

## TRAILER TOWING

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### General Recommendations

**Do NOT tow a trailer unless your vehicle has been driven at least 500 miles!**

Towing a trailer puts additional load on your vehicle's engine, drivetrain, brakes, tires and suspension. For your safety, as well as your car's well being, make sure the trailer towing equipment is properly matched to the trailer. All towing equipment should be of the proper weight class, and must be safely attached to the vehicle.

**Trailer towing should only be attempted with the 3.0L or 3.8L V6 engine!**

The maximum trailer weight that your vehicle can tow is 1,000 lbs. (454 kg) gross trailer axle weight with a maximum tongue load of 100 lbs. (45 kg). Be sure to observe the following qualifications:

- **Any model equipped with an overdrive transaxle should be shifted to the "D" (DRIVE) position to avoid excessive shifting between the overdrive and third gears.**
- **Auxiliary oil coolers are recommended for the power steering system and the automatic transaxle during long distance towing (more than 50 miles/80 km), while towing in hilly terrain or for frequent towing.**
- **Vehicle speed no higher than 55 mph (88 km/h) is recommended while towing a trailer.**

### Towing Tips

Before starting on a trip, practice turning, stopping and backing up in an area away from other traffic (such as a deserted shopping center parking lot) to gain experience in handling the extra weight and length of the trailer. Take enough time to get the feel of the vehicle/trailer combination under a variety of situations.

Skillful backing requires practice. Back up slowly with an assistant acting as a guide and watching for obstructions. Use both rear view mirrors. Place your hand at the bottom of the steering wheel and move it in the direction you want the rear of the trailer to swing. Make small corrections, instead of exaggerated ones, as a slight movement of the steering wheel will result in a much larger movement of the rear of the trailer.

Allow considerably more room for stopping when a trailer is attached to the vehicle. Keep in mind, the car/trailer combination is a considerable increase in the weight that your car's brakes have to bring to a stop. If you have a manual brake controller, lead with the trailer brakes when approaching a stop. Trailer brakes are also handy for correcting side sway. Just touch them for a moment without using your vehicle brakes, and the trailer should settle down and track straight

again.

To assist in obtaining good handling with the car/trailer combination, it is important that the trailer tongue load be maintained at approximately 10-15% of the loaded trailer weight.

Check everything before starting out on the road, then stop after you've traveled about 50 miles (80 km). Double-check the trailer hitch and electrical connections to make sure everything is still OK. Listen for sounds like chains dragging on the ground (indicating that a safety chain has come loose) and check your rearview mirrors frequently to make sure the trailer is still there and tracking properly. Check the trailer wheel lug nuts to make sure they're tight and never attempt to tow the trailer with a compact spare tire installed on the car.

Remember that a car/trailer combination is more sensitive to cross winds, so slow down when crossing bridges or wide open expanses in gusty wind conditions. Exceeding the speed limit while towing a trailer is not only illegal, it is foolhardy and invites disaster. A strong gust of wind can send a speeding car/trailer combination out of control.

Because the trailer wheels are closer than the towing vehicle wheels to the inside of a turn, drive slightly beyond the normal turning point when negotiating a sharp turn at a corner. Allow extra distance for passing other vehicles and downshift if necessary for better acceleration. Allow at least the equivalent of one vehicle and trailer length combined for each 10 mph of road speed.

Finally, remember to check the height of the loaded car/trailer, allowing for roof-mounted luggage racks, antenna, etc., and take note of low bridges or parking garage clearances.

## Necessary Equipment

Use the right equipment for the type of trailer you are going to tow, and make sure that all of the towing equipment is properly attached to your vehicle. To assist in obtaining good handling with the car/trailer combination, it is important that the trailer tongue load be maintained at approximately 10-15% of the loaded trailer weight. Make sure to securely tie down the load so that it does not shift and change the weight on the hitch.

## CONNECTING THE SAFETY CHAINS

Always attach the trailer's safety chains to your vehicle. They will help protect your trailer if the hitch breaks. Follow the manufacturer's directions for installing the safety chains. When connecting the safety chains, cross the chains under the trailer's tongue and attach them to the vehicle's frame or hook retainers. NEVER attach the safety chains to the vehicle's bumper. The bumper is not designed to handle that kind of weight. Make sure that you leave enough slack in the chains to allow you to turn corners.

## CONNECTING THE TRAILER'S BRAKES

### WARNING

NEVER connect a trailer's hydraulic braking system directly to your vehicle's brake system! If you do, your vehicle may not have enough

braking power and your chances of an accident greatly increase.

Electric brakes and manual, automatic, or surge-type brakes are safe if you install them properly and adjust them according to the manufacturer's instructions. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions and make sure that the brakes you are using meet local and federal regulations.

## **CONNECTING THE TRAILER'S LIGHTS**

Do not connect your trailer's lighting system wiring directly to that of your vehicle. Be sure you use the correct equipment and that you follow the manufacturer's directions carefully. If you do not install the lighting system properly, the warning lights on your vehicle's instrument panel may not function.

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