

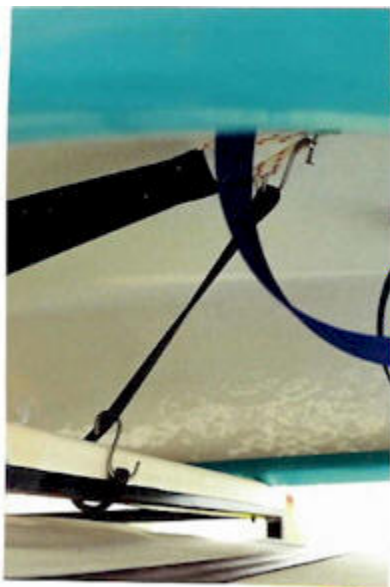
## Tie Down and Protection

This is a most critical part of traveling with the Optimist be it one or a dozen boats. Having a boat get loose can cause an accident and is sure to ruin your weekend. At least 3 to 4 Optimist fly off someone's vehicle roof every year. We at the factory have lost 4. All were on the Interstate Highway at maximum allowable speed. The boats surprisingly come through such an adventure in remarkably good condition. McLaughlin has put every road kill Optimist back on the water and they were structurally sound. But still precaution is the best prevention.

A little known fact is that most homeowner Insurance policies covers your Optimist for \$1000 to \$1200 without any rider or marine policy. Check your policy under the personal property section.

## Backup Safety System

What ever system you use rooftop or trailer there should be a back up, fail safe tie down. The back up can be as simple as your painter going to the front grill and a line from either the air bag hiking straps or gudgeons to the rear bumper or trailer hitch. If there is a failure of your main tie down system your back up will allow you time to pull over and prevent an accident.



Another back up system is once you have a fore and aft strap tight in place run a line between them and cinch the two together. If the boat moves in any direction the cinch strap will tighten both the straps keeping the knots from coming undone. Trust me it works.

When you tie down the boat you can use straps (Thule gives you two) or line both fore and aft. Try to stay a little away from the bow because the slope and narrowing tends to make the strap go forward and loosen. With line what is referred to as a rolling hitch, canoeist hitch or truckers hitch doubles your power and holds the line tight while you tie the knot. This knot is strong, secure and allows you to easily untie your boat when you get to your destination.



Polyethylene ski rope stretches especially in rain, avoid it.

You must protect the boat from touching hard abrasive surfaces like metal. Over a long trip they will wear through the outer gelcoat of your boat. Canvas covered foam pads are available from most Marine stores. Carpet, pipe insulation foam, rags and even cardboard work well. Some line can also be abrasive, especially where it goes over the edge of the boat. Slipping a small square of cardboard or carpet under the line at this point will protect your boat bottom cover, which can wear through in one trip. The small squares can be slipped into place after the lines are secured.



Be sure the excess tails of your lines are secure. A bowline or boat strap dropping on the road and getting under a tire can blow out the tire and damage the boat.



Removing Air Bags on a long trip is recommended unless you have a top cover. The vibration can wear a hole in the bag and will definitely shorten its life. A top cover will keep all the lines and parts from dropping

out of the boat including the mast step cup, which tends to vibrate and back off the adjustment nut. The result is the mast cup and nut fall off on the highway. We have seen many a family arrive at an event only to discover they have no mast step. McLaughlin puts a rubber stopper on the screw end to prevent this but a dab of silicon adhesive or even a rubber band will do.

**McLaughlin Boat Works, World Champion Boatbuilder For Over 40 Years.**