



Towing Safety Tips

The Right Tow Vehicle

Towing your boat will impact how any vehicle drives. The larger the boat in comparison to the tow vehicle, the greater the performance impact will be. For this reason, knowing the overall weight of your boat and trailer in comparison to what your vehicle is capable of towing is critical to you and your family safely enjoying a day at the lake. Vehicle manufacturers provide a "Tow Rating" which is the maximum weight of the towed trailer. The GVWR of the trailer, which is listed on the VIN tag located on the front inside of the trailer frame rail, should **never exceed the tow rating of your vehicle**. Please also specifically read your tow vehicle owner's manual as some vehicles do have a capable tow rating, but require additional accessories to achieve that rating (please see "weight distribution hitches" below).

Hitching

There are many options on the market for properly hitching your trailer to your tow vehicle. Understanding the requirements of the coupler on your trailer as well as the equipment available to install on your tow vehicle are critical elements to ensuring a safe and smooth towing experience. After reviewing your Boatmate Trailers Owner's Packet to understand the requirements of your coupler please select the proper hitch, receiver, and ball for your tow vehicle. Please keep in mind that not only must you select the correct size for the coupler and your vehicle, but **the capacity of the hitch, receiver, and ball must also meet or exceed the GVWR of your trailer**. Once you have the correct equipment familiarize yourself with seating the coupler all the way on the ball and ensuring the coupler is securely latched.

Trailer Components

Understanding the many components that make up your trailer is important to ensure you are ready to tow safely. It is important to understand the importance of properly functioning brakes, properly inflated and rated tires, properly torqued wheel lug nuts, safety chains, emergency break away cables, and properly working lights in order to tow safely. Many of these components should be part of your safety check every time you tow while some only require periodic maintenance. Please refer to your Boatmate Trailers Owner's Packet for specific information.

Boat Securement

An improperly secured boat can cause weight redistribution that could cause trailer sway or additional stress on the trailer and tow vehicle. This can cause a dangerous situation for you as well as the possibility of creating a danger for other drivers on the road. **Always make sure the boat is secured on the trailer with the bow eye firmly against the roller and the winch strap tight**. Please be aware that there is a break in period to the winch strap as the strap settles and tightens on the drum. This will require more frequent checks of the winch during your first few trips with your new boat. If your trailer is equipped with any other safety devices such as a bow safety strap or rear ratchet tie downs please make sure those are attached and tight prior to taking to the roads.

Cargo

A properly loaded trailer is easier to control. Most Boatmate Trailers are designed taking into account various boat options, variations in fuel, and a modest amount of typical gear. Please be aware the effect of adding any sort of ballast to the boat while on the trailer or adding an excessive amount of cargo may cause you to exceed the GVWR of your trailer or cause weight redistribution that could cause adverse effects to towing. Once loaded properly and secure the tongue weight of your trailer should be 5-10% of the total weight of your boat and trailer to ensure safe towing characteristics from the trailer. For adjustable trailers or pontoon trailers please ensure that your trailer is properly adjusted and tongue weight has been verified prior to towing.

Weight Distribution Hitch (WDH)

There are many vehicles being sold today that claim larger towing capacities, but require additional accessories to properly achieve that capacity. Many of these vehicles require a WDH to achieve these higher capacities. Boatmate Trailers does not advocate the use of WDH due to the adverse effects they can have on the surge brake systems found on most of our trailers. This does not mean they cannot be used, but there are several factors across our product line that make them difficult to manage. If your vehicle does require a WDH to manage the GVWR of your Boatmate Trailer then please contact a professional regarding the installation and setup of these systems.

Trailer Maintenance

Regular trailer maintenance is critical to ensuring the longevity of your Boatmate Trailer, as well as making sure you are able to tow your boat to your destination safely. Before towing, make sure your trailer and its components are in safe working order. Worn or broken trailer parts can cause a loss of control which may result in injury. You must inspect, maintain, and service your trailer regularly to ensure safe and reliable operation.

Compliance Programs

Boatmate Trailers participates in Compliance Verification Programs through both the National Association of Trailer Manufacturers (NATM) as well as the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA). These organizations compile Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards and industry best practices concerning trailer construction and use those standards to verify compliance at member facilities on a biennial basis. Boatmate Trailers is proud to participate in these programs which are a mandatory component of membership to these organizations.