

# Gatorbak Bunk Cover Installation Guide



1.1 Before and after installation Photo

## Foreword:

Thank you for your purchase of Gatorbak Bunk Covers. All of our Products are manufactured In the USA from our proprietary blend of synthetic materials and are constructed with 100% virgin materials. Our Products are backed by a three year warranty for quality in construction and durability. Be sure to complete your product warranty registration with Gatorbak LLC.

These Installation instructions are a guide for use with installing Gatorbak products, GBXXX Models. Because each installation can vary in nature of the equipment it is installed on, these Instructions are a general guide to the correct application methods. Our Team at Gatorbak is highly dedicated to customer support. If you have any questions please contact Gatorbak LLC and we will be happy to assist you.

## Tools Required/Recommended:

- Gatorbak Bunk Covers to fit the length of your Bunk Board area
- Stainless steel, 1" #10 Self drilling Screws for Wood and Stainless Steel 1" #10 Self tapping Screws for Metal bunks
- Sharp Cutters to trim material (Fixed blade Utility Knife or Carpet Knife, Straight Tin snips, Chop saw. 14 tooth hack saw can also be used.
- Power Drill with Bits to drive selected screws and a 1/8<sup>th</sup> inch drill bit to pre-drill each screw location 1/4" deep.
- Tape measure
- Marking pencil (grease pencil in contrasting color or marker)
- Tools for removing and replacing Bunk boards for your trailer
- Optional tools may be used to complete different installation methods. These tools will be discussed in the optional method notations.



Fig 1.2 Common Installation tools

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**Warning;** this guide recommends the use of various tools and or power tools for installation. Be sure that all appropriate safety precautions are used to avoid injury to persons or equipment. Follow all manufacturers recommendations of tool use at all times.

### Step 1.

For the purpose of this guide we will begin with new or replacement bunk boards. Measure the bunk boards on your trailer to ensure that your replacement boards are the correct length. It is recommended to allow treated lumber to dry before installation begins to obtain a true fit. Trim any excess length or width if necessary so the boards will fit properly. Using a tape measure mark out the locations of the mounting brackets on the back of the board to be used in order to help with bunk installation once they are complete.

#### Tips-n-tricks

- By using new lumber you can prepare your new bunk boards in advance, take them with you to the boat ramp and exchange them there with the boat launched off the trailer. Be sure to take all the necessary tools to make the swap quick and easy.
- If your looking to replace the Lag bolt mounting with carriage bolt mounting, the covers can be installed on the bunk boards over the recessed carriage bolts. Be sure to use a locking fastener for your new carriage bolts. Stainless Steel hardware is recommended
- Take this opportunity to replace old and worn hardware. Also, address any corrosion or rust in the bunk mounts.

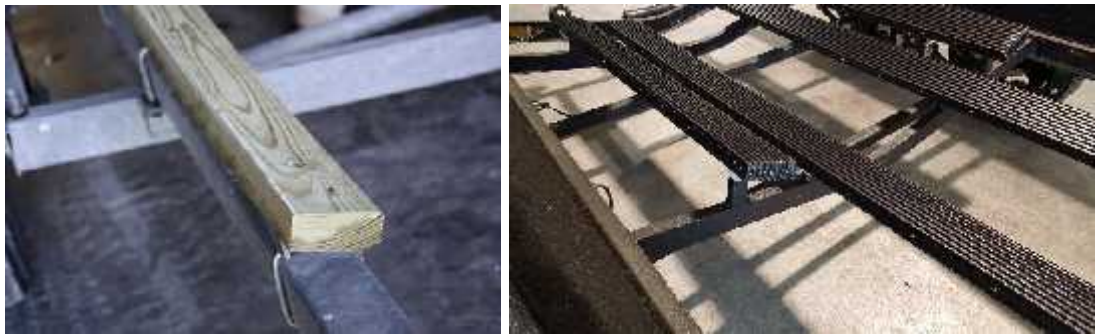


FIG 1.3 Decide if you will replace bunk covers on or off the trailer

### Step 2.

Layout the Bunk covers for initial fit. If using the flat end cap installation method your bunk covers should cover the bunk board from end to end and be flush with the end of the board. Trim any excess using a fixed blade or utility knife.

If installing your bunk covers with the fold over end cap method you will fit your covers to your boards and leave at least 1 ½” of the cover past the end of the bunk board where the fold over will be completed.



FIG 2 Plan how the end of your bunk covers will appear when completed

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### Step 3.

Using a clamp hold the Bunk cover in place against the bunk board so that it fits snugly in place. At one end you will begin placing your screws on one side to begin fastening the cover. The cover has a screw placement Line that runs the length of the cover along the side. Gatorbak Synthetic Bunk covers are designed so that all the mounting screws should be placed along the sides of the bunk. No screws should be installed facing in the upward direction in order to prevent a loose screw from damaging the hull.

The first screw is placed about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " to  $\frac{3}{4}$ " from the end of the bunk board. The Second screw should be placed approximately 1" from this first screw. Each screw after these should be spaced evenly 6" apart. Once you come to the end of the first side complete the end in the same manner as the beginning with the end screw  $\frac{1}{2}$ " to  $\frac{3}{4}$ " from the end of the bunk board and the second to last screw about 1" from the end screw position.



**FIG 3** Left, Note the screw placement for the end of the bunk board. Right, Attaching the cover with screws along the side

### Tips-n-tricks

- ) Move your clamps along the work surface as you go.
- ) Working from one end to the next will ensure that the cover is tight and has a snug fit.
- ) Use a drill bit to pilot drill the screw locations. Mark the bit at  $1\frac{1}{4}$ " to save time.
- ) Once the starting screws are placed measure and mark the screw locations every 6 inches along the side. See FIG 3.1 for proper screw insertion.

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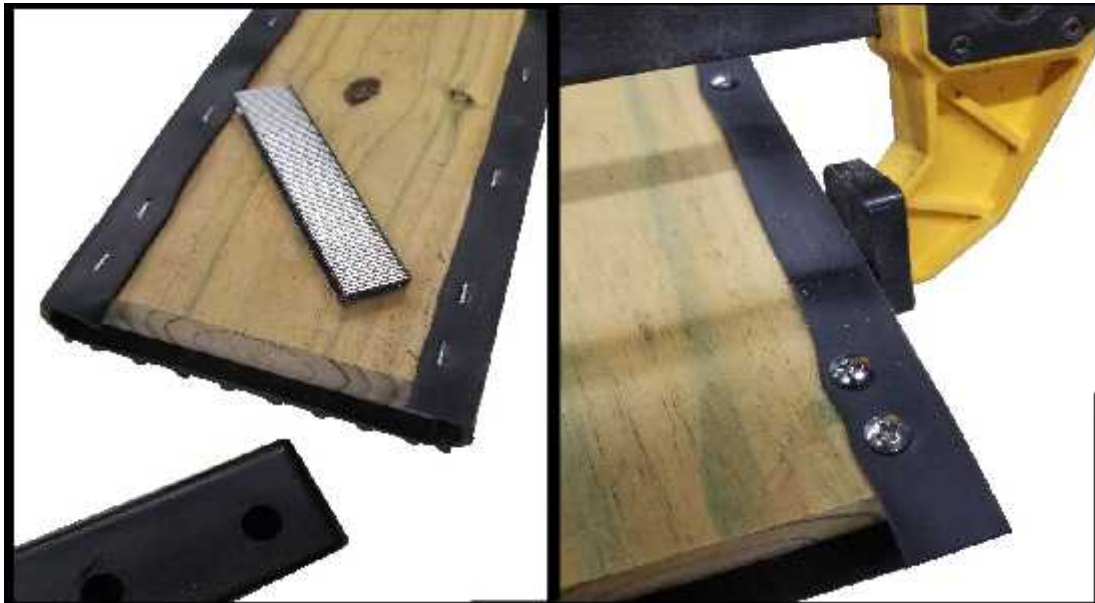
**FIG 3.1** The screw on the left has been installed too tightly. The screw on the right has been installed correctly and just begins to bind the Bunk material.

Once the starting screws are placed measure and mark the screw locations every 6 inches along the side. See FIG 3.1 for proper screw insertion

### Tips-n-tricks for Plus Series Covers

- ) Plus Series covers are designed to be affixed with Hardware on the bottom of the bunk where the cover wraps around.
- ) Staples can be used with Plus series covers for attachment. We Recommend Using a Wide Crown, 16 Gauge that is a minimum of 3/4" Long. Common T-50 type staples may not offer a secure mounting and applications may vary.
- ) If you choose to Use Staples making Repairs to Bunk Boards may become difficult unlike easily removed screws.

Place Staples 4" apart along the bottom of the Plus series covers. Screw Patterns are the same for standard covers and Plus Series Covers. See FIG 3.2 for proper Staple and screw insertion on Plus Series Covers.



**FIG 3.2** The screw example on the right and the Staple example on the left Show Mounting Details for Plus Series covers. These applications for hardware are used for all E Plus and Plus series Gatorbak Synthetic bunk covers models.

### Step 4.

Use a marking pencil to mark the screw placement from the first completed side to the opposite side. At anytime during the installation you can Pre drill the screw locations with a small drill bit to make driving the screws in

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easier if needed. Using a clamp, hold the Bunk cover in place against the bunk board so that it fits snugly in place. Begin placing your screws in the marked locations. When complete, the Gatorbak Synthetic Bunk Covers will be installed on the bunk board and you can begin finishing the ends as desired. Repeat these steps to complete all of the bunk boards for your trailer.



FIG 4 Screw placements are marked and screws are installed. Right, you can see a Drill being used to Pre-Drill a location for a screw. Use a smaller drill bit to allow the screws to grip properly when installed.

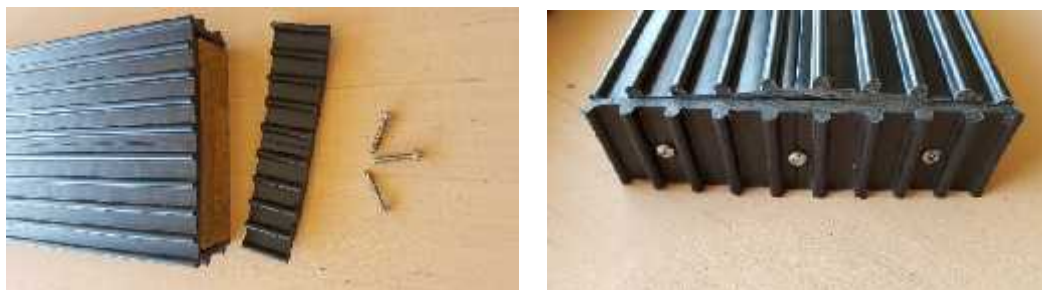
### Step 5. End cap Method

You can construct flat end caps or fold over end caps from excess bunk material. Additional Flat style end caps and the Molded Style premium end caps can be purchased separately from [www.gatorbak.com](http://www.gatorbak.com)

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### 5A. Flat End cap Installation

If using the flat end cap installation method your bunk covers should cover the bunk board from end to end and be flush with the end of the board. Trim any excess using a fixed blade or utility knife. Flat style end caps can be attached directly to the end of the board.



### 5B. Recessed Flat End cap Installation

To instal the flat end cap recessed with Bunk Cover, first attach the Flat cap to the end of the board. Trim any excess so that the flat cap is flush with the end of the bunk board. Then fit cover with approximately ½” of overlap.



### 5C. Fold Over End cap Method

If installing your bunk covers with the fold over end cap method you will fit your covers to your boards and leave at least 1 ½”-2” of the cover past the end of the bunk board where the fold over will be completed.



After fully installing the mounting screws for the Gatorbak synthetic bunk cover Trim side legs, fold over edge, and attach to end of bunk board with screws.

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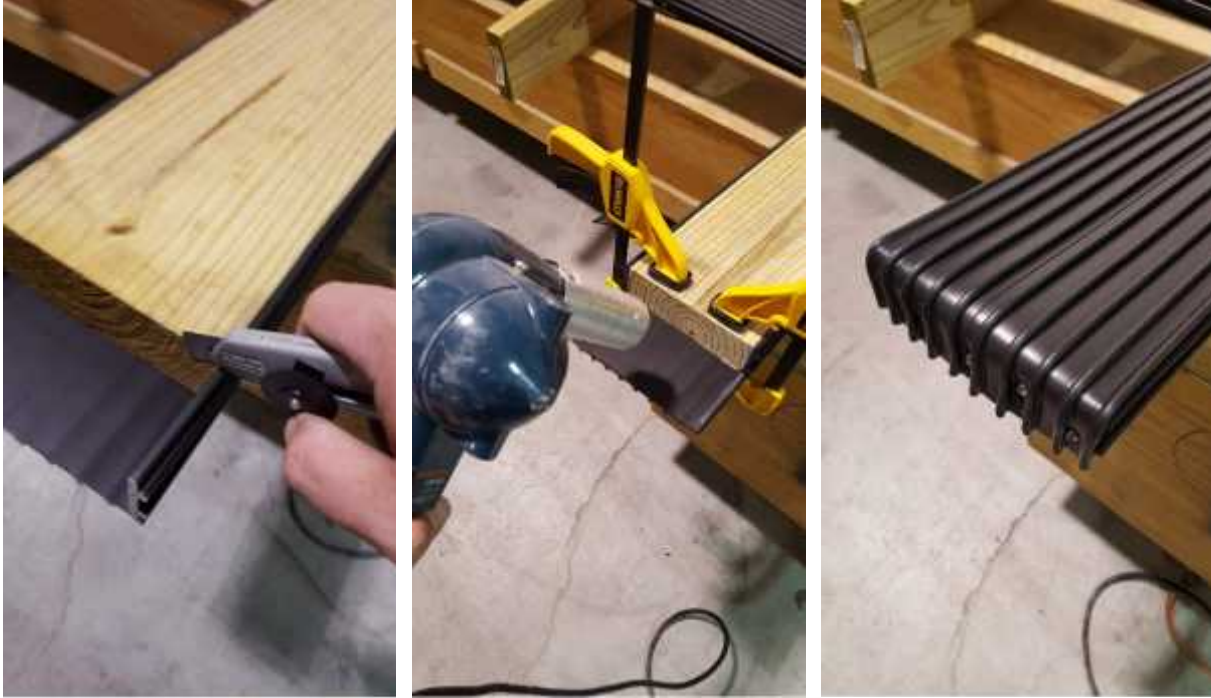


FIG 5.1 Shows the steps needed to complete the fold Over Method

### Tip-n-Tricks

- Scoring just through the rib material with a hacksaw or file along the folding edge or back scoring the bunk cover will allow it to bend more easily.
- Place screws on the end caps only between the ribs so the screw heads are tucked away
- Painted head screws will hide the screws better, and allow for a different finish to your project
- Clamping the top side of the bunk will aide in making the fold over more precise
- Bunk cover can be folded around and under the entire end of the board.
- Edges of ribs that are exposed can be knocked down with a file for a cleaner appearance if desired.
- When mounting the new bunks to your vessel on the trailer, loosen the pivot mounts once the boat is seated and centered and allow the bunks to settle to the hull so that they have the flattest fit, then retighten your adjustment points to the proper torque levels.

### 5D. Installing Premium Molded End caps.

To complete installation of the premium molded style end caps, first, align the end cap with the end of the bunk board. Complete this step on both ends of the bunk board allowing the final length of the completed bunk board with end caps to match the total length of the boards



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## Gatorbak Bunk Use

### **Some break-in of the ribs is typical,**

When you first begin Using your new bunks you may see areas of your bunks that will wear a little more than others. This is typical and once the new parts and the vessel have gone through a few loading cycles together this will subside. Often times highspots on the boards or in the bunk cradle will show these areas.

In the event that the wear is showing in places where this is not the case, some adjustment may be necessary. While the boat is loaded and centered on the chines where it should be, loosen the bunk assembly bolts to allow the Bunks to align themselves with the hull (for proper tilt). Gatorbak bunk covers allow you to see the true fit of your bunks to your vessel. In some cases the bunks can be installed with spacers to allow a precise fit. Once the best fit is achieved, be sure to re-tighten all hardware to recommended torque specifications,

### **Caring for your new bunks is easy.**

Gatorbak Bunks are made with UV and anti fungal protective compounds and will resist the elements well. Each time you get ready to load or unload your boat check the bunks to ensure dirt, sand, and debris do not collect on the bunks. Rinse these away or clean with a light detergent and bristle brush as needed. The bunks will allow these to drain away with normal use. Long range trailering, outdoor storage, and other factors like these between loading/unloading cycles can allow build up. Gatorbak Bunk covers are easy to clean and by keeping build up or other contaminants off of your bunks you are eliminating the possibility of getting abrasion on your hull.

### **Loading and unloading your boat,**

Gatorbak bunk covers are designed to protect your boats hull during trailering. To achieve this they are made of a custom blended synthetic material that is many times softer than your hull. Because of this, some rub off of material may appear on the hull area. These "eraser" marks can be cleaned away with a damp cloth. If a stubborn mark persists, use a typical hull cleaner to remove it. Be sure to follow all manufacturers recommendations for the use of these types of products.

Most of our customers will say that loading their boat on Gatorbak Synthetic Bunk Covers is very comparable to loading on carpet. While some will say it is a little stickier, some will say it is a little slicker. Each application can vary and this depends greatly on ramp conditions and your boats hull. XP bunk covers will be more "slick" when wet.

We strongly recommend against (aggressive) Power loading or (any) dry Loading your craft. In many places power loading is prohibited and can be hard on your equipment, vehicle and hull. Depending on the series of Gatorbak Bunk Cover Power loading could void your warranty (NON XP SERIES COVERS ONLY).

### **NOTE:**

\*For Gatorbak Lift Bunk covers, and Gatorbak HD series Covers Power loading will void your Gatorbak warranty.

\*\*For Gatorbak XP Series covers (MID 3/19) Power loading with wet bunks will NOT void your warranty.

### **GENERAL Loading Guide**

While ramp conditions can vary and will dictate the loading method required to compensate for wind, current or water level, Always ensure that your bunks are wet before loading. When loading your boat put your trailer in the water until the bunks are covered in water as much as possible. Then pull your trailer forward until the bunks are just at the water level. Load your boat onto the trailer until the hull comes to rest on the bunks then connect your winch strap and winch the boat into the stop. Be sure to connect your safety and transom tie down straps as applicable.

It is important to note that Power loading and loading under power are two different applications. As a general rule, if your using small amounts of throttle or Idling to drive onto your trailer this is not defined by Gatorbak as Power Loading. Our website has a link to a recommended method for loading, please take a moment to view at your convenience. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljTaqFYcj24#t=42>