



# The SLO 4-Wheeler



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## 10 Safety Rules for Off-Road Driving

Four-wheeling is one of the more exciting hobbies you can experience. Going off road opens your eyes to places you would not otherwise see. It also challenges you, as the terrain is far different from what you are accustomed to driving on. And you can find yourself in a remote and very hostile environment in just a few hours.

Follow these very important rules for a safer and more enjoyable ride.

1. Let someone know where you will be and when you expect to return. This applies to all trips, not just those in challenging areas. People have been known to get stuck or lost in relatively easy terrain. Should something happen and you're unable to leave the area or call for help, your friends or family will know to contact authorities.
2. Always have at least one other vehicle along. This ensures that you will have transportation out in the event your vehicle becomes stuck or damaged and **can't be fixed there**. Plus, the extra vehicle means additional manpower to help with problems.
3. Pack survival gear. Even a Sunday drive on the beach can turn sour. Pack the proper gear to get you through the night and to handle medical emergencies

that may occur.

4. Tie everything down inside. Your gear will go flying around if you roll over or lay the vehicle on its side. Loose items become missiles which can injure and kill anyone inside.
5. Everyone wears a seatbelt, just like when you drive on paved roads. You and your passengers will get jostled around quite a bit on many of the trails. Plus, the possibility for a rollover or crash exists at any time. The big rock you suddenly hit could cause you or your passengers to go flying out a window. Make sure everyone is belted in.
6. Arms and legs must remain inside. Many trails run through narrow passageways. Any arms or legs hanging outside can get torn off by the trees, cliff walls, or rocks just outside your vehicle. If the vehicle begins to tip your instinct is to put your hand out. There is no way you will be able to stop a vehicle this way. **Roll your windows up if you can't control the urge.**
7. Also, make sure no one holds onto the roll bar. Their fingers will get smashed in the event of a roll over. Hands can also be injured if you drive under low-hanging branches.
8. Quit if you become tired. Four-wheeling requires the ut-

most concentration. Any letdown can lead to an accident and perhaps death. If you feel fatigued at all, pull over and rest, or let someone else drive. Do not force it.

8. Lock it down. When driving off-road, you are seldom on level ground. Make sure your vehicle will not roll away from you. When you stop, put the vehicle in park, apply the emergency brake, and turn off the engine.
  9. Do not hang on a vehicle. If the vehicle gets stuck in a precarious position, do not try to pull it down or otherwise tip it by hand. And absolutely do not climb on the vehicle. Use the proper tools and techniques, and always be a safe distance away. A vehicle can and will crush you if given the chance.
  10. Treat winches and high-lift straps with respect. The straps, clevises, and other pieces are under extreme tension when in use. Inspect all parts before using, and stand clear while you are trying to recover a vehicle. A failure in gear or rigging can be lethal to you and by standers.
- Tom Severin, President  
Badlands Off Road Adventures, Inc.  
4-Wheel Drive School  
310-374-8047  
<http://www.4x4training.com>

## 2013 SLO 4-Wheelers Officers

Officers:  
 President:..... Tom B.  
 Vice President: ..... Dave F.  
 Secretary:..... Loree R. / Kenn B.  
 Treasurer:..... Devin L.  
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 Carrizo Plains Land Use.....

Newsletter submittals  
by two weeks before the  
next issue to George

# A Primer on Winching



*Rigging a "floating" pulley. 2nd parachute will be added next.*

Lines that are slack while on ground take on a new dimension when under tension. You need to check them before proceeding with the recovery. The lines may be binding or twisting. They could be rubbing against an edge on the bumper or other body part. In some cases the lines end up right over a taillight. Under load those lines will smash the cover and bulb.

If you spend any significant amount of time in difficult terrain, you're bound to encounter a recovery situation at some point. It could be either your vehicle or someone else's. And a winch may be the proper tool at that time. This is a good time to review recovery, and winching in particular.

The steps that follow are taken from my nifty and exclusive Winch Recovery Bandana. Keep in mind that these tips and the information provided on the bandana are not a substitute for proper training, sound judgment and quality equipment.

Every winching operation should start with a plan in your mind as to how you'll rig it up. Winching is a risky procedure; proceed very slowly and methodically. You're dealing with material and parts that are subject to a tremendous amount of force. A mistake can be fatal, as I pointed out in "Don't Lose Your Head While Recovering a Vehicle." Take your time.

Winching begins with a walkthrough. You want to inspect all parts and lines while the system is under light tension. If everything looks good, you can power up and proceed with the recovery.

The vehicle doing the recovery is kept in neutral with the emergency brake on. Having the transmission in neutral protects the parking pawl. Chock the front wheels if you can. (Some people even anchor this vehicle to a tree or other vehicle.) You do not want that vehicle to move. Start the winch slowly so you take up some of the slack.

Check all connections. Start at one end of the line and work your way through. Are any connections about to be pulled through the pulley? Adjust as needed.

Keep the engine running, or its battery will be drained dry. Even though the emergency brake is on, someone should be in the recovery vehicle applying pressure to the brakes. Now review the winch cable as it is leaving the winch. Does it leave at greater than a 15 degree angle? If so, it will start to pile up on one side of the drum, causing the cable to snag and possibly break that side of the winch. If you see the cable starting to pile up, stop winching. Disconnect the cable, pull it out manually, and wind it up neatly. Always start with your cable properly wound on the drum. Then, consider moving the recovery vehicle or pulley to decrease the angle of pull.

When you winch at greater than a 15 degree angle, there's a greater chance of the cable rubbing or getting caught on the bumper of the recovery vehicle. There may be times when you have no choice but to winch at a severe angle. Just watch the cable closely.

As you're paying out the cable, remember the Rule of 5: Keep at least five turns of cable on the drum at all times (eight turns for synthetic cable, because it's slippery). If you don't keep a minimum amount, the tremendous force of recovery will pull the rest of the cable right off the drum.

If you have a large blanket, toss it over the pulley. (See image.) Called a para-

chute by 4-wheelers, this blanket will absorb some of the energy should the cable snap.

Keep an eye on the parachute during winching. It has a tendency to ride up the cable. You don't need that jamming into the pulley or winch. Stop the winching if necessary to move the blanket.

Position spotters to watch the lines and pulley. (They should off to the sides of the vehicles. No one should be in the path of the lines.) Winch slowly, and pay particular attention to portions of cables nearest the vehicles. You're watching for any binding, rubbing and twisting. Make sure, also, that the vehicle being recovered is behaving properly. You may need to stop the winching and adjust the whole arrangement.

## Winch kit

All successful winching starts with a good winch kit. That kit should include a pair of sturdy, loose fitting leather gloves, a tree strap 15 to 16 feet long, a heavy blanket, four to six D-rings, and a piece of 70 grade 3/8" chain (10 feet is long enough). Let's look at each component.

Sturdy leather gloves are mandatory. Steel winch line develops small broken wires that will tear into your hands. Loose fitting gloves allow you to pull your hand out if the gloves become caught in the winch or line. A tree strap that is at least 15 feet long will be long enough to go around larger trees. This is done to protect the tree. A chain or cable will cut into the bark, mortally wounding the tree. Also, cable that's wrapped around a tree and hooked back on itself develops a kink, which weakens the cable. The blanket is used as a "parachute" and placed over the winch line during winching to dampen recoil should the winch line break.

The chain, by the way, needs to be sturdy. Chain strength is given in grades; the higher the number, the stronger the chain. The Working Load Limit (WLL) of the chain needs to be in the same range as the rest of your gear. Using higher grade chain (like grade 70) allows appropriate strength in a smaller link size which is easier to store and manage. Chain found at hardware stores is typically around a 43 grade. You will need



*A winching operation is serious business and should be treated as such. Take your time to think it through before proceeding.*

quite a large link size at that grade. Go with 70 grade (or higher if you can afford it). Higher grade chains have each link welded for extra strength. Finally, having four to six D-rings puts more options at your disposal, especially for complicated winching.

What is working load limit?

I want to stress one thing: Never use equipment whose rating – either working load limit (WLL) or breaking limit – you **don't know**. If that information is not on the item, do not use the part. You could put yourself and everyone else in danger.

Working load limit, previously called safe working limit, is just what it means: the maximum stress that the item is designed to handle while in use. For safety reasons, the WLL of winching components is about **one-fifth of the item's breaking strength**. Let's look at some examples. The WLL for grade 70 3/8" chain is 6,600 lbs. D-rings should have a **minimum of 3/4" pin**. That size has a WLL of 9,500 lbs. You can find the WLL for other sizes of parts on my winching bandana.

After purchasing the parts, if the WLL is only indicated on the package it comes in, make sure you transfer the WLL onto the part permanently. A permanent marker (magic marker or Sharpie) works great on tree straps, whose packaging you pitch after opening. For pulleys and D-rings, carve the information with an engraving pen into the metal. Original sticky labels and markings tend to wear off over time.

Also, never use a recovery strap for winching. Recovery straps are designed to stretch. That stretching builds energy, which is used to snatch a stuck vehicle free. A jerking action while winching is dangerous because of all the metal parts used. A recovery strap adds additional recoil to the winch rigging which is not desirable. If that strap were to break, **you'd have a bunch of steel missiles flying around**. (For more information on risks of using a recovery strap, see "Don't Lose Your Head While Recovering a Vehicle.") **For winching, we want a nice, steady pull.**

Winching starts with a vehicle recovery plan

A winching operation is serious business and should be treated as such. Take your time to think it through before proceeding. The following steps are outlined under the Vehicle Recovery Plan section of the bandana.

Make sure everyone in the affected vehicle is safe, especially if the vehicle rolled over. Be prepared to provide first aid, but also make sure the vehicle itself is stable. If not, you may need to attach straps or cables first. Also, look for any hazards that could endanger the recovery crew.

Be careful if the vehicle is perched on its side. **You don't want it dropping on top of you while you're attaching the cable.**

A vehicle recovery plan is essential. Gather everyone together. Get their input, and determine the best course of action. **Don't let anyone start rigging up until you've decided what to do**. If need be, appoint a leader. Have someone (that could be you) take charge of the situation. The winching should be done in an orderly manner.

Inspect the vehicle. Are there any broken or dangling parts that could affect the recovery? What about leaking liquids? Do something to capture those until you can devote time to the environmental issues and clean up.

Determine your exit path, and get a lay of the land. See if there are any obstacles **you'll need to overcome**. **What is the best direction to go? It's always easier to go downhill**, but you may find that pulling a few feet up and over a hill or obstacle makes more sense.

If the vehicle is on a slope, set the emergency brake. **You don't want the vehicle rolling downhill once it's freed up.**

Plan the rigging. Estimate your stuck load, and calculate whether you have the capability to handle the load. (See the sidebar for more information.) Pulleys add friction, so remember to add 10% to the load for each pulley used.

But pulleys also aid in pulling. A full discussion is beyond the scope of this article. Just remember that when you **use one "moving" pulley, the winch "sees" only one-half of the total load**. (Only one-third, if two "moving" pulleys are used.) The total load may be 10,000 lbs. but the winch needs to pull only 5,500 lbs. (10,000 plus 10% for the pulley divided by 2).

Last step

Set up the rigging and double check it. Take up the slack and re-inspect for correct assembly. Proceed with the recovery.

This may seem like a lot of steps—**especially when you're following off the bandana—but after doing a couple, it's easy to pick up the fundamentals of winching.**

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# Set Your Tent Up Right



*Camp with a view — What a view!*

Camping is one of our favorite pastimes. **It's tough to beat a few days or a week in a natural setting away from all the hassles of everyday life.** Many people understand that.

A 2011 study released by The Outdoor Foundation reported that almost 40 million Americans participated in some form of camping in 2010. That equates to more than 14 percent of Americans over age six. Are you part of the 14 percent? I hope so.

While some people are turned off by the rustic nature of camping and others view setting up camp as too much work. It is **not, and doesn't need to be.** Once you've established a pattern for camping (which includes packing your vehicle), preparing for and setting up camp is actually quite enjoyable. **It's a pastime the entire family can enjoy.**

In an earlier column, I offer a number of suggestions on how and what to pack.

**Here I'd like to focus on setting up camp and maintaining your campsite.** There are a number of factors to consider. But **first I'd like to remind you of a basic tenet of camping:**

The best campsites are found, not built.

By this we mean you should look for a **site that's already been used for camping. Minimize your impact on the land. Don't tramp down pristine land if you don't have to.**

How to set up camp:

The steps involved in setting up camp can be broken down into two broad categories, Safety and Logistics.

## Safety:

Avoid setting up camp next to hazards like dead (or dying) trees, power lines, critter holes, loose rock and those areas prone to flash flooding.

If the entire area is a flood plane, pick a spot that has **good drainage. You don't want water pooling around**

your tent.

Speaking of water, camping ethics recommend that you not set up camp within 200 yards of streams or ponds. This is so **you don't disturb wild game that uses** those sources of water.

Also, avoid setting up next to plants and bushes that could cause a problem. Some of these include poison ivy (and related plants) and cacti. While more of a nuisance, these plants can still ruin a day or weekend.

## Logistics:

Assuming the area is free of obvious hazards, here are some additional suggestions to consider.

Inspect the ground for pebbles, sticks and other sharp objects. You may need to rake or otherwise clear a patch of ground **for your tent. If you're camping on an** incline, position your tent so your head will be uphill. That is generally the most comfortable position.

Rarely do you find flat, smooth ground outside established parks and campgrounds. You get to your camping **area and find one section that's bumpy or** grooved. Another spot is smooth but at an angle. Which do you choose?

Most people select the bumpy ground because they prefer being on the level. They know their air mattress or other padding will provide a comfortable sleep. **Assuming drainage isn't a factor, this** type of decision is more based upon personal preference. Give it some thought

when you face this scenario for the first time.

**If you're camping near the bottom of a** large hill, walk around to get a feel for the run-off pattern(s). Even light rains can generate small streams for a brief time.

Setting up camp next to a large boulder may seem like a good idea – it creates a natural wind break – but inspect the area above the boulder. Do you see loose rocks? Those could come tumbling down on your head during a storm. Wind whipping around the boulder sometimes causes **howling or whistling noises. If you're a** light sleeper, you may consider placing your tent somewhere else.

Trees and shrubs provide some protection from the elements, including a beating sun. Inspect for dead limbs, beehives and critter nests or dens.

Position your tent with the prevailing winds in mind. For rectangular tents, position the narrow side to the wind. If yours is tapered, the tapered side should **face the wind. You're trying to minimize** the wind load and therefore overall effect of any winds. Some people prefer to have the door face a non-windy direction.

As for the front door, I like to have it facing the east. I get to view a nice sunrise to start the day, and it seems to warm the tent faster.

**After you've experienced it, I'm sure you'll agree that camping out is really** quite enjoyable. A few days away with Mother Nature does wonders for the soul and body. When and where are you going to set up camp?

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<http://www.4x4training.com>

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# Club Meeting Minutes:

*By Kenn B., Secretary*

December 2012 minutes

Thanks to Mike and Sharon G. for hosting the Christmas Party

The Club may have to meet at a new place for the January meeting as A-Town is **moving to the old Carl's junior building**. Please stay tuned to email for update

Adopt a HWY:

Kirk – HWY 101 is available from bottom of the grade to the HWY 58 off ramp. For the sign no cost except for the decal we might use. 1 maintenance session pr quarter is required

John J. – Does not want to work for the state

Kenn B – The club has a hard time getting people to show up for the functions we already try to have

Mark B – would advise to not votes yes if you are not willing to show up and pick up trash

Voting did not pass. Thanks Kirk for the leg work and gathering the info we needed

PLEASE BE THINKING ABOUT ALL THE OPEN OFFICER POSITIONS IN JANUARY AND WHICH ONE YOU WOULD LIKE HOLD.

As of now only 20 paid members. You need to be a paid member to vote at the next meeting

This Friday is the Christmas parade in slo

Meeting place is Broad and Peach

Time is 5:30

Parade starts @ 7 pm

Motion to postpone nomination until January meeting

Second by Dan G

50/50

On to the gift exchange and the door prizes

January 2013 minutes

7PM started meeting with **INTRO'S**

V.P. – nothing to report

Secretary – see last months minutes

Treasurer – report given

Membership – 29 paid members

Newsletter – The letter is out now from the last meeting. If anyone has something for the newsletter please see George

Safety – Dave has the club Bag / contact him if you need it for a club run

Web – is up and works just fine / The forums page is up and ready to be used

Events – no Randy P

NEW BUSINESS:

Meeting place

Discussion was about **Denny's and The Winery offer**

Motion was made to hold the meeting back at the old A-Town which is now going to be Hovers

2nd and vote passed

Election results:

President – Tom B.

V.P. – Dave F.

Secretary – Loree R. / Kenn B.

Treasurer – Devin L.

Membership – George W.

Newsletter – George W.

Safety – Dave F.

Web Site – Mark B.

Events – Casey R.

Promotions – Loree R.

Land Use - ?

Garcia Ridge – Dave Fauset

Pine Mtn. - Jim B.

*(Continued on page 6)*

*(Continued from page 5)*

La Panza Camp ground –  
Dave F.

#### EVENTS:

No dates set yet just months

FEBRUARY KOH the week  
of the 4th

Location is the desert out by  
Barstow

MARCH Suns of Thunder  
run

MAY – Miller Lockwood trail  
with Dave F

Up out of Gorman

Death Valley Run

AUGUST –before school  
starts – Annual club Red-  
Coyote-Mirror lake run

Pismo any time

Pozo any time in between the  
rain / now is a great time no  
dust and not hot!

Donation ideas for the club  
funds generated in 2012

Blue Ribbon / land use fund  
only

Board meeting January 10th  
@ the new Hovers (old  
Atown) 7PM

Anyone may attend that is  
interested

50/50 - 24.00 for the club and  
24.00 for the winner

#### LANGLYS

Thanks Again GARNETTS  
for hosting the Christmas  
party

January 9th 2013 Board  
Minutes  
by Loree R.

Items of Discussion

Memberships – Individual  
and Commercial

Bi-law review

Work Days

Donations

Safety Box Upgrade

Budget 2013

Newsletter

Postage

P.O. Box

Website

Safety Box Upgrade

Christmas Party

#### Events

March 9 – Work day at  
Garcia Ridge (after meeting  
run)

April 6 – Currently sched-  
uled as a back up work day  
in case of rain on March 9  
(after meeting run)

May 4 – Spring Fling

June 8 – La Panza  
Campground inspec-  
tion/cleanup (after meeting  
run)

July 4 – Templeton 4th of  
July parade

August 9, 10, 11 – Coyote  
Run

December – San Miguel  
Christmas Parade

# It's Membership Renewal Time!

Please complete this coupon and mail it with your check for \$20.  
Remember, you can only vote in the January elections if your membership is paid up into the new year!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate your Newsletter Delivery Preference:

Link to PDF (Color) via email

Hardcopy (black & white)

Send completed coupon along with a check for \$20 made payable to "SLO 4 Wheelers" to:

SLO 4 Wheelers  
PO Box 2271  
Atascadero, CA 93423-2271



SLO 4-Wheelers contributes to and/or is a member club in these organizations. Visit and support, -they are working for US!

<http://www.sharetrails.org/>



The United Four Wheel Drive Associations also acts as your voice to keep 4x4 roads and trails open so that we can continue enjoying four wheeling in the great outdoors.

<http://www.ufwda.org/>



A varied group of outdoor recreationists who are extremely active in promoting the positive aspects of vehicular access on public lands and protecting that right.

<http://www.corva.org/>



SLO 4-Wheelers is also a member club in the California Association of Four Wheel Drive Clubs (CA4WDC) If your not a member, check it out,

<http://www.cal4wheel.com> or ask Suzy




**Advance Adapters Inc.**  
4320 Aerotech Center Way  
Paso Robles, CA 93446  
Phone: 805-238-7000  
(Toll Free: 800-350-2223)  
<http://www.advanceadapters.com>

# SLO 4 WHEELERS

PO Box 2271  
Atascadero, CA 93423-2271



**We're on the web:**

<http://www.slo4wheelers.org/>

## Upcoming Events / Runs

In addition to this list, keep your eye on the club email list and web site:

<http://www.slo4wheelers.org/>

for last minute events or spur of the moment runs.

February 9th or 10th — After meeting Run: To Be Determined at the February meeting

February 15th-17th Cal 4 Wheel Convention:

California Association of 4WD Clubs' annual convention. The 54th Annual CA4WDC Convention to be held this year at the Sacramento Marriott Rancho Cordova, 11211 Point East Dr. Rancho Cordova, CA 95742-6239 (916) 638-1100 This year's theme is 'Denim & Diamonds - Protecting California's Diamonds in the Rough' and will feature the return of traditional convention

activities, including the vehicle show. more info: CA4WDC Convention 2012 Registration: online CA4WDC convention 2011 registration Contact/trailboss: Suzy J.

March 6th — General Meeting. Location to be determine at the February meeting.

March 9th or 10th — After meeting Run: To Be Determined at the March meeting.

March, April or May — Trail maintenance depending on weather.

April 3rd — General Meeting. Location to be determined at the February meeting.

April 6th or 7th — After meeting Run: To Be Determined at the April meeting

April or May — Spring Fling.

May 1st — General Meeting. Location to be determined at the February meeting.

May 4th or 5th — After meeting Run: To Be Determined at the May meeting

June 5th — General Meeting. Location to be determined at the February.

June 8th and 9th — After meeting Run: To Be Determined at the June meeting

August — Annual club run to Coyote Lake. Stay tuned for details.

If you have any questions or events, local runs, not so local runs you would like to do, coordinate and/or participate in, please contact the SLO-4-Wheelers Events Director.