

Trailering Tips

Towing a trailer is demanding on your vehicle, your trailer and your personal driving skills. Follow some basic rules and you'll tow more safely and have a lot more fun.

Weight Distribution

- For optimum handling and braking, the load must be properly distributed
- Keep center of gravity low for best handling
- Approximately 60% of the allowable cargo weight should be in the front half of the trailer and 40% in the rear (within limits of tongue load or king pin weight)
- Load should be balanced from side-to-side to optimize handling and tire wear
- Load must be firmly secured to prevent shifting during cornering or braking, which could result in a sudden loss of control

Before Starting

- Before setting out on a trip, practice turning, stopping and backing up your trailer in an area away from heavy traffic
- Know clearance required for trailer roof
- Check equipment (make a checklist)

Backing

- Back up slowly, with someone spotting near the rear of the trailer to guide you
- Place one hand at bottom of steering wheel and move it in the direction you want the trailer to go
- Make small steering inputs – slight movement of steering wheel results in much greater movement in rear of trailer

Turning

When turning, be sure to swing wide enough to allow trailer to avoid curbs and other obstructions.

Braking (Also see page 27)

- Allow considerably more distance for stopping with trailer attached
- Remember, the braking system of the tow vehicle is rated for operation at the GVWR, not GCWR
- If your tow vehicle is a F-150, F-Series Super Duty®, or E-Series and your trailer has electric brakes, the optional Trailer Brake Controller (TBC) will help assure smooth, effective trailer braking by automatically proportioning the trailer braking to that of the towing vehicle
- If your trailer starts to sway, apply brake pedal gradually. The sliding lever on the TBC should be used only for manual activation of trailer brakes when adjusting the gain. Misuse, such as application during trailer sway, could cause instability of trailer and/or tow vehicle

Towing On Hills

- Downshift the transmission to assist braking on steep downgrades and to increase power (reduce lugging) when climbing hills
- With TorqShift® transmission, select Tow/Haul Mode to automatically eliminate unwanted gear search when going uphill and help control vehicle speed when going downhill

Parking With A Trailer

Whenever possible, vehicles with trailers should not be parked on a grade. However, if it is necessary, place wheel chocks under the trailer's wheels, following the instructions below.

- Apply the foot service brakes and hold
- Have another person place the wheel chocks under the trailer wheels on the downgrade side
- Once the chocks are in place, release brake pedal, making sure the chocks will hold the vehicle and trailer
- Apply the parking brake
- Shift automatic transmission into Park, or manual transmission into Reverse
- With 4-wheel drive, make sure the transfer case is not in Neutral (if applicable)

Starting Out Parked On A Grade

- Apply the foot service brake and hold
- Start the engine with transmission in Park (automatic) or Neutral (manual)
- Shift the transmission into gear and release the parking brake
- Release the brake pedal and move the vehicle uphill to free the chocks
- Apply the brake pedal while another person retrieves the chocks

Acceleration And Passing

The added weight of the trailer can dramatically decrease the acceleration of the towing vehicle – exercise caution.

- When passing a slower vehicle, be sure to allow extra distance. Remember, the added length of the trailer must clear the other vehicle before you can pull back in
- Signal and make your pass on level terrain with plenty of clearance
- If necessary, downshift for improved acceleration

Driving With An Automatic Overdrive Transmission

With certain automatic overdrive transmissions, towing – especially in hilly areas – may cause excessive shifting between overdrive and the next lower gear.

- To eliminate this condition and achieve steadier performance, overdrive can be locked out (see vehicle Owner Guide)
- If excessive shifting does not occur, use overdrive to optimize fuel economy
- Overdrive may also be locked out to obtain engine braking on downgrades
- When available, select Tow/Haul Mode to automatically eliminate unwanted gear search and help control vehicle speed when going downhill



Metric Conversion – To obtain information in centimeters, multiply feet by 30.48; to obtain information in kilometers, multiply miles by 1.6.

Driving With Speed Control

When driving uphill with a heavy load, significant speed drops may occur.

- An 8-14 mph speed drop will automatically cancel speed control
- Temporarily resume manual control through the vehicle's accelerator pedal until the terrain levels off

Tire Pressure

- Underinflated tires get hot and may fail, leading to possible loss of vehicle control
- Overinflated tires may wear unevenly
- Tires should be checked often for conformance to recommended cold inflation pressures

Spare Tire Use

A conventional full-size spare tire is required for trailer towing (mini spare tires should not be used; always replace the spare tire with the road tire as soon as possible).

On The Road

After about 50 miles, stop in a protected location and double-check:

- Trailer hitch attachment
- Lights and electrical connections
- Trailer wheel lug nuts for tightness
- Engine oil – check regularly throughout trip

High Altitude Operation

Gasoline engines lose power by 3-4% per 1,000 ft. elevation. To maintain performance, reduce GVWs and GCWs by 2% per 1,000 ft. elevation.

Powertrain/Frontal Area Considerations

The charts in this Guide show the minimum engine size needed to move the GCW of tow vehicle and trailer.

- Under certain conditions, however, (e.g., when the trailer has a large frontal area that adds substantial air drag or when trailering in hilly or mountainous terrain) it is wise to choose a larger engine
- Selecting a trailer with a low-drag, rounded front design will help optimize performance and fuel economy

NOTE: For additional trailering information pertaining to your vehicle, refer to the vehicle Owner Guide.

For the latest RV/Towing information, check out the Ford Fleet Web site at www.fleet.ford.com/showroom/rv_trailer_towing/2011/2011_default.asp

Photography, illustrations and information presented herein were correct when approved for printing. Ford Motor Company reserves the right to discontinue or change at any time the specifications or designs without incurring obligation. Some features shown or described are optional at extra cost. Some options are required in combination with other options. Consult your Dealer for the latest, most complete information on models, features, prices and availability.

Many of the recreational vehicles shown in this brochure are modified or manufactured by companies other than Ford Motor Company. Ford assumes no responsibility for such modifications or manufacturing.

