

TIPS ON HOW TO TRANSPORT A CANOE OR KAYAK

Ceyana Canoe Club (April 2022)

The 'OS Method' to tie boat to vehicle

This method was invented by the Bow Waters Canoe Club member Peter Kozlik. The 'OS' Method is considered the best as it uses **4 points** to securely tie down your boat to your vehicle – both ends of boat and 2 straps across middle of the boat. With 4 proper tie down points, your boat is less likely to fly off your vehicle and you are less likely to say 'Oh Sh\$%!'

Top Roof Rack Do's and Don'ts for Paddlers

Source: Paddling Magazine Issue 65

1. Upgrade your factory rack system to a base rack from a quality roof rack company. This is a set of feet and bars upon which all other rack accessories can be mounted.
2. Ensure your purchase the correct rack system for the year and model of your particular vehicle.
3. Place your bars as far apart as possible. The less the boat hangs past the front and rear bars the more the boat is supported in its straight-ahead position, and the less the boat is likely to turn in the wind.
4. Periodically check and tighten the fasteners that secure your rack to your vehicle. Most racks are rubber mounted and as rubber compresses and hardens with age the friction holding it in place reduces. The only thing worse than losing one boat from the rack is having the entire rack blow off.
5. Lube and periodically use the keys in the locks. Racks are exposed to the weather and can seize up.
6. Do not overload your factory racks – they are recommended for maximum of 70-pound load. Any sort of tension applied to the bars will warp them out of shape.
7. Do not get bars that extend past your roof. If you have the correct feet for your vehicle you can install up to 78-inch-long bars. The inconvenience of installing wider bars every time you need to haul 2 canoes is less than the pain of banging your head on the bars every time you use your vehicle!
8. If you use uprights don't get in the habit of leaving them up when not in use.
9. Don't go through the automatic car wash if have roof racks.

'How to Transport a Kayak or Canoe' Source: MEC website

Before you can start paddling, you'll have to negotiate the trip from the garage to the water's edge safely and securely. Once your boat is on your vehicle, check the straps for looseness after 10 minutes of driving and regularly during your trip.

Positioning a canoe or kayak on your vehicle

Position **canoes** with their open side down. This minimizes the risk of distortion and also stops rainwater from accumulating inside.

The best way to transport a **touring kayak** is to use kayak racks that have curved cradles to properly secure and protect your boat. If you don't have a special kayak rack, you can also transport it using curved foam blocks with the cockpit (open side) facing up.

For **whitewater kayaks**, kayak racks or rooftop kayak carriers are also the best way to transport them; depending on the rack system, your boat may have the cockpit facing up, down or even on its side.

Take extra care with plastic boats to avoid denting them and make sure to cover the cockpit if the boat is right side up. In rainy weather, seal the cockpits of an upright kayak with a cockpit cover. Check the boat periodically and pump it out if needed. Even a small amount of water in the kayak greatly increases the strain on straps and racks as you accelerate, brake or turn.

How to tie-down a kayak or canoe

If you're not using cradles or saddles with built-in straps, you'll need to tie down the kayak or canoe to the top of your vehicle. To do this, you'll need the following items:

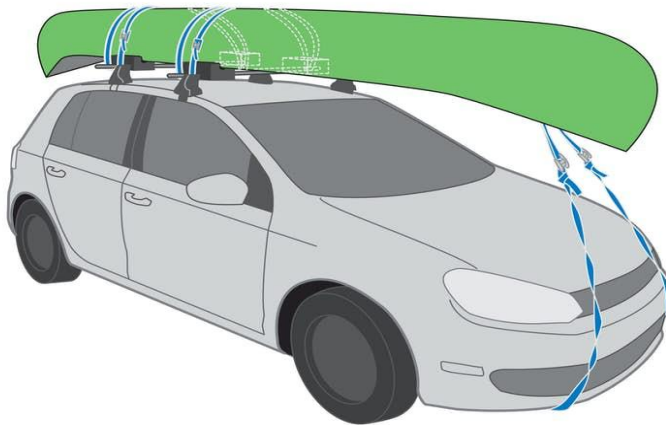
- Foam blocks
- 2 hull straps per boat
- 2 V-straps with hooks per boat, or cord (not needed for whitewater kayaks)

Make sure to use straps or rope that are static – you want very little stretch. Some ropes can stretch a lot when they get wet. Also avoid using ratchet straps, since they can create enough force to crush or damage a kayak or canoe.

“Always tie your boat down as soon as you put it on the roof of your vehicle. I know people who put their boat on top of their car, went to grab a coffee or got distracted by something else, and then drove off with their boat unsecured... until it shot off the roof.” – MEC staffer Tim M.

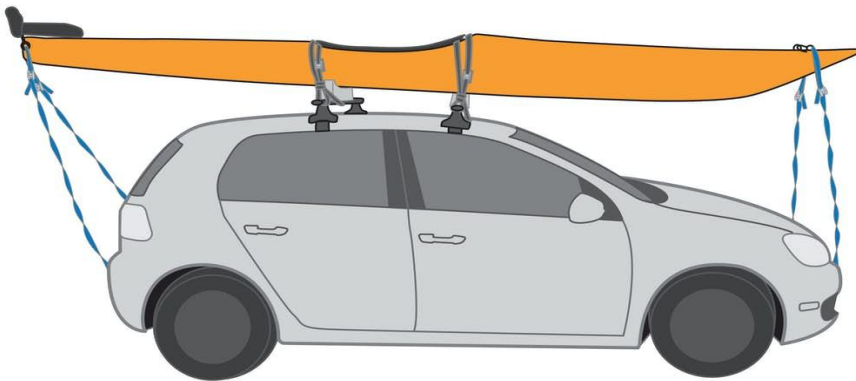
First, secure the hull straps:

- Place foam blocks under the hull or gunwales.
- Place a cam buckle against the boat. Run the other strap end over the end of the boat, under the roof rack bar, back up over the boat, under the rack bar, and up through the cam buckle. Tighten the strap by pulling down on the loose end. Wrap the excess strap around the roof rack bar a few times, and tie it off with a half-hitch knot.
- Repeat with the second hull strap.
- Make sure the straps run inside the rack towers to prevent them from slipping off.



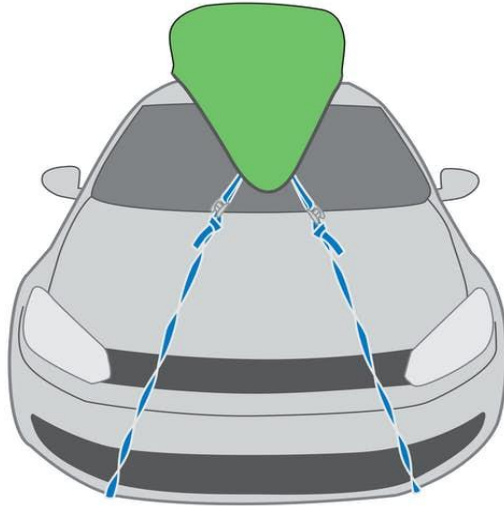
Hull straps and foam blocks in place.

For sea kayaks: to avoid boat slippage and damage to the cockpit rim, do not run straps over the cockpit. If your vehicle is large enough, line up the crossbars of your roof rack with the bulkheads of your kayak to support the boat.



Next, secure the front and back V-straps (you can also use cord)

- Attach the middle hook of one strap to a thwart (canoe) or U-bolt (touring kayaks).
- Twist the strap in a spiral to reduce vibration as you drive.
- Attach the end hook to a secure point under your bumper or underside of your vehicle.
- Repeat with the second strap and tighten then evenly by pulling down on the loose ends running from the cam buckles. Tie off the loose ends.
- Do not overtighten, as this can bend the boat. V-straps hold the boat into the wind – they don't need to hold the boat to the vehicle.



Front V-straps in place. The V-straps should not replace the hull straps.

Ensure your boat is securely attached to the car by grasping the bow and the stern in turn, and gently but firmly moving them side to side and up and down – you should be able to rock the car this way without having the boat slip or wiggle.

Use a red flag

In some provinces, loads that extend beyond the rear of a vehicle require a red flag or marker (check the local laws for where you'll be driving). If you use a flag that is visible from the driver's seat when the car is moving slowly, it'll also provide a useful guide for backing up the car without tapping objects or buildings with the back of your boat.