Before driving, make sure your vehicle maintenance and trailer maintenance are current. This is very important because towing puts additional stress on the tow vehicle.

**Tow Vehicle Pre-check:**

- Check and correct tire pressure on the tow vehicle, including the spare tire.
- Make sure the wheel lug nuts/bolts on the tow vehicle are tightened to the correct torque.
- Is the GVWR (gross vehicle weight rating) of the trailer at or lower than your vehicle’s “tow rating”?  
- Make sure all running lights, brake lights, turn signals and hazard lights are working.
- Check side- and rear-view mirrors to make sure you have good visibility.
- Verify that the brakes on the tow vehicle are operating correctly.

**Hitch Pre-check:**

- Be sure the hitch, coupler, draw bar and other equipment that connect the trailer and the tow vehicle are properly secured and adjusted. *Ensure all parts are compatible such as correct ball size to hitch.*  
- Make sure the safety chains are properly criss-crossed and connected, not touching the road but with enough slack to make turns.
- Check that the wiring is properly connected; not touching the road, but loose enough to make turns without disconnecting or damaging the wires.
- Make sure all running lights, brake lights, turn signals and hazard lights are working.
- Verify that the brakes on the trailer are operating correctly.
- Ensure the breakaway system lanyard is connected to the tow vehicle but not to the safety chains or ball mount.

**Load Pre-check:**

- Review trailer owner’s manual for precise loading instructions.
- Check load distribution to make sure the tow vehicle and trailer are properly balanced front to back and side to side.
- Check that all items are securely fastened on and in the trailer.
- Be sure the trailer jack, tongue support and any attached stabilizers are raised and locked in place.

**Other:**

- Check routes and restrictions on bridges and tunnels.
- Make sure you have wheel chocks and jack stands.