and putting all items away into the storage locker.
3. You will be expected to be able to back up a trailer down the ramp at the bay and also into the club’s boat space. You should study how the launchers achieve this seemingly impossible task, and the launcher should be able to place the boat into the boat space without hitting anything.
4. The launcher is there only to offer guidance and direction in case you are going to or will screw up. You may direct him/her to perform some of the tasks that you would be doing, but you must specifically inform him/her of what you wish them to do.
5. The locks used on the trailers and the storage locker are all keyed alike to the master key that all launchers have.
6. The protocol at the launching ramp is one of confusion at times, especially during the summer when everybody is trying to launch or retrieve their boats. You will encounter the occasional boat owner that tries to launch and their boat engine won’t start, or the person who will launch their trailer into the water sideways because they can’t back up straight. Some people leave their trailers in the water for an extended amount of time for no apparent purpose. The club recommends that you launch and retrieve the boats with a minimum of fuss and hassle. It is advised to also minimize the amount of time that the boat trailer is in the water, primarily due to the corrosive aspects of seawater. Don’t be a launcher that appears befuddled and confused, even though you may feel like it, don’t show it.
7. Upon completion of the skiing activity, the engine equipment and the boat should be washed down with fresh water after every use. Water connections and hoses are located at the boat storage facility.

# LAUNCHING PROCEDURES

## At Boat Storage Facility

1. Load ski equipment. Equipment should include a pair of double skis (adult and child), assorted slalom skis (large and small), ropes and handles, a paddle and a number of ski vests. Also, during the summer months bring volleyball equipment in case a large group is expected.
2. Load briefcase (check for a blank sign-up sheet).
3. Record engine hours and date on sign-up sheet.
4. Make sure oil reservoir is full.
5. Install mirror on car if needed.
6. Hook up trailer, lights and safety chain. Check lights.
7. Raise engine and lower towing latch (support strut).
8. Decide whether to buy gas. Check amount of fuel in bow or stern tank by referring to gauge with key momentarily turned on. Or tap on outside of tank if accessible and listen for sound difference between empty and full, or place clean dipstick into tank to measure level, or use relative weight of boat on trailer to judge the level of the tanks.
9. Close and lock storage locker when leaving. Be sure you haven't left your car keys in the locker.

## **At Gas Stop**

1. Check the level of the auxiliary oil tank (usually located adjacent to the battery).
2. Remove cans from boat for filling.
3. Fill with regular unleaded 87 octane fuel.
4. Wipe any spilled gas off of hull when filling bow or stern tanks.
5. Get receipt for gas, record amount on sign-up sheet and put receipt into kitty. Sign back of receipt.
6. Stop at beach if you need a helper/driver to drive boat or car back to beach from launching ramp.

## **At Boat Ramp**

1. Disconnect winch from bow eye.
2. Insure that drain plug is installed. On some boat hulls, there are inner hull plugs that should be drained periodically. If the boat comes equipped with a flapper valve, simply verify it's presence.
3. Make sure flusher was not left on engine.
4. Prime fuel ball.
5. Tilt engine up slightly, stow towing bar, and lower engine halfway.
6. Make sure driver knows how to start engine when cold. If driver doesn't know, instruct them to push key for choke and raise high idle lever. It is recommended that qualified drivers or well seasoned student drivers are tasked with this job.
7. After launch, watch and make sure boat gets started and underway.
8. Park trailer and padlock tongue.

## **At the Beach**

1. Unload loose equipment onto beach above water mark. Enlist people on the sign-up list to aid in moving gear. If they can sign up to ski, then they can also help unloading the gear.
2. Start sign-up list.
3. Record gas purchase if not done at gas station.
4. Appoint a "Beach Master", if possible. The duties of a Beach Master is to oversee and coordinate the names on the sign-up list. He/she should insure that the next available skier on the list is ready to ski when the next available boat finishes a ski run. This means that the skier should have his/her ski vest on, ski picked out and sized to his/her feet, and be at the water's edge ready to ski.
5. Ensure all driving is done by qualified drivers or properly supervised student drivers.
6. Insure that all skiing operations are conducted in a safe and responsible manner.
7. Notify the Mission Bay Patrol immediately in case of an accident.
8. Notify the Commissioner within four hours of any accident or within 24 hours of an encounter with the Mission Bay Patrol or Coast Guard.
9. Keep sign-up list current with all rides recorded.
10. Don't leave without designating another Launcher as "in charge".
11. Make sure that all money owed is properly recorded and paid before skiers leave the beach. Members owing money cannot ski.

### **Upon Leaving the Beach**

1. Update sign-up sheet and get everyone to pay.
2. Load loose equipment into boats or move equipment to washdown area. Enlist people on the sign-up list to aid in moving gear. If they can ski, then they can also help moving the gear.
3. Appoint someone to drive boat to ramp. Make sure they know how to drive and where the ramp is. An approved driver or well seasoned student driver is recommended for this task.
4. Check and recheck entire area for any club or personal gear being left behind. Load anything found into boat.

5. Make sure everyone has paid and the kitty picked up.

## **At Ramp**

1. Keep trailer hubs out of water until boat is ready to load.
2. Guide boat onto trailer.
3. Draw boat onto rails with winch. Do not power on with engine as prop may strike ramp.
4. Lock winch.
5. Raise engine before pulling boat out of water.
6. Remove and stow drain plug under driver's seat. Do not remove flapper valve used for draining on some boats.
7. Install lights if you must drive to washdown area.

## **Return To Boat Storage Facility**

1. Rinse boat and trailer with special attention to trailer.
2. Wipe boat with towels including steering wheel and instruments.
3. Wash all loose equipment.
4. Coil and tie ski ropes.
5. Install flushing adapter, lower engine, and flush with engine running 2 to 4 minutes.
6. Assure adequate water circulation through engine. When water pressure is low, you may have to squeeze flushing adapter tight by hand.
7. Remove flushing adapter.
8. Stow gear in appropriate places. Hang towels to dry.
9. Have someone watch blind side while backing boat into space.

10. Lower engine and put trailer tongue on sawhorse or lower trailer wheel. Block wheels.
11. Leave suitcase, mirror, lost and found gear, etc.
12. Record engine hours on sign-up sheet.
13. Check both boats for ignition off.
14. If you have time, remove engine cover and spray engine with WD-40 and oil steering linkage.
15. Close and lock storage locker. Be sure you haven't forgotten you car key inside the locker.

# CHECK LAUNCHER EVALUATION

LAUNCHER'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DRIVER STATUS APPROVAL DATE \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>INITIAL ORIENTATION</b>			
	<b>1<sup>ST</sup> CHECK LAUNCH</b>			
	<b>2<sup>ND</sup> CHECK LAUNCH</b>			
	<b>3<sup>RD</sup> CHECK LAUNCH</b>			
	<b>SUBMIT TO BOARD</b>			

# RIVER TRIP LAUNCHER CHECKLIST

1. Fill the oil reservoir and take two quarts extra.
2. Spare tire.
3. Jack and lug wrench for changing the trailer wheel.
4. Check tire pressure (should be between 30 and 32 psi cold)
5. Test the wheel bearings: jack up the axle and spin the wheel. Listen for any growling noise. Try to move the wheel from side to side. Movement should not exceed 1/16-inch at the outer circumference of the tire.
6. Check the bearing buddies and grease, if needed: If the piston can be rocked with your fingers, the grease load is adequate. Use only boat trailer wheel bearing grease. Mixing automotive grease with boat trailer grease will result in bearing failure. Boat trailer grease is bright blue.
7. Check operation of trailer lights.
8. Be sure the following are on board:
  - a. registration
  - b. spare ignition key
  - c. throwable cushion
  - d. fire extinguisher
9. Attach three boat tie-downs – one bow and two stern.
10. Four spare spark plugs and a wrench.
11. Drain plug (under the driver's seat).
12. Spare propeller.
13. Securely attached safety chain (would the chain as you've attached it control the trailer at 60+ mph down I-8 if the coupler came off the hitch ball or the ball worked loose? (It should).
14. Check that your hitch is securely attached to your car.
15. First aid kit: one per trip, not one per boat.

16. Tongue weight of at least 100 lbs. Load heavy gear to the front of the boat and put gas in the bow tank, if necessary (safety item).
17. Two ropes and two handles.
18. One paddle.
19. Three PFD's (in addition to vests for skiing).
20. Pour spout for the 5-gallon gas cans if they will be used.
21. One 6-gallon auxiliary tank.
22. Crank the engine for about two seconds to be sure the starter works and the battery is charged. Don't start the engine.
23. Assorted skis, vests and other water toys.
24. Other items according to the trip leader's direction.

## BAY LAUNCHER CHECKLIST

1. Check the oil reservoir level and fill if below half.
2. Check the bearing buddies and grease, if needed. If the piston can be rocked with your fingers, the grease load is adequate.
3. Check operation of trailer lights.
4. Be sure the following are on board:
  - a. registration
  - b. spare ignition key
  - c. throwable cushion
  - d. fire extinguisher
5. Check tire pressure. Should be between 30 and 32 psi cold.
6. Drain plug (under driver's seat).
7. Securely attached safety chain.
8. Two ropes and two handles.
9. One paddle.
10. Three PFD's in addition to vests for skiing.
11. Assorted skis, vests and other water toys.
12. Other items according to the trip leader's direction.