

Safe Use of the Tractor

As an aid to safe use of the club tractor. All drivers should take careful note of the following points and be sure that they fully understand them and their ramifications.

The current tractor is a Case 850X, this unit has a 4 wheel drive capability.

Drivers

The only persons permitted to drive the tractor as those named on the register help by the lifting group leader or a third party contracted to carry out maintenance.

Slope & Slip

It must be clearly understood that the tractor should be kept on the upper, more level, part of the slipway: It's weight will not prevent it sliding on a muddy i.e. lubricated surface. Understand that ships weighing thousands of tons are launched down simple lubricated ways having a slope similar to that of our slipway. Safe practice demands use of the long haul-up cables to keep the tractor on the mud-free upper part of the slipway.

Passengers

With our present tractor (a C A S E) it is acceptable to carry a passenger in the cab for purposes of training and familiarisation but it is bad practice to allow a social passenger because of the almost certain likelihood of the driver being distracted by conversation.

Tractor Speed

The tractor should always be driven about the site at low speed and in low range. With the hoist connected the tractor should only be driven at the walking pace of the steersman.

Under no circumstances should a driver Free-wheel or lower the hoist down the slipway on the brakes. It will inevitably result in a series of runs and snatches. Nor should it be thought that a launch can be speeded up by slipping the clutch! The hoist can only make a controlled launch with someone steering it and that person can only proceed at a walking pace.

If the final entry into the water is speeded by clutch-slipping to create a lifeboat launch, the momentum built-up will cause the boat to charge backwards as she floats and the slings to come slack. Then as she is arrested by the loose slings, she will be propelled violently back into the hoist; to the great danger of both the hoist crew and the boat. None of the foregoing is necessary and is grossly irresponsible; it is courting disaster. Never allow slack to develop in the tow rope. the shock of the resulting snatch will result in damage and possible personal injury.

Our tractor has an excellent crawler gear: be sure to use it to maintain a slow, safe, progress.

Fuel

Diesel for the tractor is obtained in plastic Jerry Cans. Any fuel should only be poured into the tank through a funnel having a fine mesh filter gauze.

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Proper use of signalling

Make sure that the team you are working with fully understand that voice communication with the driver is impossible and that "Cane Speak" is to be used. Agree with the team who is going to give the signals.

Public Crossing the Footpath

Be aware of the dangers to the public when crossing the footpath and insist on the use of the warning signs. If possible have a lookout at the footpath, but in any case be aware of any public in the vicinity of the slipway. Be prepared to stop to allow members of the public to cross the slipway.

Use of the Tow Bar

When on level ground be sure to move the hoist only by connection to the tow bar. Remember the hoist has no brakes. trying to tow with a wire on level ground will lead sooner or later to the hoist running forward. Position the tractor so that it runs in front of the hoist and avoid the tow bar jackknifing. In tight situation is sometimes necessary to disconnect the tractor and reposition it so that it has a straighter connection to the hoist.

Security

Do not lend your key or allow any unauthorised driver to use the tractor. If the tractor is to be left unattended the key is to be removed to prevent unauthorised use.