

Q. Why do I need a Skamper-Ramp if I have a fenced pool or I have trained my dog to the steps?

A. Fence gates do get opened and don't always get securely closed, and many animals manage to get over or under fencing. In training a pet to the steps (which are underwater and can't be seen by the pet), you have actually trained your pet to some marker, usually a visible plant, but do you know exactly what that marker is that your pet is using? What if that potted plant is moved for a party, or the tree/shrub/hedge gets cut down, or remodeling changes the landscape — how will your pet find the steps then? And while you may have trained your dog to the steps, that is when you go to the pool with them, not necessarily when you are not there. What if they are spooked, chased, or fall in, or if some other animal gets to your pool? Then the situation is not the same. There is great value to the peace of mind that comes from knowing there is one additional, inexpensive means of drowning prevention in addition to your fence and/or your training.

Q. What about vinyl-liner pools and above ground pools?

A. Either the blowmolded Skamper-Ramp (SKR4) or blowmolded Super Skamper-Ramp (SKR3) works well for permanent vinyl liner pools — in-ground or above-ground (steel walled) — making sure that an animal's claws don't puncture the pool liner. If you have a deck surface that overhangs the pool wall by 1" or more, make sure you re-lace the ramp's rope to the set of holes below the Skamper-Ramp logo so that the ramp can be snugged under the overhang, directly against the side wall. Note that Skamper-Ramps are designed for regular, even frequent, usage in vinyl pools. Its totally smooth edges will not cut or wear on your liner, even if it is used for regular ingress and egress by your pet.

Soft-sided, non-permanent, above-ground pools require an adaptation to accommodate a Skamper-Ramp. You could try to adapt your deck (primarily by affixing a 1x10 x 18" board under the deck with a brace behind it holding it perpendicular to the deck and parallel to the pool wall) so that the Skamper-Ramp will have a rigid flat surface to brace against so that animals can escape using it.

Q. How does it install to a boat or a dock?

A. Because Skamper-Ramp was originally designed for use in pools, dock installation is easy if there is a vertical face to the dock. Simply tie both rope ends to one cleat and make sure the ramp is snug to the dock face.

Boat installation often requires some ingenuity, and awareness that chop may kick it up. Outboard motors are the easiest — simply brace the ramp on the stern alongside a motor and tie both ropes to one stern cleat.

With a swim ladder, some people re-lace the rope to the set of holes below the Skamper-Ramp logo and then tie it around the ladder rails, and brace it between the top rung and the bottom of the platform, so that the underside of the platform keeps the ramp from going vertical.

With a large platform that is high off the water, some people put eye hooks on the underside of the platform about 6" back from the end. Then re-lace the rope so that you can tie the ramp through the eye hooks and back down through the ramp, allowing the ramp to stay dragging behind and under the boat. The advantage to this is that in chop it won't kick up and the underside of the platform allows a brace so the ramp doesn't go vertical.

The back ("open box") end of the ramp requires approximately 6" of a vertical surface to brace against, or must have the underside of a rigid horizontal surface to brace against. As with pool installation, the ramp also must have at least 3" submerged beneath the water. If your boat gunwale is especially high out of the water (like many sailboats) or has a sloped transom/stern or no place to create a brace, it may not be appropriate for your boat.

Q. How is it kept in optimal working condition?

A. Skamper-Ramps are truly low maintenance. For both Skamper-Ramp models it is important, from time to time, to check and make sure the rope is as taut as can be so the ramp is very snug against the vertical wall.

Q. What is it made of?

A. The new Skamper-Ramp and Super Skamper-Ramp are blowmolded using white polyethylene, and are chemical- and UV/solar-resistant. Neither Skamper-Ramp model will become yellow, mildewed, or scummy over time — and it won't grow barnacles. The fabrication method ensures that both models are lightweight as well as durable, providing tremendous strength-to-weight ratio and affordability! Each ramp comes complete with the necessary hardware for assembly and installation — rope, stainless steel d-ring clips for deck mounting, and washers and snaps together for quick assembly. The only additional parts you will need to purchase separately, for any of our ramps, are the 1/4" stainless steel pan-head screws about 1.5" long (and concrete anchors) required by your pool deck surface.

Q. Will I need anything more for installation?

A. The ramps come complete with all the necessary assembly hardware

for proper installation, except they do not have the screws/bolts for wood or masonry decking. If you do not plan to tie your Skamper-Ramp to existing fencing or cover anchors, we suggest a 1/4" pan-head stainless steel screw that is 1 3/8" long and a plastic or lead concrete anchor for sinking into your concrete pool deck. For a wooden deck, or dock not utilizing existing cleats, we suggest a 1/4" pan-head stainless steel screw that is 1.5" long (or 2" carriage bolt). Hardware for attaching the D-ring-clips to the pool deck HAS NOT been supplied due to the wide variety of deck types and materials as well as uses of Skamper-Ramps. Your local hardware/home improvement store or pool service company is a great resource to help make the appropriate selection.

Q. Are there alternative anchoring methods?

A. For Skamper-Ramp owners who don't want to drill into their decks, it is possible to use alternative tie down points such as pool cover attachment points, skimmers, railings and water levelers. There are many creative ways to attach the ramp. You just want to ensure that the ropes are not spread too far away from being parallel, that the back and wings have a surface to rest snugly against, and that the force is downward (diagonal vectors) so it does not pull purely horizontally (or it will pull out). There is no one right way to install a Skamper-Ramp, but two criteria are critical: 1) a few inches of the round nose end need to be submerged so that the white breaks the water surface so the animal will see the white while swimming, even in stress; and 2) it needs to be snug to a rigid, flat, vertical wall so that a critter or pet on the end of the Skamper-Ramp has something to brace against. It is the open-box-end and stabilizing wing-strips that provide rigidity and robustness, especially when braced against a vertical element, that makes it work. The most important point about the installation is to have the Skamper-Ramp as snug to the pool edge as possible, while still having a few inches of the nose end of the ramp underwater. To accomplish that, there are two sets of holes for threading the connection rope through, one above the Skamper-Ramp name and one below, in order to accommodate deep copings or flush edges.

Q. How long will it last?

A. We know it will hold up for five or more years. We have ones installed that have lasted that long and are still going strong. Skamper-Ramp has not been around long enough to determine an end-life beyond that.

Q. Are there other uses besides pools?

A. Skamper-Ramp owners are creative in their applications. Many people are buying Skamper-Ramps for their floating docks, fixed docks, and boats (from the stern transom or with the swim platforms); to use for thin ice rescue; for indoor ramps for very small or light weight animals;

and in water troughs in pastures and remote ranchland (gives critters that get in for a drink a way out, rather than drowning and polluting the water so animals won't drink it).