

Tool Box Talk



TRAILER TOWING

August 2017

License Requirements

You are required to hold a special driver's licence when the weight of your trailer plus its load exceeds 4,600 kg (10,000 lb). You may not be required to obtain this special driver's licence when operating common trailers such as recreational, utility, small farm, and small commercial trailers. However, if you are planning on towing larger trailers, a heavy trailer G Endorsement on your licence or a Class 1 licence may be necessary. An endorsement is an authority added to your driver's licence that permits you to operate a certain type of vehicle or equipment.

Always determine the towing capacity of the towing vehicle and what extra towing equipment you may need, such as heavy duty shocks and springs or a transmission cooler. Class and type of trailer should be determined prior to towing.

Determining Towing Capacity

1. Fill the vehicle with fuel.
2. Weigh the front axle and rear axle of the vehicle separately.
3. To determine carrying capacity of the front axle, subtract the actual weight on the front axle from the GAWR of the front axle as specified on the decal.
4. To determine carrying capacity of the rear axle, subtract the actual weight on the rear axle from the GAWR of the rear axle as specified on the decal. If the trailer hitch is not installed on the towing vehicle, add the weight of the hitch to the rear axle actual weight before calculation.

Trailer Dimensions

The total length of a vehicle and trailers must not exceed 23 m (75 ft 5 inches) and the width of any unit must not exceed 2.6 m (8 ft 6 inches). The maximum length of a single trailer is 12.5 m (41 ft) and the maximum height allowed is 4.15 metres (13 ft 6 inches).

Choosing the Proper Hitch

The hitch must be rated for the GVWR or the total weight of the trailer and its load, whichever is greater. If used to tow a trailer that weighs more than 1,400 kg (3,000 lb), the hitch must be attached to the frame of the towing vehicle. A truck bed liner cannot be installed between the hitch and the towing vehicle. Truck box and hitch contact areas must be free of compressible material.

For loaded trailers over 1,590 kg (3,500 lb), use a load equalizing hitch. This device lessens the load on the rear axle of the towing vehicle by distributing some of the hitch weight back onto the towing vehicles front/steering axle and the trailer axle(s).

Gooseneck and 5th-wheel hitches allow better handling and should be used for larger trailers. When using a 5th-wheel or gooseneck

hitch, or a ball hitch with a weight distribution attachment, the loaded trailer must not weigh more than twice the GVWR of the towing vehicle. When using a non-weight distribution ball hitch, the loaded trailer must not weigh more than the GVWR of the towing vehicle.

For ball-type hitches, the ball diameter should be:

Weight of trailer and load	Ball diameter
up to 900 kg (2,000 lb)	47 mm (1 7/8 inches)
up to 2,270 kg (5,000 lb)	51.2 mm (2 inches)
up to 4,540 kg (10,000 lb)	58 mm (2 5/16 inches)

When not in use, the trailer hitch shall not extend past the bumper of the vehicle more than 225 mm or 9 inches.

Towing and Brakes

Stopping distance is longer when towing a trailer. If your trailer is rated over 1,360 kg (3,000 lb) it must have brakes on at least 1 axle if manufactured before 1985, and brakes on all axles if manufactured during or after 1985.

A motorhome towing another vehicle must have operational brakes on the towed vehicle if the towed vehicle exceeds 40% of the GVWR of the motorhome, with the towed vehicle weight not to exceed 2,000 kg (4,409 lb). This rule also applies when using a tow dolly.

Tongue or surge brakes may be used on trailers with electric brakes if the trailer's GVWR is 2,800 kg (6,160 lb) or less and on trailers with non-electric brakes if the trailer's GVWR is 3,700 kg (8,140 lb) or less. For heavier loads, all trailer brakes must be controlled by the brake pedal of the towing vehicle.

All components included in the electric brake system, including the brake system controller, must be rated for the trailer GVWR.

Legend

Acronym	Definition
GAWR	Gross Axle Weight Rating: This is the maximum distributed weight that may be supported by an axle of a road vehicle. Typically, GAWR is followed by either the letters FR or RR, which indicate front or rear axles respectively.
GVWR	Gross Vehicle Weight Rating: This is the maximum weight the original manufacturer states the vehicle and its load can weigh and still operate safely.

For more information on Saskatchewan towing requirements, contact:

SGI Vehicle Standards and Inspection
306-775-6188 or 1-800-667-8015 ext.6188

www.sgi.sk.ca/individuals/safety/vulnerabilities/safetyfeatures/trailers/index.html



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