

TRAILER SAFETY

PRE-DEPARTURE SAFETY CHECKLIST

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.