

Choosing a Rigid Dinghy / Sports Boat

Open row boat and/or tiller steer motor 2.6 – 3.5m



Marine Ally 10 / F 5

Remote steering and seating 3.5 - 5 m



Rigiflex Cap 400 / 40 hp

Guide to main features

Suitable for children	Yes to row & motor slowly
Car topable	Yes up to 10'
Requires Trailer	Above 10' probably
Unsinkable	Yes
Suitable for remote steering	Not Really
Suitable for tow watersports	No
Suitable for the sea	Inshore only

Guide to main features

Suitable for children	Not Really
Car topable	NO
Requires trailer	Yes
Unsinkable	Yes
Suitable for remote steering	Yes
Suitable for tow watersports	Yes
Suitable for the sea	Coastal Yes

There are a lot of issues to consider in choosing a craft of this type. What we are NOT looking at here is "proper" sports boats like a Fletcher or a Boston Whaler / Dory, we are looking at low cost SIMPLE robust dinghies, if you go to the larger end of the size range they can take 40 + hp motors and have seats and can be fitted to a high standard but they are still a dinghy. If you want serious sea keeping then you really need to look at some thing else. BUT if you want a safe craft to use in the sea and be value for money these sorts of craft are ideal.

What questions do I need to ask myself to help me decide which craft I need?

- How am I going to transport it?
- What should it be made of plastic, aluminium or fibreglass.
- Who is going to use it?
- Will I row or motor or both?
- If motoring do I want a steering wheel ?
- How many people do I want to carry?
- How far do I want to go in the boat ?
- Is it suitable for the water conditions that I will be using it in?

Below we cover each of these points in turn and advise what is suitable, once you have had a look at this contact us to discuss the craft further. We also have pages on the web site that cover each make of Rigid craft in much more detail.

How am I going to transport it?

Obviously this will depend on your car but typically on a roof rack you can carry upto a 10' (3 m) Craft. Obviously weight is an issue and Aluminium craft are by far the lightest with single skin craft like the Walker Bay being the lightest plastic option. Craft like the Pioneer or Rigiflex are





Folding Trolley, it is NOT a trailer and can not be towed by a car

also plastic but being double skin they are MUCH heavier.

The Max load on most roof racks is 50 Kgs

If a roof rack is not an option then it HAS to go on a trailer. It does not have to be a boat trailer, we see lots of people collect these craft with box / luggage trailers but a proper little boat trailer is the best option as you can get it in to the water off the road trailer.

We do sell folding trolleys that you can use to launch a craft that is carried on a roof rack and you can fit launching wheels to some craft.

What should it be made of plastic, aluminium of fibreglass ?



This is in part decided by how you are going to transport the craft, if you are roof racking then Aluminium saves you weight. Once you are on a trailer weight is less of an issue and then it is a decision based on looks, use the craft will be put to etc:

ALUMINIUM: The Lightest option and probably the most durable, it can take major knocks and dragging over rocks that will damage / split even the toughest of plastics. If the craft is to be left outside the sun does not degrade ally, the fact it is light means often the sides are higher than on a plastic boat yet the boat is still lighter and a lighter boat is easier to drive with an OB or to row. If damaged ally boats can EASILY be welded and repaired.

LEFT: 12' Ally craft planning with a F 6 hp and 2 adults, a boat like this weighs 50 Kgs, a plastic craft like this will weigh 70 Kgs +

DOUBLE SKIN PLASTIC: Rigiflex and Pioner are of this construction, the plastic is thick and they are VERY Tough, they will take a huge amount of abuse but they are heavy with a 10' (3 m) boat weighing 74 Kgs Again they keep the classic look of a row boat and of all the options have the most built in buoyancy. Because the plastic is thicker and of a type that can be welded they can be fixed if damaged. This is not easy and there are not many places that can weld this sort of material but it can be done. **Shown to the left is a Pioner 10'**



Pioner 10'

FIBREGLASS: This is what dinghies USED to be made of, no one really makes this sort of craft in fibreglass any more (On a commercial basis) It is heavy and costly. We do not offer such craft.

WOOD: Contact Noah @ noah@wood_boats_are_us.org seriously this is a niche product, hugely costly and requiring a LOT of maintenance, We do not offer such craft.

Who is going to use it?



This is really about children and where you will launch / store the boat whilst it is in use, weight needs to be kept in mind if you are aiming to drag it up beaches and you need to think about how many people you want in a craft, stability is completely lost if you overload a solid dinghy so make sure that you have MORE than enough capacity for the number of people that you need to carry.

This is NOT like an inflatable so overloading MUST be avoided, these are stable craft as the image to the left shows as long as you do not overload.

Also the engine that you use with it needs to be of a size that children, if using the craft unsupervised can not get in to trouble with.

Will I row or motor or both?



If you want to row buy a boat that can be rowed properly, if it is too wide it will not row easily, if the bow is blunt it will not row as easily as a craft with a pointed bow. If the craft has a flat bottom it will not have any direction stability and this makes rowing much harder. If you are rowing hard look for a craft that has a GOOD ROWLOCK design so that you can pull against it, some of the craft do not have this! A rowlock with a top bolt that stops the oar coming out of the unit is best, metal is better than plastic.



Good Solid Metal Rowlocks

If you want to motor all the time then make sure you look at craft that can cope with having weight at the back of the craft.

Rowing as the sole means of propulsion is not really viable over 14', as you can see the 15 Ally craft to the Left is great under power but will be too big to row.

If motoring do I want a steering wheel ?

Steering takes up room in the boat so in craft under 12' you may only add this if you want a child to have more control than a tiller steer option gives them. If the motor is 8 hp and larger then remotes do allow the engine / boat to be used for longer periods than tiller steering.



Rigiflex Cap 370

Not all craft will have as good a steering options as others and you need to think about weight distribution. If you are sitting to one side in the craft to steer and often in the boat on your own you may find that the boat is leaning to one side all the time, here you be better off looking for a craft that you can sit more in the centre. If you always have people in the craft with you it does matter so much as they can act as ballast. Steering also has a big cost implications literally adding £1,000's with the cost of the steering and the extra for a remote control motor.

How many people do I want to carry?

In craft of 10' (3 m) or less you are looking 2-4 persons maximum. Upto say 15' (4.5 m) you are in the 4-7 person range, to carry more than that you need a craft of 17' / 5 m plus.

How far do I want to go in the boat?



A High sided Craft, Pioneer Viking, that will have good sea keeping

We are talking about motoring here and range re fuel. Motors with inboard 1 L tanks will run at most an hour or two (F 2 – 6 hp) and that gives you at best a few miles, no more than 8 and probably a LOT less.

If you want range buy a craft that will take a motor that can have a remote tank, if you think you want to go on "long" journeys it is worth considering steering and if you want to go in the rough get a boat that can. I think you need to be looking at 15' (4.5 m) as a minimum.



Fishing From a 4.5 m craft off the West Coast of Scotland

Is it suitable for the water conditions that I will be using it in?

Here you need to seek advice (from us) we have a lot of experience of USING this sort of craft and can offer first hand experience and advice to help you decide what is best suited to what you want to do and where you want to go.

We can supply all the equipment you need

What is the balance between sea keeping and stability at rest ?



A wide Bow: Rigiflex Aquapeche 370

You trade one against the other in the smaller craft and in the larger craft (over 4.5 m) they are stable just by being bigger.

Stability in a small craft is achieved with a flat bottom and this makes the craft VERY stable indeed. To give a good ride in the rough a V hull is a big advantage but as the V gets deeper at rest the craft will be less stable. A V hull also gives directional stability when moving, a completely flat bottom to the craft will mean it "slides" all over the place rather than cutting through the water.



Deep V Hull, Pioner 12



What most craft do is have a V at the bow to give direction and then flatten to give stability over most of the hull, this with a very square / wide bow makes the boat VERY stable at rest and slow speed and a lot of deck space BUT a craft like this will not be good in the rough.

What do boats come with ? and what else will I need ?

Boats come with NOTHING so you will need to think about all the other kit.

Lifejackets, Flares, Anchor, Fenders, VHF Radio, Compass, GPS, Echo Sounder, mooring ropes, Insurance, Security devices (Wheel Clamps and Engine Locks)

We can offer all the advice you need to sort out the craft for you so contact us today.

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