



**WARNING:**



**READ and FOLLOW** all of these instructions and safety messages before operating the trailer. **DEATH, DISMEMBERMENT or SERIOUS INJURY** to you, your passengers, and others on the road may result if you do not follow these instructions. Make sure all drivers read and understand all these instructions.

### IMPORTANT TRAILER TOWING INFORMATION

**PREVENT WHIPPING** by properly loading the trailer. Load 60% of the cargo weight in the front half of the trailer box. Loading heavier in the rear will cause the tow vehicle and trailer “combination” to begin **WHIPPING**, which is violent and uncontrollable sway.

**SIDE to SIDE MOTION (SWAY) THAT BEGINS** as you reach a certain speed, will likely become **WHIPPING** at higher speeds. If you notice sway beginning **SLOW DOWN IMMEDIATELY** by letting off the gas pedal. Then stop to reload the trailer heavier in the front as soon as possible.

**IF WHIPPING or SWAY OCCURS, DO NOT** steer, **DO NOT** apply your brakes, and **NEVER** speed up. Let off the gas pedal and hold the steering wheel in a straight-ahead position.

If a **WHEEL GOES** off the paved roadway, **DO NOT** steer sharply and **DO NOT** brake. Let off the gas pedal and slow down below 25 mph. Then steer gradually back onto the roadway. Proceed with caution entering traffic.

### LOADING YOUR COMBINATION

**NEVER** exceed the trailer’s maximum gross weight, which is posted inside the trailer. Never exceed a lower allowed gross weight and allowed cargo weight as listed on your rental contract.

**NEVER** overload your tow vehicle. Do not exceed the gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) and the gross axle weight ratings (GAWR), which are posted on a label inside the driver’s door opening.

**NEVER** load cargo on the outside of the trailer, or extend cargo out the rear of the trailer. Secure all cargo inside trailer. Unsecured cargo may (1) shift and cause dangerous **WHIPPING** or (2) be ejected and cause a roadway hazard.

**DO NOT** transport hazardous materials, corrosives, explosives or flammables.

### SLOW DOWN WHEN TOWING

**AVOID CRASHES** by slowing down. Reduce your speed from what you would normally drive without a trailer under similar road conditions. The maximum recommended speed is 55 mph when towing. Do not exceed any posted speed limit.

**DRIVE DEFENSIVELY** – anticipate stops, brake early, and never follow closely.

**BEFORE GOING DOWNHILL**, slow down and shift the transmission into a lower gear. **DO NOT RIDE BRAKES** on downgrades.

**WHEN GOING UPHILL**, use lower gears and plan on slowing down. Stay in the slow lane. Turn flashers on if speed drops below 45 mph. Watch your gauges and pull off the roadway if the temperature gets too high.

Pull off the road **BEFORE** your engine gets too hot. If the engine gets too hot it will shut off by itself (stall) and may leave you stranded in traffic or damage your vehicle.

Slow down for curves, adverse weather, hazardous road conditions, road construction and expressway exits.



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### BEFORE TOWING AND ON THE ROAD

Use the checklist at the end of these instructions before towing and while on the road.

Make sure your tow vehicle is properly equipped and maintained. Be sure all tires are inflated properly.

**ALWAYS** wear your seat belt. Be sure children are properly restrained.

**DO NOT** drive when you are fatigued, sleepy or distracted. Avoid driving at night.

**NEVER TEXT** while driving. **NEVER** be distracted by using a cell phone while driving. Distracted driving is a major cause of crashes. If you need to text or use a cell phone, find a safe place to exit the roadway.

**NEVER** drive under the influence of alcohol or any substance that might impair your vision, judgment or ability to control the vehicle.

**NEVER** allow passengers to ride in the trailer. Passengers risk injury due to shifting cargo, asphyxiation and lack of collision protection.

### YOUR TOW VEHICLE

For occasional towing, your vehicle, when properly equipped, can tow any recommended trailer, if the loaded weight of the trailer does not exceed your vehicle's curb (empty) weight. Your vehicle can also tow any trailer equipped with brakes, provided the curb weight of your tow vehicle is at least 80% of the loaded weight of the braked trailer.

Refer to the owner's manual, decal instructions or an authorized automotive dealer for any specific handling characteristics of your tow vehicle.

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Changes made to your tow vehicle after it was manufactured can affect its ability to tow. These changes can include different tires, suspension changes, etc. Check your owner's manual or with an authorized automotive dealer to make sure any changes to your tow vehicle are approved. **DO NOT** tow the trailer if your tow vehicle has changes that are not approved.

Avoid driving on a compact spare tire any longer than necessary. Follow the vehicle manufacturer's instructions.

### MAINTENANCE

Maintenance and condition of your tow vehicle's engine, transmission, steering, suspension, front-end alignment and tires may affect your vehicle's ability to tow the trailer. Have an authorized repair facility inspect and repair your vehicle **BEFORE** towing.

To find the towing capabilities of the engine, transmission and axles of your vehicle, refer to the owner's manual, or check with an authorized dealer.

### ALLOWABLE TOW WEIGHT

Trailer GVWR – trailer empty weight – 20% = allowable tow weight

Example - 8.5x18CHFTSR2BRK

GVWR rating 7,000 lbs. – trailer empty weight 2,480 lbs. – 20% - **3,616 lbs. payload capacity**



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### TOWING EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

#### **Hitches**

Hitches must be able to tow the weight of the trailer and its cargo.

#### **Other Hitch Systems**

Weight distributing or sway control devices may have a negative effect on vehicle handling and braking and may restrict the operation of the trailer coupling mechanism.

#### **Lights and Mirrors**

When towing a trailer, all lights must be operational. Your tow vehicle may require external mirrors on both sides.

### LOADING YOUR TOW VEHICLE

To find how much weight you are allowed to put in your tow vehicle:

**Step 1:** Find your tow vehicle's GVWR on the label inside the driver's door.

**Step 2:** Subtract the curb (empty) weight of your tow vehicle from the GVWR.

**Step 3:** If your trailer has 2 tires, subtract 250 pounds from the answer in Step 2

If your trailer has 4 tires, subtract 400 pounds from the answer in Step 2

The answer in Step 3 is the amount of weight you can put in your tow vehicle. This weight includes driver, passengers, cargo and any additional equipment. If the rear of your tow vehicle seems low, reduce the load in the rear seat, trunk or cargo bed areas. Too much load in the rear can affect handling.

### TIRE PRESSURE

Set all tires to the proper pressure. Find the recommended **COLD** pressures on the tire sidewall, owner's manual, your vehicle's door decal, or on the trailer decal. **DO NOT** put more pressure in the tire than is indicated on the tire sidewall. Tire pressures go up during driving. **DO NOT** let off this extra pressure.

Air pressure in the rear tires of some tow vehicles may be increased to accommodate the additional weight of the trailer. Inflate rear tires approximately 6 psi above normal, but do not exceed the pressure limit stamped on tire.



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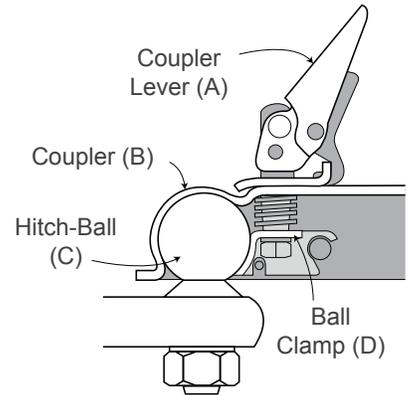
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### CONNECTING YOUR TRAILER

Lower the coupler onto the hitch-ball and follow the instructions below to properly fasten the coupler to the hitch-ball. Do not allow yourself to become distracted. Ensure that the coupler is properly fastened to the hitch-ball before moving to the next step.

### COUPLER

1. Release the coupler latch by pulling up on the coupler lever (A).
2. Lower the coupler (B) onto the hitch-ball (C) as shown.
3. Check that the ball clamp (D) is positioned below the coupler (B). The coupler should completely cover and enclose the hitch-ball (C).
4. Lower the coupler lever until the lever latches.
5. Place a coupler pin, coupler lock, or padlock through the coupler to secure the coupler to the hitch-ball.
6. Check all connections at each stop. Make sure the hitch and hitch-ball are securely attached to your tow vehicle and that the trailer coupler is properly connected to the hitch-ball.

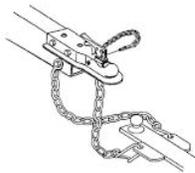


### SAFETY CHAINS

The purpose of the safety chains are to keep the trailer connected to your tow vehicle in the unlikely event the coupler comes off the ball or the ball comes off the hitch. Safety chains are attached to the trailer tongue and are equipped with "S"-hooks on their free ends. **DO NOT** tow the trailer without the safety chains securely attached to the towing vehicle. **DO NOT** attempt to pull the trailer by the safety chains alone, unless this is necessary to get the combination off the roadway to a safe place.

The left chain (A) crosses underneath the trailer tongue (B) and hooks to the right side of the tow vehicle permanent hitch (C), frame or structure, or to the tow vehicle bumper brackets. Do not attach chains to the ball or to a ball mount that is removable. The right chain hooks to the left side in the same manner. The "S"-hooks (D) can be placed through a link in the chain. Crossing the chains under the tongue allows the minimum amount of slack for turning. Control slack by hooking the chain back to itself or by twisting the links to shorten chain. Be sure the "S"-hooks are secured with a rubber retainer (D).

The chains need slack to allow your vehicle to make turns. Make sure these chains attach securely to your tow vehicle and do not drag on the roadway.



### LIGHTING CONNECTIONS

Make sure all tow vehicle and trailer lights function properly. The connecting wires need slack to allow your tow vehicle to make turns. Do not allow wires to drag on the roadway.



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### LOADING YOUR TRAILER

Failure to follow these loading instructions may result in sway or **WHIPPING** and lead to total loss of control. **NEVER** unhook the trailer or loosen the coupler before loading or unloading.

#### **Van trailers**

Load your trailer with 60% of the cargo weight in the front half of the trailer. Do this by loading the heaviest items first (such as appliances, toolboxes, boxes of books, etc.) in the front of the trailer, then load your lighter items near the top and to the rear. Pack all items closely and firmly and secure with rope to the tie-downs in the trailer. This will place the proper amount of weight on the hitch (tongue weight). If the trailer is not completely full, secure the load with rope to the trailer tie-downs. This will prevent the load from shifting or damaging your belongings. Be sure the cargo door is closed and latched securely.

#### **Open trailers**

Load heavier in the front of the box (60% of the cargo weight). When loading an open trailer, follow the same instructions as outlined when loading a van trailer, except **DO NOT** load small goods above the height of the trailer box side. Secure your cargo using the tie-downs on the trailer or the top rail and rail supports. Cargo not properly secured may shift, be damaged or be ejected under normal driving conditions.

#### **Motorcycle loading & securing**

Walk or ride your motorcycle (MC) up the ramp and position the **FRONT** tire in the wheel chock or against the front wall if no chock is present. Always load a MC facing forward. Secure the MC with four 1,200 lb. rated cam-buckle or ratchet-type tie-down straps. (Two for MC front and two for rear) Attach tie-down straps from each side of handlebars or shock towers to lower front D-rings located inside trailer. (Refer to your MC owner's manual for other recommended attachment points.) Tighten straps evenly, compressing shocks about halfway to ensure that MC is firmly secured and cannot move side to side. Attach tie-down straps from each side of rear MC frame or wheel to lower center or rear D-rings located inside trailer. Tighten straps to prevent MC rear from moving. Make sure all straps are tight and avoid contact with hot exhaust pipes. If cargo is loaded with a MC, also follow instructions above for open or van trailer.

Secure your load, it's the law.

### TONGUE WEIGHT

This guideline is to help you make sure the trailer is loaded properly by checking the tongue weight. **DO NOT** disconnect the trailer to do the following.

**Step 1:** With the tow vehicle and trailer empty, and the trailer attached to your tow vehicle, measure the distance from the ground to the top of the trailer coupler lever.

**Step 2:** With the trailer fully loaded and the tow vehicle empty, measure the distance from the ground to the top of the trailer coupler lever.

**Step 3:** Subtract the answer in Step 2 from the answer in Step 1. (Answer 1 – Answer 2)

If your answer in Step 3 is greater than or equal to 1 inch, your trailer has enough tongue weight. If your answer is less than 1 inch, it is recommended that you reload your trailer, and put more weight in the front of the trailer. An answer less than 1-inch can cause sway or **WHIPPING**.

### ELECTRIC BREAKAWAY EMERGENCY SYSTEM

Trailers with electric brakes have breakaway system with a cable connected to the trailer and tow vehicle. This cable applies the brakes automatically in the unlikely event of a separation of the trailer from the tow vehicle. Attach this cable as close to the vehicle center as possible to the tow vehicle's permanent hitch, frame or structure. Some slack is necessary to prevent the emergency brake from activating on turns or inclined driveways.



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### HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

**DO NOT** transport hazardous materials, corrosives, explosives or flammables such as gasoline or paint thinner. A container that is almost empty is just as dangerous as a full one. Flammables may explode or ignite through spontaneous combustion from vehicle movement.

Empty and air out the tanks on lawn mowers, camping stoves and lanterns before loading.

Propane tanks must be secured standing upright, with fuel hose disconnected, valve closed and checked for leaks before transporting.

**NEVER** fill a portable fuel container **IN** or **ON** the trailer. Set tanks on the ground to fill to avoid static electricity and prevent sparks.

Securely close and properly package household cleaning products.

### TOWING

#### **Reduce Speed**

Slow down for curves, adverse weather, hazardous road conditions, road construction and expressway exits. Do not feel secure because your trailer tows easily at higher speeds. A road hazard that could be avoided at 55 mph, may become unavoidable at a higher speed.

When driving at a lower speed you are less likely to lose control of any vehicle, than when driving at a higher speed. Excessive speed is a major cause of accidents.

It is **NOT** recommend using cruise control or overdrive when towing a trailer.

#### **Stopping and Following Distance**

Your combination is heavier and longer than your vehicle alone. This means it will take you longer to stop.

Allow at least 4 seconds between you and the vehicle in front of you. Start counting when the back of the vehicle in front of you passes a fixed object, such as a line or crack on the road. If the front of your vehicle reaches the object before the end of the 4 seconds, increase your distance.

If you are driving in adverse weather, such as rain, snow, or fog, use at least a 5 second gap.

#### **Whipping**

Whipping is violent and uncontrollable sway caused by loading a trailer heavier in the rear half.

Persistent side to side sway motion is not normal. If this occurs at a certain speed, it is a signal that **WHIPPING** will likely occur if speed is increased by a small amount. If you notice this behavior immediately slow down and maintain at least 10 mph below the speed this sway was first noticed. Then stop at the first opportunity and reload the trailer heavier in the front half to correct this problem. See next section.

#### **Combination Disturbances**

A "combination disturbance" is improper handling, whipping, sway, over-steering or other deviation of the tow vehicle or trailer from their intended path, due to one or more causes (improper loading, steering inputs, excessive speed, cross winds, passing vehicles, rough roads, etc).



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If a combination disturbance occurs:

- Let off the gas pedal. **NEVER** speed up to try to control a combination disturbance.
- **DO NOT** apply your brakes.
- **HOLD THE STEERING WHEEL** in a straight-ahead position. **DO NOT** try to control the combination disturbance by turning the steering wheel.

After a combination disturbance has stopped:

- Pull a safe distance off the roadway and stop. Get all occupants out of the vehicle and away from the roadway.
- Check the cargo in the trailer to make sure the load has not shifted. Make sure the trailer is loaded heavier in front.
- Check that all the tires are properly inflated and that all lug nuts are tight.
- Check the trunk or rear cargo area of the towing vehicle to make sure it is not overloaded.
- **REDUCE SPEED** to 55 mph or **LESS**. Combination disturbances happen most often at higher speeds.

### Passing

Your combination is heavier and longer than your tow vehicle alone, and will require more time and distance to pass.

Passing by another vehicle in the same or opposite direction can result in a combination disturbance. See the Combination Disturbances Section for what to do if this happens.

### Hills

**SLOW DOWN BEFORE** starting downhill. Shift into lower gear and let off the gas pedal, this allows the engine to help you control your speed. Combination disturbances happen more frequently going downhill and at higher speeds.

**DO NOT** ride the brake pedal going downhill. Prolonged use of your brakes results in overheating and possible loss of braking. When you need to slow down, apply the brake pedal and slow down below the intended speed. Then let off the brake pedal completely. Repeat as needed.

Shift into lower gear to prevent your tow vehicle from jerking due to engine lugging when traveling up hills. This will improve gas mileage and reduce engine overheating.

When traveling up long or steep grades, shift to a lower gear and expect that your vehicle may slow down significantly. Stay in the lane designated for slower traffic. Turn on flashers if speed drops below 45 mph and other traffic is traveling faster than you. Watch gauges and if temperature is climbing turn off A/C and slow down until the temperature stabilizes well below "hot". This may be at 45 mph or less. If the temperature is getting too high pull off to a safe place and stop. After stopping do not turn the engine off, shift to park / neutral and let it cool down at idle; or to cool faster increase engine rpm slightly.

### Road shoulders

If a wheel goes off the paved roadway:

**DO NOT** turn the steering wheel sharply.

**DO NOT** apply your brakes.

Let off the gas pedal and slow down below 25 mph. Then steer gradually back on the roadway. Proceed with caution entering traffic.

Sometimes the trailer is wider than the tow vehicle. Allow for this by driving in the center of your lane.



### Sharp corners

Avoid turning too sharp on corners, in gas stations or parking lots. Because the combination is longer the trailer will track inside the turn and may sideswipe a vehicle or object. Drive slightly past the corner before turning or turn wider than you would with a car to avoid this. Or simply plan ahead and avoid sharp turns where you can.

### Backing Up

Keep your hand at the bottom of the steering wheel. To move the trailer left, move your hand left. To move the trailer right, move your hand right. If your combination starts to jackknife, or isn't headed where you want it, **STOP**. Pull forward to straighten out, then start again.

Get help to watch as you are backing. If you cannot get help, exit your vehicle and make sure there are no people or obstructions in the way.

### Breakdowns

Immediately park your combination in a safe place, completely off the roadway. Turn on your emergency flashers. Get all occupants out of the vehicle and away from the roadway.

If you must continue on the roadway to reach a safe place off the road, turn on your emergency flashers and proceed with caution.

If necessary, drive on a flat tire to reach a safe place completely off the roadway. Drive slowly.

## TOWING CHECKLIST (USE AT EACH STOP)

### Before Towing

- Towing hitch and hitch-ball are tight.
- Coupler lever is latched and locked.
- Safety chains are properly attached and secure.
- All lights are connected and working.
- Check all tires for correct pressure.
- Load trailer heavier in front.
- Secure the load.

### On the road

- Reduce speed to 55 mph or below.
- Stop often for rest.
- Inspect your vehicle and trailer connections at each stop.
- Anticipate stops, brake early.
- Remember - crashes are caused by
  - Driver error or Inattention.
  - Excessive speed.
  - Failure to load trailer heavier in front.
- You should always
  - Load trailer heavier in front.
  - Reduce your normal driving speed.
  - Wear your seat belt.

