

ATTENTION HITCH INSTALLER: GIVE THIS INSTRUCTION SHEET TO THE VEHICLE OWNER

RIGID HITCH

YOUR TOWING EQUIPMENT



TRAILER HITCHES, RECEIVERS, & BALL MOUNTS

Choose the proper hitch and ball mount to fit your specific vehicle. Be sure the gross trailer weight and tongue weight ratings of the vehicle and towing system are sufficient to handle the trailer you intend to tow.



HITCH BALLS

When selecting the proper hitch ball, gross trailer weight, coupler size, hitch/ball mount platform thickness and hole size must all be considered. The hitch platform must be at least 3/8" thick and the hole size should not exceed the ball's shank diameter by more than 1/16". With the nut and lock washer tightened to the proper tongue specification, the threads of the ball shank should extend beyond the bottom of the nut. Coupler size is stamped on the coupler housing.



TRAILER COUPLERS

Inspect the coupler mechanism for wear and adjust to manufacturer's specifications. The ball socket should be clean and lightly lubricated to eliminate binding on the hitch ball.



SAFETY CHAINS

Proper connection of safety chains is required by law and is critical to safe towing. When properly installed, chains should cross each other under the hitch platform to form a cradle in the event of a ball and coupler separation. Connecting chains too loosely may cause them to bind during turning. Connecting too loosely may all chains to drag on pavement and become damaged.



TRAILER ELECTRICAL CONNECTIONS

Before you tow, check all trailer electrical functions including stop, turn and running lights, electric brakes, break away batteries and switches as required by law. Be sure to make all electrical connections every time you tow and recheck all functions during fuel and rest stops.



OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

Suspension enhancements such as air springs, helper springs or air shocks may increase comfort and safety when towing. Adding a transmission cooler may help to protect the tow vehicle's transmission when towing heavy loads.



TIRE INFLATION

Keeping tires properly inflated on both the tow vehicle and trailer helps prevent trailer sway and increases tire life. Inflate to manufacturer's specifications and check often.

HITCH INSTALLATION NOTES

Be sure to check your hitch frequently to make sure that all fasteners and hitch ball are tightened properly. A hitch and/or ball that has been damaged should be removed and replaced. Always wear protective eye wear and use safe procedures when working beneath a vehicle. To prevent moisture or fumes from entering vehicle make sure to plug any holes in trunk pan or body if hitch is removed. Never cut access or attachment holes with a torch.

RATING LIMITS

Never exceed the lowest rating of any part of your towing system. Installing a 3,500 lb rated ball on a 2,000 lb rated hitch does not increase the weight capacity of the towing system. Installing a 2,000 lb rated ball on a 3,500 lb rated hitch decreases the weight capacity of that towing system to 2,000 lbs.

BEFORE TOWING

KNOW BEFORE YOU TOW

Be sure anyone who operates a vehicle while towing any type of trailer reads and understands the following information. Save this document for reference. Selecting the proper towing equipment for a specific use is very important. Proper maintenance of equipment is also critical to safe towing. Refer to owners manuals for your tow vehicle trailer and other parts of your towing system for capabilities and limitations of each part.

TRAILER & TONGUE WEIGHT

Gross trailer weight and tongue weight are the two most important items to consider. Gross Trailer Weight is the total weight of the trailer plus all cargo. Measure Gross Trailer Weight of the fully loaded trailer on a vehicle weight scale. Tongue Weight is the downward force exerted on the ball by the trailer coupler. Measure Tongue Weight with the fully loaded trailer on a level surface and the coupler at its normal towing weight.

TOWING SAFETY

SAFETY CHECKS

It's important to check all of your towing equipment every time you stop or before you begin towing each day. Check the hitch ball, trailer coupler, retaining pins and clips, safety chains and electrical connections. Check all tires for proper inflation and overall condition.

DRIVING

Adding the weight of a trailer can affect the braking, acceleration and handling of the tow vehicle. Passing, stopping and lane changes all require additional time and space. Use extra caution when traveling on rough roads and reduce speed accordingly. If any part of your hitch or towing system strikes the ground or "bottoms out", stop and make a complete inspection of the equipment before you continue towing. Check for excessive trailer sway.

TRAILER SWAY SAFETY

Keeping tires correctly inflated and properly loading the trailer are critical to preventing trailer sway. However, trailer sway can also be caused by other factors such as wind gusts, turbulence from passing trucks or traveling down steep grades. In the event of trailer sway, hold the steering wheel as straight as possible and reduce your speed gradually. If the trailer is equipped with electric brakes, apply the brakes manually using the brake controller's manual bar. Do not attempt to steer out of the sway condition as sudden or aggressive steering motions may make the sway worse. Do not brake suddenly unless absolutely necessary. This may result in a trailer "jackknife". Do not continue to tow trailer that tends to sway. Stop and adjust the load or make other adjustments necessary before continuing.

TRAILER LOADING

Proper loading of a trailer and securing the load are extremely important to trailer towing safety. Placing heavy objects ahead of the axle and balancing the load from side to side helps prevent trailer sway. Never load the trailer with excessive weight at the rear of the trailer. To help avoid trailer sway, trailer tongue weight should be 10% to 15% of the gross trailer weight. Never allow people to ride in a trailer while towing.

WARNINGS

- If you have questions regarding towing, contact your vehicle or trailer manufacturer or your local hitch installer.
- To replace worn or damaged parts, contact your authorized Rigid Hitch dealer.
- Failure to follow warnings and instructions could lead to vehicle crash resulting in property damage and/or serious bodily harm or even death.
- Do not overload any part of your towing system.