



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
EXTENSION

MSU DAWG TRACKS

Safe trailer usage affects not only those pulling it, but everybody else on the road too. Trailers have the potential of becoming unguided missiles if they are not properly hooked up or cared for. Cargo that is not properly secured can quickly cause mayhem on the road.

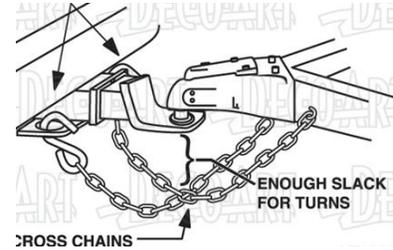
The extra weight and length you are responsible for when towing a trailer can be done safely following these precautions:

- ✓ Prior to hook-up, inspect the hitch on the tow vehicle for loose bolts, deformation, and damaged pins. Check the ball on the tow vehicle to make sure that it matches the coupler size on the trailer.
- ✓ Always secure the trailer coupler connection with a pin to ensure it can't disengage from the ball. If you have a trailer coupler with a tension bolt, ensure it is properly adjusted.



- ✓ Connect trailer electrical plug and breakaway cable to vehicle; ensure all lights work & brakes are adjusted correctly.

- ✓ Attach safety chains to tow vehicle. For a bumper pull trailer, cross the safety chains underneath the coupler with enough slack to permit turning, but not dragging the ground. This will help to hold the tongue up if the trailer comes loose.



- ✓ Check all trailer jacks, gates, ramps, etc. to ensure they are secured.
- ✓ If heavy equipment may cause the back wheels of tow truck to be temporarily lifted during loading/unloading, block up the back of the trailer to help support that load.
- ✓ Load placement on the trailer is critical to the tow driver's ability to control the whole unit. If often pulling the same trailer & equipment on it, put a mark on your trailer for correct position every time.
- ✓ Ensure that the load is sufficiently secured; trailer decks must be free of any loose tools or debris (mud chunks, rocks, etc.).
- ✓ Do a pre-trip inspection of both truck & trailer repairing any problems before leaving.
- ✓ Maintain extra distance between other vehicles and objects. Stopping & turning takes more room with a trailer.
- ✓ Plan ahead – roads & routes may need to be adjusted to accommodate driving with a trailer.
- ✓ Use a spotter when backing up into a tight area or maneuvering through parking areas if necessary.
- ✓ During long hauls, stop periodically to do a quick walkaround ensuring the trailer is still in good shape and the load is secured.

For more info contact:

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Sources:

<https://www.trailersafetyweek.com/towing-safely>

<https://www.etrailer.com>