

Seven Reasons Why 55 Gallon Drums Make Better Dock Floats



On the left is a picture of three different color plastic 55 gallon drums. These drums are approximately 3' long and 2' in diameter. On the right is a typical dock float that is 2' wide, 4' long and 1' high. Both of these floats are made from polyethylene plastic, displace about 8 cubic feet or 500lbs of water, and have been used for decades to float docks. Here are seven reasons why 55 gallon drums make better dock floats:

1. **Drums are more Rugged** – The walls of a typical 55 gallon drum are twice as thick as the walls of standard rectangular dock float. A 55 gallon drum can be beat with a sledge hammer without damage. Do NOT try this on a rectangular dock float.
2. **Drums don't require Foam Filling** – Rectangular dock floats are

typically foam filled to keep the walls of the float from collapsing. This increases the weight of the float and If the float ever gets punctured, the foam inside can become water logged with no way to dry it out. Drums, on the other hand, have a shape that makes them strong without requiring foam filling. If, somehow, they ever get punctured, the water can be easily drained and the hole welded up, returning the float to 100% capacity.

3. **Drums won't crush in the Ice** – The round shape of a drum keep the ice from grabbing hold of it. As the lake freezes, the drums get pushed up on top of the ice. When the ice thaws and shifts, the drums and the dock are not damaged. Rectangular floats will easily crush in the ice.
4. **Drums slide easily across the Ground** – The round shape and ruggedness of drums allow a dock to be easily dragged over sand, gravel, even small rocks. Hook your dock up to your truck and drag it up on shore.
5. **Drums sit the dock higher above the Water** – A typical dock floating on 55 gallon drums will sit about 20” above the water where as a dock on rectangular floats will sit only 10-16” depending on the design. A higher floating dock more in line with pontoon boats and ski boats.
6. **Drums are much less Expensive** – Brand new rectangular dock floats can cost anywhere from \$110-140 not including shipping. A brand new 55 gallon drum is only about \$50 and used drums are almost always available in the \$5-15 range.
7. **Drums are already Everywhere** – Shipping a single rectangular dock float can cost \$30-45. But used drums are already available in just about every community. Just search for “55 gallon drums” or “55 gallon barrels” on Craig’s List. Locally available drums dramatically reduce shipping costs.



RollingBarge.com has developed a series of floating dock kits and plans that firmly lock 55 gallon plastic drums in place. These designs exploit the advantages of plastic drums while making it just as easy to build your dock as if you had chosen expensive and fragile rectangular dock floats.



Visit RollingBarge.com for a stable and rugged floating platform that will provide a lifetime of enjoyment.

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