

Title:

Your Guide To Towing - Know Before You Tow

Word Count:

519

Summary:

If you love to camp, hike, fish, water ski and enjoy the great outdoors; chances are there will come a time when you want to tow a boat or camping trailer. Know before you tow with this guide to towing.

Here are some terms you should be familiar with and what you need to check. The Base Curb Weight + Cargo Weight + Passenger Weight = GVW or Gross Vehicle Weight. The GVW + Loaded Trailer Weight = GCW or Gross Combination Weight.

The GVW must not exceed the GVWR which ca...

Keywords:

towing

Article Body:

If you love to camp, hike, fish, water ski and enjoy the great outdoors; chances are there will come a time when you want to tow a boat or camping trailer. Know before you tow with this guide to towing.

Here are some terms you should be familiar with and what you need to check. The Base Curb Weight + Cargo Weight + Passenger Weight = GVW or Gross Vehicle Weight. The GVW + Loaded Trailer Weight = GCW or Gross Combination Weight.

The GVW must not exceed the GVWR which can be found on the safety Compliance Certification label. The GVWR is the maximum weight allowed on a fully loaded vehicle. This includes passengers and cargo. Once you have this information, you will be able to figure out what size trailer a vehicle can tow.

There are two different types of hitches on the market. A weight carrying hitch is common for small to medium size trailers. Use a good weight carrying hitch that properly distributes the weight. You'll find a label on the hitch that provides the weight carrying and weight distributing capacity of the hitch. Don't exceed the rating.

The weight distributing hitch uses a hitch platform to distribute the tongue

load to all the wheels of the towing vehicle and trailer. It is the required type of hitch for most Class III and IV trailers. This type of hitch is welded or bolted to the frame of the vehicle and it has equalizing arms that are connected from the hitch to the trailer's frame.

Besides the GVWR and the correct type of hitch, you also need to make sure your braking system is adequate. If your load is more than 1500 pounds, the law requires a separate braking system. There are two types on the market.

Electronically controlled brakes provide both automatic and manual control of the trailer brakes. The tow vehicle needs to be equipped with a controlling device and requires some wiring. Surge brakes are independent and are activated by a master cylinder that is located at the junction of the trailer tongue and hitch. Make sure your braking system conforms with all legal requirements.

The trailer will also need to be equipped with trailer lights that meet government regulations. Do not connect the trailer lights directly to the vehicle's lighting system. They need to be installed with a proper wiring harness. See your dealer to ensure you have the correct wiring harness for your vehicle.

Safety chains should always be used when towing. They provide a connection between the trailer and the vehicle should the hitch fail. Cross the chains under the trailer tongue to stop the tongue from connecting with the ground if the hitch fails, and leave only enough slack to allow for a full turn.

A trailer is a great investment. It will take you from the mountains to the valleys and from the river to the lakes. If you haven't towed before it's natural to feel overwhelmed about choosing a vehicle and trailer to tow safely. This guide to towing will have you confidently towing in no time!