

## IMPORTANT TIPS FOR HIRING A BOAT HAULER:

For some boat hauling companies, responsibility begins when they load the boat and ends once the boat is safely dropped at the customers location. Contractually that may be true, however at Lighthouse Boat Hauling, we believe that we owe it to our customers to listen first and then propose a solution that exceeds their expectations. Whether a one-time move, or long-term relationship we are here to serve. Information on various aspects helps everyone understand and be on the same page. With that in mind, we provide information as a first step. We hope to help inform, with the knowledge it will help the process if we work together or choose to work with another.

***Being informed is the best way choose the correct boat hauler for your vessel.***

## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHO YOU HIRE

When choosing someone for boat transporting, did you know that many companies are transport brokers or agents rather than boat transport companies? Over the road boat transporting requires proper preparation, careful planning and coordination between the owner, boatyard, and transporter. It includes a lot of moving parts, and success depends on communication and attention to detail. Adding a Broker or Agent in the mix can result in a loss in these critical areas, and definitely adds costs to your move.

### **Broker or Agent**

A Transport Brokers / Agents do not have the operational and logistic capabilities transport companies have. They do not have trucks or yacht transport trailers, professional drivers, proper transport equipment, and in many cases not much transport experience at all. Transport brokers /agents are sales teams that book your transport and attempt to sell it to the lowest bidder. Then they markup and sell the transport to you at ADDITIONAL cost. Many times they broker /agent is not able to find a transporter and you can get stuck without a transporter on the day of your move.

### **Boat Transport Company**

Boat transport companies differ from owner / operators by employing salespeople who book your transport then schedule it with one of their hired drivers. The driver dispatched to your boat could be a veteran boat transport driver, a career driver who has very limited experience loading, supporting, securing, or transporting boats, or a new hire.

### **Owner / Operator**

Owner / operators are boat transporting companies that do it all. They are lone individuals or sometimes small teams. They operate their own truck equipment, answer their own calls and emails, and do their own scheduling. They are specialized haulers of boats only. You can feel confident that they will personally be the one showing up and transporting your boat. However, an owner/operator schedule is typically much tighter than the transport companies and the good ones can be booked 2 to 4 months in advance. You can enjoy a higher level of service and early planning is wise.



## **OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER PRIOR TO QUOTING:**

### **Measuring Your Boat For Transport:**

When requesting a quote to transport your boat, the dimensions are extremely important. To get the best possible price and avoid shipping and damage issues, these dimensions need to be very accurate and include every part of the vessel as it will be shipped. If you have questions, ask as necessary prior to agreeing to a move. Changes after a quote may result in added charges if significant.

**LENGTH OVERALL (LOA):** Include bow pulpits, swim platforms, outboard motor brackets, outboard motors themselves including the length of the motors or out drives in the raised and supported position. If on a trailer, include from the tip of the tongue to the end of the motor.

**OVERALL HEIGHT:** It is critical to measure from the bottom of the keel to the highest non-removable part of the boat. It is recommended to have the boat out of the water for measuring the height as it is very difficult to obtain an accurate measurement otherwise. The maximum legal height is 13 feet 6 inches without permits. Many oversized yachts require wide-belly low-boy trailers for the keel to set down low. Using these type trailers for tall yachts can sometimes be low enough to avoid using a pole car and added expenses. Boats with an overall height greater than 13.6' loaded on the trailer require special handling and routing. Again, it is critical to measure from the bottom of the keel to the highest non-removable part of the boat.

The fly bridge may need to be removed. If it is, it is important to measure the vessel without the bridge and provide bridge dimensions to ensure appropriate transport space. The bridge should be placed somewhere suitable on the boat and make certain it is safely secured using material to protect it. If it must be placed on the trailer, prepare a frame for secure transport. If your radar arch is removed, it should be secured against your boat. You might consider using carpet to protect areas where surfaces may "touch".

**OVERALL BEAM/WIDTH:** The beam of your boat is measured at the widest point of the boat including anything attached to the boat. Boats wider than 8 feet 6 inches are regarded as oversize permitted loads and require state permits as well as special routing. Having exact widths is important prior to quoting.

**DRAFT:** The distance between the lowest part of the boat in the water and the water line. This can be important if you need your boat to be placed in the water at destination. If so, this information is important prior to quoting.

### **ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE SHIPPED WITH YOUR BOAT?!?:**

It is important to inform your transporter of any additional items to be transported with your boat that are not stored aboard the boat itself. There may not be enough room on the trailer if these items are not considered and discussed prior to quoting. You also need to be careful not to increase any dimension (length, width, or height) of your boat by attaching additional items to it as the Department of Transportation considers this a divisible load and is not allowed as they expect it to be disassembled. Again, if your bridge, hardtop, arch, or any other item has been removed for transport and cannot be placed somewhere suitable on the boat and safely secured remember to provide the dimensions to ensure appropriate transport space on the trailer. If it must be placed on the trailer, a frame should be prepared for it to be secured on and the entire assembly can then be properly supported and secured to the trailer for transport. Electronics such as radios, Loran Systems, etc., should be shipped separately or securely stowed in your cabin, with all cabin doors, windows, and any other access points locked. Do not give the keys to the driver, he may not remember to return them upon delivery.



## **ROUTING:**

If your boat is not considered oversize, then mapping software like MapQuest can be a good estimate of the mileage. Keep in mind that most trucks are restricted to travel on the highways, so please check that option on your routing program. If your boat is listed as oversize, then the general rule of thumb is to add an extra 25% onto the above listed approach for estimating the trip length. States require that oversize vehicles stay on the routing they list on the permit which always adds extra miles onto the move.

## **CHOOSING THE RIGHT MARINA FOR YOUR BOAT TRANSPORT**

Here are some important questions to ask when choosing a marina for your transport. Calling them will help you understand as well how customer focused they are which is a consideration as well.

- Do they have a travel lift, crane, or fork-lift to load or offload your boat?
  - If they load or unload using a fork-lift, are they capable of doing so from the side of the trailer?
- If necessary, can they shrink-wrap your boat for transport?
  - Please see the comments on the down side of shrink wrap damage and evaluate cost/benefit of having it shrink wrapped
- Do they provide disassembly or reassembly of any part required for transport?
- Can they provide or assist with the preparation of the boat for transport? See specifics on prep prior to calling to ensure you can ask detailed questions if needed.
- Does the facility have enough overhead clearance, free from low-lying trees, branches, and wires? A clear path is required to get to where the boat needs to go.
- Does the facility accept low boy type long haul boat transport trailers with 6" of ground clearance? Steep drives, hills and such can cause trailers to get stuck on high ground.

## **QUOTING AND SELECTING A BOAT TRANSPORTER:**

### **CHOOSE AN EXPERIENCED BOAT TRANSPORTER**

Experienced boat transport companies and owner operators will have the necessary experience working with all aspects of your move. The value they provide includes working with the following agencies and departments among others:

The Department of Transportation, State Permit Departments, marinas, boat yards, required private and police escorts, requirements on hours of travel and routes, high pole cars when state regulations require them, and dealing with ports are but some of the areas they handle.

They bring extensive knowledge of the interstate highway system in transporting over width and over height boats nationwide to avoid unnecessary stress to your vessel. They will not move your boat if it is believed to be unsafe. Professional boat transporters also know how the boat must be supported, balanced, stabilized, and secured. They know how to properly distribute the weight of the boat across all the axles of the truck and trailer as well as how to correctly secure the boat to the trailer for the safety of your boat and to meet DOT requirements.



## **SAILBOAT TRANSPORTERS**

Special consideration should be taken for sailboats. Sailboat delivery is a delicate process that requires special equipment, knowledge and experience to master. Lighthouse Boat Haulers have the equipment to construct a custom cradle for each-and-every sailboat transport. Experience involves leaving adequate space to load additional items, calculating how much weight and the proper location of the vessel supports, and securing the boat to the trailer considering flexing while traveling down the highway. This, along with the permit and other expertise is why Lighthouse is a great choice for your next move.

## **ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION FOR QUALIFIED TRANSPORTERS**

Once you have narrowed your choice or are ready to select a hauler, there are a few other considerations in choosing an individual to transport your boat.

1. Verify that the company or driver is a legal hauler by checking their DOT Motor Carrier Number and Insurance. To do this, go to the [www.safersys.org](http://www.safersys.org) website, and click on licenses and insurance. Type in their MC# in the space provided and If they are a legitimate hauler, their file will have "active" beside their authority status and their insurance will be on file. If it says either "inactive" or "none" next to authority then they are not currently legal to be hauling.
2. If you've decided to try a Boat Transport Broker, then you should make sure that their broker authority is "active" and bond is on file. Many Boat Transport Brokers are operating with either inactive or no authority at all in which case you need to look elsewhere. Also, remember a broker generally adds costs to the process and can be a source of communication issues.
3. A company that accepts various forms of payment besides cash is a good sign. If a company only accepts cash as payment you should be concerned. They may not be a reliable carrier and they may not want a shipper to have leverage in the event of claims or damage arise during transport. However, also consider that credit cards typically add 3.5% to the transport costs, and many transporters do not want to pass that cost along to the customer so they may choose to not accept credit cards.
4. Be cautious of a quote that is significantly lower than other quotes. Typically get at least 2-3 quotes and ask questions to understand the variance. Prices in this industry also fluctuate based on the season due to supply and demand. The summer months are considered the prime season whereas the winter months are considered the slow season. If your timing is flexible you might consider having your boat transported during the winter. Transport prices are generally based on the miles from origin to destination and the size and weight of the boat being moved.
5. Do not try to cut costs by avoiding ordering permits or hiring escorts when moving your over-dimensional boat. Any company that attempts to do this is an extreme liability to their clients. If the beam of the boat is greater than 8'6" wide, or the boat on the trailer is greater than 13'6" high (in most states) then it is considered an oversized load and you should ask questions if the bid does not consider that aspect.



6. If you plan on using an Online Bidding or Auction style website to request bids it is important that you verify the shipper's authority and insurance prior to accepting any bids per the process above. These sites **DO NOT** always check the status of their members. Simply placing a bid on your boat move does not mean the bidder is a legal or capable transporter or have the correct equipment and insurance to move your boat. It is up to you to protect yourself by verifying their information. Make sure that the Motor Carrier Number matches the shipper's name or DBA information.

## **INSURANCE AND LIABILITY**

By law, all boat transportation companies are required to carry cargo insurance. Be sure the carrier's maximum insurance coverage is greater than your boats value. If there is a loss, you are only entitled to the lesser of the cost of repair or the boats actual value. Best practice is to have a Transportation Rider attached to your yacht policy. The shipper needs to be aware that the carrier does not warrant the condition, integrity, craftsmanship, or packing of any part of the boat. Damage attributed to the above items as well as wind and weather damage is not covered by the carrier.

## **MAKE YOUR SELECTION**

I hope the information Lighthouse Boat Haulers provided has helped get you to this important point in a successful move. A few things to further consider before making a selection include the following;

**NEVER SELECT SOLELY ON PRICE.** However, do not be afraid to do your due diligence and make a selection that happens to be more cost effective than another. If you ask informed questions and get good answers do not exclude them. Your experience, good upfront communication and repositiveness should be a factor as well.

If you choose another boat hauler for your project, but found our site to be helpful, please leave a note in the site comments, give us a good google review, and like us on social media as well please. Good luck and please keep us in mind for all your future needs!

