

## **Purchasing a Boat Lift or Dock -- Questions For Competition.**

**1. Will your boat lift or dock work at my water site?** Some companies will sell you their products without even checking to make sure it will work at your site. Shallow water, deep water, fluctuating waters, muddy, rocky or uneven sea floors, no existing infrastructure to attach to, winter iced-in locations, etc., can all mean the boat lift or dock you just bought won't suffice at your location. Make sure!

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**2. Will the product adequately dock or dry-dock my boat?** Don't just take their word for it, ask for pictures or references. Many companies sell boat lifts that really do not keep your watercraft completely out of the water. Use your common sense – can a 10 pound sausage fit in an 8 pound bag? Make sure.

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**3. What happens when I get a bigger boat?** The average person only keeps their boat or pwc for 4 years. When you change your boat you need to change your boat lift or dock. Most boat lift systems are not modular or changeable. Look for systems that can expand or contract with your needs.

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**4. What happens when I move?** Many types of boat lifts and docks become fixtures to land or are so cumbersome to move that they are simply not portable. Find out if you can take your investment with you.

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**5. How long will this product last?** Most boat docks and lifts have warranties that vary from 1 to 10 years. But be careful – a “five year warranty” may only be on a minor portion of the product, while the remaining portion – often the most expensive mechanical parts – carry only a 1 or 2 season guarantee. Obviously, a lifetime warranty says a lot about a product’s quality and design.

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**6. Can I easily use this boat lift by myself?** One of the most relaxing and satisfying boating experiences can be had when riding by yourself. Check to be sure you can easily or practically use the boat lifting system without a helper or two. Some systems are very tedious to use solo, or darn near impossible. Make sure you can launch and dock by yourself!

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**7. Can I fully access my watercraft on this boat lift?** Some boat lifting devices do a wonderful job lifting a boat in the air. But, for that matter, so do tow motors and cranes. The problem is that *you* can’t access the craft for easy boarding, loading, launching, dry-docking, unloading, cleaning, fueling or maintaining. When comparing boat lifting devices, make sure you consider the boarding and access – this is critical to your boating fun.

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**8. What happens if your boat dock or lift breaks?** Everything in the world – especially in the marine world – can break. The difference between a good boat dock or lift investment and a poor one is what you do to fix them when they break. Look for a system that has easy to replace modular sections, or does not need professional expertise, mechanics or a complete replacement when the “oops” happens.

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**9. What are the maintenance costs?** Even when your boat lift or dock does not break or fail, it still will require some kinds of maintenance. Check to see if you can do it yourself and if not what annual costs you should expect.

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**10. Does your boat lifting device need a permit?** In many areas, permanent structures can require a lengthy and costly permitting process. To avoid this, look for portable boat lifting devices that are sold as retail products, and check with your local authorities about the requirements for them. Almost without fail, the portable systems require a less involved or non-existent permitting process.

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**11. What other add-on costs could there be?** Some boat lift and docking alternatives can involve many unforeseen costs. Permitting, dredging, pile-driving, environmental mitigation, gangways, access walkways, concrete footers, seawall reinforcing or rebuilding, electrical wiring, etc., all represent costs that may not have been considered along with the initial quote. What once looked like the least-cost alternative may end-up being the highest-cost, and not necessarily in return for the highest quality option. Look for products and quotes that are all-inclusive and do not rely on building or re-building existing infrastructure.

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**12. Will your boat lift be allowed at my marina?** Many marinas and waterside condo associations have restrictions on mechanical boat lifts that can alter the existing docking structure or block the view of neighbors. Check to make sure that the alternatives you are researching will be allowed at your marina, and strongly consider a low-profile, floating dry-docking solution that does not rest on the existing docking structures or block the view of others.

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**13. What is it like to communicate with your company?** As is true for all purchases you make, think about how easy or difficult it is to communicate with that boat dock or lift company. If you have to leave messages, call back several times, wait for someone with knowledge to call you back, wait for information in the mail, experience delays or reluctance to get a firm, meaningful quote, then you need to seek alternatives. A boat lift or dock is a major investment – make sure you are dealing with company that is easy to communicate with, now and *after* you make your purchase.

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**14. What questions did the boat lift company have for me?** The last question isn't a question for your competitors at all – it's actually a question for yourself. After communicating with a boat dock or lift company, ask yourself how painstaking they were about collecting information on you and your docking needs. The less they want to know about you and your situation, the more you should consider looking elsewhere. Not sure what they should be asking of you? Try taking our Dock Wizard and see.

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There are many more questions to ask about each particular situation and need. The above are some very critical, yet simple questions to consider when making your important investment into a boat lift or docking purchase. At Jet Dock, our people are members of a knowledgeable, well-trained and conscientious sales, customer service, accounting, shipping, production and field operations team to make sure your project goes right. Invest wisely. Invest in the Jet Dock system.