

# Boat Dock Safety



**IS YOUR DOCK AN  
ACCIDENT WAITING TO  
HAPPEN?**

**LAKE GASTON WATER  
SAFETY COUNCIL**

# Mooring cleats!

Most older docks have 'cow horn' type cleats bolted to the top side of the decking. VERY UNSAFE ON DECK!

Sketch out guest mooring for two boats and look for logical and safe mounting places for new safe cleats.

Check out you boats for hazardous cleats near where people climb on and off your boats.

Either purchase cleat covers or relocated boat mounted cleats if necessary





# CLEATS

Very important part of any boat dock.

You **HAVE** to have them, but you can make them as safe as possible!

**NEVER** tie your boat off to a loose or poorly secured cleat! Use a vertical support pole instead.

- Large cleats can be attached to the vertical poles supporting the decking, either above or below the deck, to keep deck clear.
- Cleats and the area around them can be painted bright safety yellow.
  - Makes them easy to see from deck or approaching boats.
- Make sure all cleats are attached properly with thru-bolts or at least large lag bolts.

# Cleats on boats may be hazardous



# There are safer boat cleats



# Climbing INTO and OUT of Boats



**THESE ARE TWO OF THE MOST  
DANGEROUS THINGS YOU WILL DO  
ON YOUR BOAT DOCK!**

**LOOK AROUND LOADING AREA WITH  
“NEW EYES”**

**LET COMMON SENSE BE YOUR GUIDE!**

**USE HANDICAP ACCESSORIES TO  
MAKE BOARDING SAFE**





- Gap too large
- No handholds
- Slippery decking
- Slippery Boat
- Safe step
- Proper height



**Most dangerous action on dock?  
Embarking and disembarking boats**



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Most Handicap accessories made for the modern home or business can and should be adapted for use on your boat dock even if no one in your family or circle of friends are disabled!

Falling between the boat and dock can be fatal!





Ask ANY boat lift manufacturer if they recommend climbing into a boat lifted out of the water?

Not one will say it is OK

Always lower boat until it is just about floating.

Stabilize boat and help passengers board.

Do the same when climbing out of the boat onto a boat dock



**DO NOT let anyone board a vessel while it is lifted OUT of the water!**



## **Handicapped passengers need special consideration**

Before attempting this, make sure boat lift is capable of lifting total weight involved, and is in perfect working order.

Once handicapped passenger is loaded, lower boat to proper loading position for all other passengers.

- When boarding handicapped passengers: Try to have boat deck level with dock and use a solid ramp topped with 'grip tape'.
- Always try to have two assistants, one on either side of person boarding.
- Unless wheel chair or scooter can be secured to deck, have passenger transfer to a secure boat seat.
- Otherwise, do not attempt!



# Boat Lifts



**BOAT LIFTS CAN BE DANGEROUS**

**REALLY SIMPLE MECHANISMS TO MAINTAIN  
WITH PROPER KNOWLEDGE**

**LAKE GASTON FORTUNATE TO HAVE TWO  
MANUFACTURERS RIGHT HERE**

**INSPECT LIFTS REGULARLY**

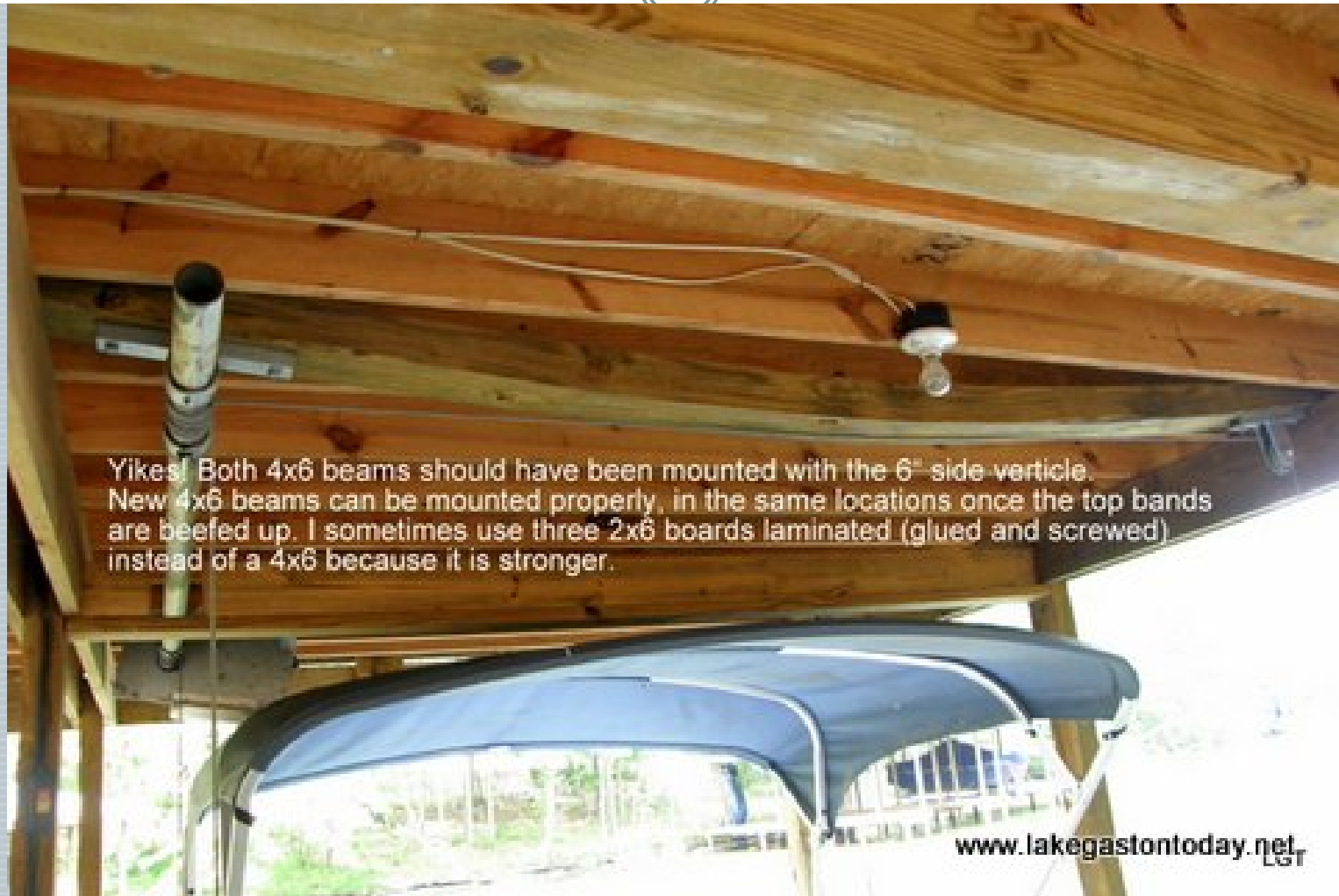
# Inspecting YOUR Boat Lifts



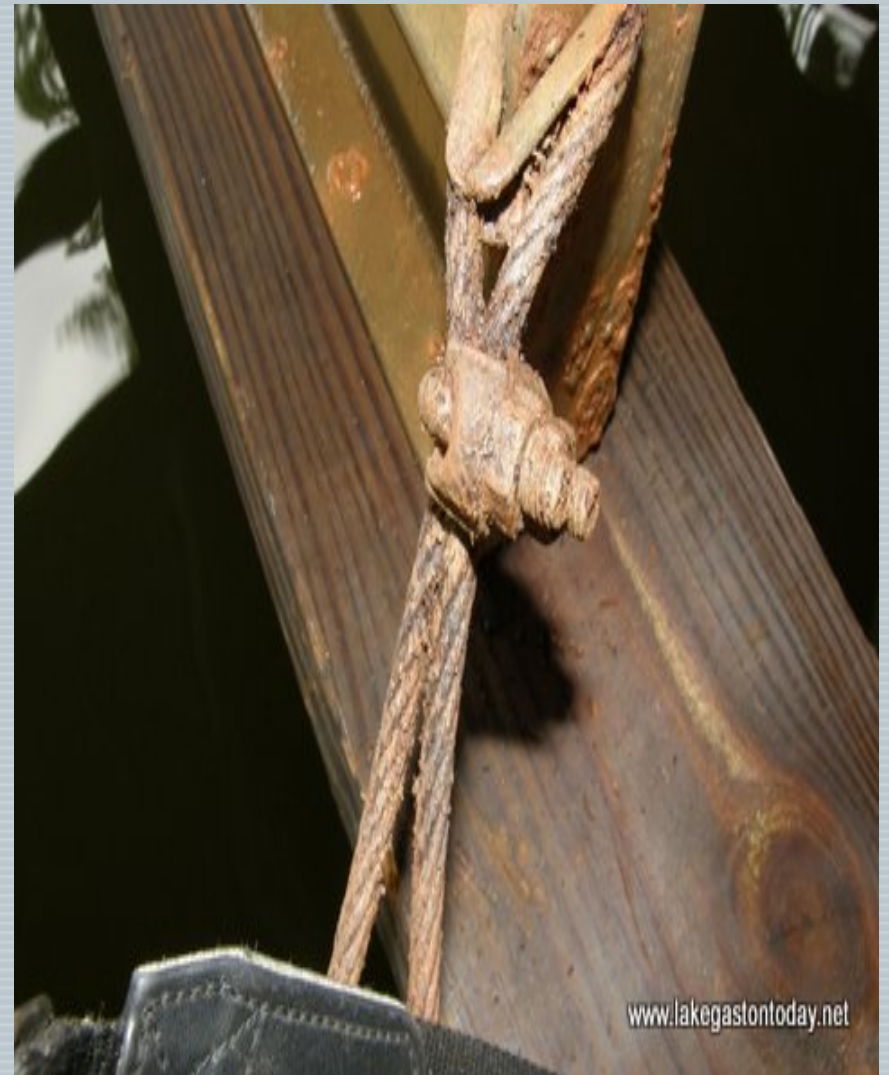
- Is boat sitting level in lift?
- Lift cables, clamps and cable saddles.
- Switch working properly up and down.
- LOOK UP!
- Are cables winding properly on lifting pole?
- Screeching noise is NOT good!
- Are all galvanized brackets and pulleys attached securely?
- Are top bands of boat dock bolted to poles?



# Look UP!









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Motor Plate is almost perfectly straight.  
Pulleys and belt now line up properly.  
All mounting bolts also now have lock  
washers. Doozie didn't call for them but  
I believe they are necessary due to  
vibration inherent in this lift.





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Check entire decking area and  
steps if you have them



**LOOK FOR POPPED UP NAILS!**

**LOOK FOR SPLIT BOARDS**

**LOOK FOR BOARDS CURLING UP**



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**If you have a boat dock... YOU need these tools**



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# LADDERS

Ladders are just as dangerous as climbing into and out of boats!

- Dock ladders come in all shapes and sizes.
- So do PEOPLE! So purchase a ladder that can hold the largest people you know!
- Make sure all ladders are attached properly and kept tightened.
- Inspect homemade ladders regularly!
- Clean ladder rungs with stiff brush to remove slippery slime before guests arrive.



# ELECTRICITY over WATER?



**NEVER SOUNDED LIKE A GOOD IDEA!**

**THIS IS NOT AN AREA A TYPICAL  
HOMEOWNER SHOULD MESS WITH**

**PLENTY OF GOOD ELECTRICIANS AROUND  
LAKE GASTON WITH MARINE ELECTRICAL  
EXPERIENCE**

**HAVE A PRO CHECK IT OUT**



# Large Electrical enclosure for a typical Boat House

Most homeowners would see absolutely nothing wrong with this installation. In fact, this PASSED a county inspection!



A boat house panel is usually a SUB PANEL and must have a SPLIT BUSS for ground and neutral wires.

ALSO! And just as important

It must have a separate driven ground attached to panel box and motor plate!





## **WHY IS ELECTRIC SHOCK DROWNING A SILENT KILLER?**

There is no visible warning or way to tell if water surrounding The boat, marina or dock is energized or within seconds will become energized with fatal levels of electricity.



**Electricity IN the water is NOT a good idea.... ABOVE the water is a much better and safer plan.**

# New irrigation systems on Lakes can be UNSAFE!



**SUBMERSIBLE WELL PUMPS WERE MADE FOR PUMPING  
WATER OUT OF A WELL, NOT THE LAKE!**

**FOR MANY YEARS THESE PUMPS WERE NOT USED IN  
LAKES. MOST IRRIGATION PUMPS WERE MOUNTED  
INSIDE BOAT HOUSES.**

**WITH THE INCREASE IN LANDSCAPING LARGE  
EXPENSIVE PROPERTIES, SUBMERSIBLE WELL PUMPS  
BECAME PREVALENT**

# WHY IS ELECTRIC SHOCK DROWNING A SILENT KILLER?



- There is no warning about electricity in the water!
- Submersible well pumps were never intended to be used in lakes, despite what irrigation companies tell you.
- When the irrigation system is off, there is no electricity in the water, but when that timer comes on, the pump start relay sends 220 volts down into the water to start the pump.
- Would you want to be in the water when that happens?

<http://www.electricshockdrowning.org>



- **My Take on Electric shock on Lake Gaston**
- Boat lifts can be dangerous, but submersible well pumps could be the worst thing to happen at ANY lake! Very dangerous to say the LEAST!

**Upper deck!**



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# PARTY on the UPPER DECK?



**KIDS LOVE UPPER DECKS!**

**INSURANCE AGENTS HATE  
UPPER DECKS**

**PERSONAL INJURY ATTORNEYS  
LOVE UPPER DECKS MORE  
THAN ANYONE!**



# Secure upper deck railings and jump gate!





## Maintenance intensive!

Lots of wood  
preservative!

Baking sun all day!

Post, railings and  
pickets always coming  
loose.

Smaller, lighter decking  
boards need replacing  
twice as often!

- Are supporting bands **BOLTED** to support posts?
- **ANGLE BRACES** in place?
- All railings and pickets securely fastened?
- Do you have a **JUMP GATE**?
- Is it securely mounted and locked?
- Do you have **SIGNS** in place?







# USE SIGNS!!!

Protect  
yourself!

Protect your  
family and  
friends.

Protect your  
kids and  
grandkids from  
themselves!

- NO RUNNING!
- No more than 5 people on Upper Deck at any time! (1,000 lbs)
  - (for single walk-on boat house)
- DO NOT LEAN OR SIT ON RAILINGS!
- NO ONE ON UPPER DECK without permission from owner!
- No JUMPING from upper deck without permission from owner!

# Ever thought about what's under your dock?



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# Underwater Survey!

DIVING hazards!

Inspect for  
protruding nails  
and bolts

Check for under  
decking wasp nests

Clear old tangled  
fishing lines.

All you need is a  
mask, fins and  
snorkel.





# FIRE EXTINGUISHER



**PLEASE**

**KEEP ONE OF THESE  
ON YOUR BOAT DOCK!**

**MOST IMPORTANT PART**

**LIFESAVING  
GEAR**

and

**LEARN CPR!**





## LIFESAVING EQUIPMENT FOR DOCK

Go over lifesaving procedures with your family and guests

Never go into the water to save a swimmer in trouble unless you HAVE to....

Use throw ring or pole first! Only go in after them as a last resort!

You LIVE at the water, get comfortable IN the water.

- Large solid float ring with non-kinking rope attached.
  - Keep on a covered outside wall in plain view.
  - Practice with this!
- Telescoping Boat Hook/Pole
  - Keep just above throw ring
  - Keep well lubed and practice using
- First Aid Kit – well stocked
- Emergency Blanket
- Tool box with knife inside



## What ME Worry?

If you have given your boat dock a thorough safety inspection and performed the necessary simple maintenance, you can relax!

You will find yourself spotting little things you can do to make your dock safer.

You will have a worry-free spring and summer!

● Have a  
**SAFE,  
WORRY-  
FREE, FUN  
Summer!**