

Tips for Traveling With a Trailer

When traveling with a trailer, take some extra time to plan and prepare to ensure yourself a smoother, safer trip.

The first thing to do is to check that your tow vehicle, trailer, and all related equipment comply with the towing and RV road laws of each U.S. state/Canada province you will be traveling through. A chart included in this insert provides a summary of each state's/province's towing regulations, including height, width, and weight restrictions. For a more comprehensive overview, refer to the motor vehicle laws posted online for states/provinces.

Preparation

Your tow vehicle should be prepared to handle the weight of a trailer:

- Check the rear springs. They should be strong enough to maintain the vehicle at a nearly level position.
- Check the shock absorbers.
- Check the wheel alignment.
- Check the tires. Adding some air to the rear tires can be helpful (*usually no more than 4 or 5 pounds and NOT exceeding the manufacturer's specifications*).

Packing and Loading

Load your tow vehicle and trailer for optimum road stability:

- To help the tow vehicle absorb the weight of the trailer, do not put heavy items in the trunk or back seat.
- When packing the trailer, load about 60 percent of the weight toward the front and 40 percent toward the rear.
- Place heaviest items nearest to the floor to create a low center of gravity.

Trailer designs typically allow for proper, balanced packing with cabinet doors and drawers that stay closed during transit. For added safety and stability:

- Pack cabinets, drawers, stowage compartments so contents cannot slide.
- Pack items so that they brace each other in place.
- Lash large articles, such as bicycles, tightly to outside carriers. Laying them inside unsecured can cause havoc during sharp swerves or sudden halts.

Warning! Never carry extra gasoline in any type of container. Fume build-up or accident impact can cause lethal combustion.

Tow Vehicle and Trailer Inspection

Before you set out on the road, give your tow vehicle and your trailer a thorough inspection. Pay particular attention to:

- The hitch
- The tires on both vehicles
- Safety chains
- The load
- The ability of both vehicles to remain level

If applicable to your trailer:

- Check the independent braking system
- Check the water, electrical, and LP gas systems

Repeat this visual inspection at each stop along your route. If you hear unusual noises while driving, pull well off the highway and investigate immediately.

Driving With a Trailer

Do not drive an unstable tow vehicle/trailer combination.

A swaying trailer is both tiring and hazardous.

High speed and downhill travel are the two main causes of instability on the road. To minimize instability:

- Always obey the speed limit for towed vehicles.
- Anticipate downhill grades. Slow up before starting the descent and use a lower gear to keep from overworking the brakes.
- Use a lower gear on uphill pulls as well to get more power at less cost to your tow vehicle.
- On long grades, use the climbing lane if the road has one or pull over when the opportunity permits to let faster traffic pass.

Stopping

A tow vehicle/trailer combination is heavier and longer than a vehicle alone and thus requires a greater stopping distance in the city and on the open road.

Passing

Passing with a tow vehicle/trailer combination also requires more time and distance. Note that air suction, sometimes created when a vehicle overtakes another, can cause both to lurch unexpectedly.

Turning

When turning corners or rounding curves, the trailer wheels do not follow the same track as the tow vehicle's wheels. They travel considerably closer to the inside of the curve. To compensate, and to avoid running over curbs or off pavement, (a) start the turn farther to the outside of the curve or intersection and (b) farther along into the curve or intersection. Proceed deliberately and patiently.

Backing Up

Before your trip, practice backing up with the trailer as it is very different from backing up a car. Place your hand at the bottom of the steering wheel, then move your hand in the same direction you want the trailer to go. Move your hand left to move the trailer left. Move your hand right to move the trailer right. If you jackknife the trailer, pull forward, straighten up, and try again.

Restrictions

Restrictions and prohibitions exist on the transportation of liquefied petroleum in tunnels and some bridges in several states including: Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Texas and Virginia.

Before beginning your trip, contact your AAA/CAA club for a routing that offers the most favorable terrain and road conditions for trailer travel.

AAA has made every effort to ensure the information in the Towing and RV Road Chart is accurate. We strongly recommend that if you plan on traveling through any of the jurisdictions listed, you contact the appropriate state or provincial police, dmV, or other roadway authority to verify towing restrictions and regulations.

Towing and RV Road Laws

Refer to Notes section for footnote information

State/Province	Motor Homes	Towables	LENGTH (ft.)		HEIGHT (ft.)	WIDTH (ft.)		DIVIDER WEIGHT OF TRAILERS REQUIRING BRAKES	OVERNIGHT PARKING PERMITTED	In Towed Trailer	RODING PERMITTED	Pickup Camper
			Comb-nation	# in RV Combo		All	Motor Home					
UNITED STATES:												
ALABAMA	45'	40'	65'	2	13.5	88.5 ¹	3,000		P	N	Y	
ALASKA	45'	40'	75'	2	14	8.5	5,000			N	Y	
ARIZONA	45'	40'	65'	3	13.5	88.5 ¹	3,000 ²		Y	Y	Y	
ARIZONA	45'	53.5	63'	3	13.5	8.5	3,000 ²		Y	N	Y	
ARIZONA	45'	40'	65'	N/S	14	8.5 ²	1,500 ²		P	N	Y ²⁴	
CALIFORNIA	45'	N/S	70'	4	14.5	8.5 ¹	3,000 ²		P	N	Y	
COLORADO	45'	40'	60'	2	13.5	8.5 ²	3,000 ²		P	N	Y	
CONNECTICUT	45'	40'	65'	N/S	13.5	8	3,000 ²		N	N	Y	
DELAWARE	45'	40'	65'	2	13.5	8.5 ²	3,000 ²		P	N	Y	
D.C.	40'	N/S	55'	3	13.5	8	N/S		P	N	Y	
FLORIDA	45 ²	40'	65 ²	2	13.5	8.5 ²	3,000 ²		P	N	Y ²⁵	
FLORIDA	N/S	N/S	60 ²	2	13.5	88.5 ²	3,000		N	N	Y ²⁵	
HAWAII	45'	40'	65'	N/S	14	9	3,000 ²		N	N	Y ²⁶	
HAWAII	45'	48'	75'	3	14	8.5 ¹	1,500		P	N	Y	
IDaho	45 ²	42'	60'	3	13.5	8.5 ²	3,000 ²		Y	N	Y	
ILLINOIS	45 ³	40'	60/65'	2/3	13.5	8.5	3,000 ²		Y	Y	Y	
INDIANA	45 ³	53	65/70'	2/3	13.5	8.5 ²	3,000		Y	Y	Y	
INDIANA	45 ³	N/S	65'	3 ³	14	8.5 ¹	Y ²⁷		Y	Y ²⁸	Y ²⁸	
KANSAS	45'	N/S	65'	3	13.5	88.5 ²	3,000 ²		N	N	Y	
KENTUCKY	45'	N/S	65'	3	13.5	88.5 ²	3,000		P	N	Y	
LOUISIANA	45'	40'	70'	2	13.5	88.5 ²	3,000		P	N	Y	
MAINE	45'	48'	65'	2	13.5	8.5 ²	3,000		P	N	Y	
MAINE	40 ⁴	40 ⁴	55 ⁴	2	13.5	8.5 ⁴	3,000 ²		P	Y	Y	
MARYLAND	45'	40'	60'	2/3	13.5	8.5 ¹	10,000		Y	N	Y	
MASSACHUSETTS	45'	45'	75'	3	13.5	8.5 ²	3,000 ²		P	Y	Y	
MICHIGAN	45 ⁵	40'	53'	3	13.5	8.5	2,000 ²		N	N	Y	
MINNESOTA	45 ⁶	40'	53'	3	13.5	8.5	2,000 ²		N	N	Y	
MISSISSIPPI	45 ⁷	N/S	65'	N/S	14 ¹	88.5 ¹	N/S		Y	Y	Y	
MISSOURI	55'	N/S	65'	2	14	8.5 ¹	3,000		P	N	Y	
MONTANA	45 ⁴	40 ⁴	65'	N/S	14.5	8.5 ²	3,000		Y	Y	Y	
NEBRASKA	45'	N/S	70'	N/S	14	8.5 ²	3,000		Y	Y	Y	
NEVADA	45 ¹	48'	N/S	N/S	13.5	8.5 ¹	3,000		N	N	Y	
NEW HAMPSHIRE	45 ¹	40 ¹	53'	2	13.5	8.5 ²	3,000		P	N	Y	
NEW JERSEY	45 ⁶	40 ⁶	65'	2/3	14	8.5 ¹	3,000 ²		P	N	Y	
NEW MEXICO	45 ⁶	40 ⁶	65'	2/3	14	8.5 ¹	3,000 ²		P	N	Y	
NEW YORK	45 ⁶	48'	60'	2	13.5	88.5 ¹	88.5 ¹		P	Y	Y	
NORTH CAROLINA	45 ⁶	48'	60'	2	13.5	88.5 ¹	88.5 ¹		P	Y	Y	
NORTH CAROLINA	50 ¹	53'	75'	3	14	8.5	3,000		Y	Y	Y	
OHIO	45'	40'	65'	N/S	13.5	8.5	2,000 ²		N	N	Y	
OKLAHOMA	45'	40'	65'	3	13.5	8.5	3,000		Y	Y	Y	
OREGON	45 ¹	45 ¹	65 ¹	3	14	8.5	N/S		Y ²⁸	N	Y	
PENNSYLVANIA	45 ¹	N/S	85'	N/S	13.5	8.5 ¹	88.5 ¹		N	N	Y	
RHODE ISLAND	40 ⁴	N/S	60'	2	13.5	8.5	4,000		Y	N	Y	
SOUTH CAROLINA	45 ¹	48'	N/S	2	13.5	8.5 ¹	3,000 ²		P	N	Y	
SOUTH CAROLINA	45 ¹	48'	N/S	2	13.5	8.5 ¹	3,000 ²		P	N	Y	
SOUTH DAKOTA	45'	53	80 ¹	3	14	8.5 ¹	3,000		P	N	Y	
TENNESSEE	45'	40'	65'	3	13.5	8.5 ²	3,000		Y	N	Y	
TEXAS	45 ¹	N/S	65'	3	14	8.5 ²	4,500		P ²⁵	Y	Y	
UTAH	45'	40 ⁴	65'	3	14	8.5 ¹	2,000 ²		P ²⁵	N	Y	
VERMONT	46'	N/S	75'	2	13.5	8.5 ¹	3,000		N	N	Y	
VIRGINIA	45 ¹	45'	65 ¹	2	13.5	8.5 ¹	3,000		Y ²⁶	N	Y	
WASHINGTON	46 ¹	53'	75'	2	14	8.5 ¹	3,000		Y	N	Y	
WEST VIRGINIA	45 ¹	40'	65'	2	13.5	88.5 ²	88.5 ²		Y	N	Y	
WISCONSIN	45'	48'	65'	3	13.5	8.5 ²	3,000 ²		N	N	Y	
WYOMING	60'	45'	85'	3	14	8.5 ¹	Y ²⁶		P	N	Y	
CANADA:												
ALBERTA	13m	12.5m	20m	3	4.0m	2.6m	909kg ¹		N	N	Y	
BRITISH COLUMBIA	12.5m	12.5m	20m	N/S	4.15m	2.6m	1,400kg ¹		N	N	N	
MANITOBA	12.5m	12.5m	21.5m	N/S	4.15m	2.6m	910kg ¹		Y	N	Y	
NEW BRUNSWICK	12.5m	12.5m	23m	N/S	4.15m	2.6m	1,360kg		P	N	Y	
NEW BRUNSWICK	12.5m	12.5m	23m	N/S	4.15m	2.6m	Y ¹		P	N/S	Y	
LABRADOR	12.5m	N/S	21m	N/S	4.2m	3.2m	1,360kg		Y	N	Y	
NWT/ NUNAVUT	12.5m	12.5m	23m	N/S	4.15m	2.6m	1,814kg		N	N	Y	
ONTARIO	12.5m	12.5m	23m	N/S	4.15m	2.6m	1,360kg ¹		N	N	Y	
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND	12.5m	12.5m	25m	N/S	4.15m	2.6m	1,500kg		P	N	Y	
QUEBEC	12.5m	12.5m	26m	N/S	4.15m	2.6m	1,300kg ¹		N	N	Y ⁶	
SASKATCHEWAN	12.5m	12.5m	23m	N/S	4.15m	2.6m	1,360kg ²		N	N	Y ⁶	
YUKON	16.15m	16.15m	25m	3	4.9m	2.6m	910kg ¹		P	N	Y	

Notes to United States Towing and RV Road Laws

- Includes bumpers. In California, required safety devices may not extend more than 10".
- Excludes safety devices approved by the state.
- Excludes safety and energy conservation devices.
- Includes bumpers. Excludes devices determined to be necessary for safe and efficient operation.
- Excludes bumpers and safety devices.
- Excludes bumpers.
- Includes bumpers. 65' vehicle combinations are limited to designated roads and 5 miles therefrom. 55' on all other roads.
- In a recreation vehicle combination consisting of a pickup truck, a camper-trailer and a boat, flat-bed, horse trailer, etc., the camper-trailer cannot exceed 28' in length, and the entire combination cannot exceed 60' in length. The combination cannot be operated in the seven county Metro area from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.
- Includes all structural parts.
- A combination that includes an RV that is not more than 45' long when operating on principal highways may exceed the maximum length for vehicles in a combination if the combination is not more than 65' long.
- Excludes safety and energy conservation devices including mirrors, turn signals, lamps and handholds. If second trailer exceeds 3,000 lbs. gross weight, must have breakaway brakes.
- Includes coupling in the combination measurement.
- Mirrors are permitted to extend beyond the total outside width of the vehicle.
- 14-13'6" limit on some roads.
- 15-8'8.5" allowed on designated roads.
- Required lights, mirrors, or devices may not extend more than 10" on each side of the vehicle. Door handles and hinges may extend 3" on each side of the vehicle.
- Allows outside width to exceed 8.5' if excess is attributed to appendage.
- Excludes devices or appendages related to safe and efficient operation of vehicle. Clearance lights, door handles, window fasteners, handholds, door and window trim, molding and load securing devices, may extend up to 3" on each side of vehicle.
- Excludes safety equipment. Permits safety equipment to extend not more than 3" on each side of vehicle.
- Excludes mirrors and safety devices.
- Mirrors and sunshades may extend up to 6" on each side of vehicle.
- Excludes required clearance lights, rearview mirrors, or other accessories. Allows 8.5' RVs to leave designated roads. Excludes safety devices.
- Permits rearview mirror to extend 5". Permits safety appliances and appendages such as clearance lights, door latches, door hinges, and turn signal brackets to extend 4". Sunshades may not exceed 6".
- Permits safety devices such as mirrors, turn signals, marker lamps, steps, and handholds for entry/egress to extend 3" on each side of vehicle. Excludes mirrors. Sunshades may not exceed 6".
- Excludes rearview mirrors, turn signal lamps, and handholds provided they do not constitute a hazard. State can also exclude other safety devices.
- Gross weight requiring brakes.
- Must be able to stop in 40' at 20 mph. In North Carolina, must be able to stop 30' at 20 mph.
- Required if weight of trailer-vehicle exceeds 40% of tow vehicle weight.
- Required on trailers over 1,000 lbs. unladen or 3,000 lbs. laden.
- Required on trailers over 3,000 lbs., or if gross weight of trailer exceeds empty weight of tow vehicle.
- 12-hour limit.
- 8-hour limit.
- 24-hour limit.
- If passenger can communicate with driver and exit can be opened from both the interior and exterior in California, seatbelts are required in pickup campers.
- Must have free access to drive compartment.
- 14 years of age or older; 13 or older in HI.
- Not stated or no law

Y = Yes N = No P = As posted

Notes to Canadian Towing and RV Road Laws

- Required if trailer exceeds 50% of tow vehicle weight. BC, Yr. Biden.
- Gross weight requiring brakes.
- See provincial regulations.
- Total maximum combined length of 21m. Ball hitch permitted on fifth wheel only.
- Seats must be equipped with safety belts.
- Must have access to drive compartment.

N/S = Not stated or no law; Y = Yes; N = No; P = As posted; 2.6m = 8.5, 3.88m = 12.6, 4.2m = 13.7, 4.9m = 16.1, 12.5m = 41', 16.15 = 52.9, 20m = 65.6, 21m = 68.9, 21.5m = 70.5, 23m = 75.5, 25m = 82, 909 kg = 2004 lbs., 910 kg = 2006.2 lbs., 1300 kg = 2866 lbs., 1360 kg = 2998.2 lbs., 1400 kg = 3086.5 lbs., 1500 kg = 3306.9 lbs., 1800 kg = 3968.3 lbs., 1814 kg = 3999.2 lbs.