

## USER INSTRUCTIONS

# TRAILER USER INSTRUCTIONS

STUDY THESE INSTRUCTIONS DAILY  
BEFORE OPERATING EQUIPMENT



# WARNING



FAILURE TO FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS MAY RESULT IN  
SERIOUS INJURY OR DEATH



**FAILURE TO READ AND FOLLOW ALL THE INSTRUCTIONS IN THIS BOOKLET MAY RESULT IN SERIOUS INJURY OR DEATH**

- \* **DO NOT** put the vehicle in motion before everyone in the vehicle has their safety restraint fastened. See page 9
- \* **NEVER** use a cell phone when you are driving. You may become distracted and cause an accident. See page 9
- \* Avoid accidents by slowing down. When driving at a lower speed you are less likely to lose control of the vehicle than when driving at a higher speed. The **recommended maximum speed** when towing a trailer is **45 mph**.
- \* Load 60% of the cargo weight in the front half of the trailer. See page 7
- \* **NEVER** exceed the trailer's maximum gross weight posted on the trailer. See page 8
- \* **DO NOT** overload your tow vehicle. Check the Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) on the label, inside the driver door. See page 3
- \* **NEVER** allow passengers in any trailer or load cargo on the outside of the trailer. See page 7
- \* **DO NOT** use any type of sport-utility vehicle, not equipped with a hard top, to tow a trailer. See page 3
- \* Use the checklist before towing and while on the road. See last page
- \* **ANTICIPATE STOPS! BRAKE EARLY!** Allow a 4 second gap between you and the vehicle in front of you. In adverse weather, allow at least a 5 second gap. See page 10
- \* Slow down for downgrades and shift your transmission into a lower gear. See page 10
- \* Slow down for curves, adverse weather, hazardous road conditions, and expressway exits. See page 9
- \* Your vehicle/trailer combination may experience momentary disturbances. If a disturbance happens, **DO NOT** brake, speed up or turn the steering wheel. Let off the gas pedal and keep the steering wheel in a straight-ahead position, sufficient to maintain the lane of travel. See page 10
- \* If the combination travels off the paved roadway, hold the steering wheel firmly. Let off the gas pedal. **DO NOT** apply your brakes. **DO NOT** turn sharply. Slow down below 25 mph, and then gradually turn the steering wheel to get back on the roadway. Proceed with caution when entering traffic. See page 11

# EQUIPMENT

## YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Driving a vehicle/trailer combination is different from driving a vehicle alone. These instructions are to help you, your passengers and your cargo reach your destination safely.

Your vehicle may be capable of storing information regarding vehicle speed, brake application, steering input, seat belt use or other vehicle information. In the event of an incident, law enforcement or others may have access to this information.

**If the driving duties are to be shared, make sure all drivers read and understand these instructions.**

## YOUR TOW VEHICLE

### **WARNING**

Burford & Henry Real Estate Services does not allow any type of sport-utility vehicle, not equipped with a hard top, to tow a trailer. In the unlikely even of an accident, vehicles not equipped with a hard top offer less crash and ejection protection than vehicles that have a hard top.

For occasional towing, your vehicle can tow any trailer equipped with brakes, provided the curb weight of your tow vehicle is at least 80% of the loaded weight of the braked trailer.

Changes to your tow vehicle from how it was manufactured can affect its ability to tow. These changes can include different tires, suspension changes, etc. Check your vehicle's owner manual or with an authorized automotive dealer to make sure any changes to your tow vehicle are approved. **DO NOT** tow the trailer if your tow vehicle has changes that are not approved.

If a tire goes flat on your tow vehicle, avoid driving on a compact spare tire any longer than necessary. Be sure the compact spare tire is properly inflated and do not exceed its weight limits. Check the vehicle manufacturer instructions for further information.

Refer to the owner's manual, decal instructions or an authorized automotive dealer for any specific handling characteristics of your tow vehicle.

## MAINTENANCE

Your tow vehicle's engine, transmission, steering, suspension, front end alignment, and tire condition, if not properly maintained, may affect the vehicle's ability to tow the trailer at the **recommended maximum speed of 45 mph**. Have an authorized automotive repair facility inspect and repair your vehicle **before** towing.

To find the capabilities of the engine, transmission, and axles of your vehicle for towing, refer to the owner's manual, or check with an authorized automotive dealer.

## TOWING EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

### Hitches

Hitches must be able to tow the weight of the trailer and its cargo. Your vehicle must have at a minimum class III hitch capable of towing at least 6000 lbs GVWR. **!!Bumper hitches are not to be used to tow the trailer!!**

### Hitch Balls

If the tow vehicle has the proper hitch, the correct ball size and rating is a 2" ball rated at 6,000 lbs or greater.

### Other Hitch Systems

Weight distributing or sway control devices **ARE NOT RECOMMENDED**. Towing a properly loaded trailer does not require these devices. These devices may have an effect on vehicle braking and may restrict the operation of the trailer coupling mechanism.

### Lights and Mirrors

When towing a trailer, all lights must be operational. Also, your tow vehicle must have external mirrors on both sides.

## LOADING YOUR TOW VEHICLE

To find how much weight you are allowed to put in your tow vehicle, including driver, passengers, cargo and any additional equipment:

**Step 1:** Find the tow vehicle manufacturer's recommended Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR). This is found on a label inside the driver door.

**Answer** \_\_\_ pounds

**Step 2:** Subtract the curb weight of your tow vehicle from the answer in Step 1.

**Answer** \_\_\_ pounds

**Step 3:** Subtract 400 pounds from the answer in Step 2

**Answer** \_\_\_ pounds

The answer in Step 3 is the amount of weight you can put in your tow vehicle. This weight includes driver, passengers, cargo and any additional equipment.

If the rear of your tow vehicle seems low, reduce the load in the rear seat, trunk or cargo bed areas. This can affect handling and headlight aim.

## TIRE PRESSURE

Set all tires to the proper pressure. Find the recommended **COLD** pressures on the tire sidewall, owner's manual, your vehicle's door decal or on the trailer decal. **DO NOT** put more pressure in the tire than is indicated on the tire sidewall. Tire pressures go up during driving. **DO NOT** let off this extra pressure.

## INSPECTING CONNECTIONS

Check all connections at each stop. Use the checklist on the last page.

### PERMANENT HITCH

Make sure the hitch is securely attached to your tow vehicle and the hitch ball is securely attached to the hitch.

### COUPLER (FIG. 2-4)

Push down on the latch (C) and fully loosen hand wheel (D) by turning counter-clockwise. Lower the coupler (B) onto the hitchball (A) as shown. (Fig 2)

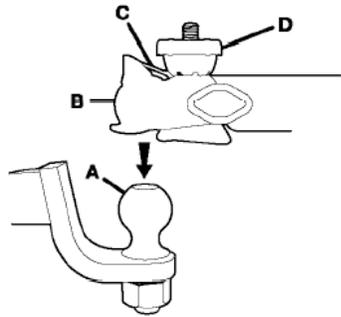


Fig. 2

Check that you can feel the ball clamp (E) positioned below the coupler (B). The coupler should completely cover and enclose the hitch ball (A).

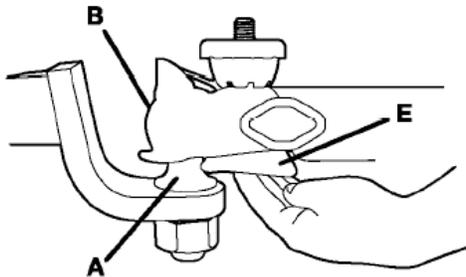


Fig. 3

Hand-tighten the coupler by pushing down on the latch (C) while rotating the handwheel (D) clockwise. When the handwheel becomes tight, push back on the trailer or slowly move the tow vehicle forward several inches to ensure that the hitch ball is properly seated within the coupler. Recheck that the handwheel is tight.

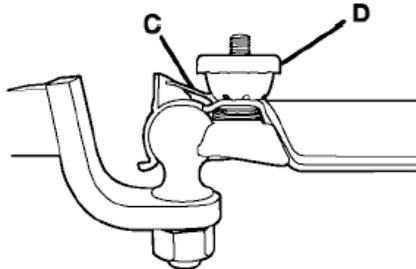


Fig. 4

## EMERGENCY SAFETY CHAINS (FIG. 5)

The purpose of the safety chains is to keep the trailer connected to your tow vehicle in the unlikely event the coupler comes off the ball or the ball comes off the hitch. Safety chains are attached to the trailer tongue and are equipped with “S”-hooks on their free ends. **DO NOT** attempt to tow the trailer by the safety chains alone unless it is necessary to get the combination off the roadway to a safe place. **DO NOT** tow the trailer without the safety chains securely attached to the towing vehicle.

The left chain (A) crosses underneath the trailer tongue (B) and hooks to the right side of the tow vehicle frame (C) or structure, the tow vehicle bumper brackets or to the permanent hitch. The right chain (D) hooks to the left side in the same manner. The “S”-hooks can be placed through a link in the chain. Crossing the chains under the tongue allows the minimum amount of slack for turning. This method may prevent the tongue (B) from striking the pavement in the unlikely event the trailer becomes separated from the tow vehicle.

*The chains (A&D) need slack to allow your vehicle to make turns. Make sure these chains attach securely to tow vehicle and do not drag on the roadway.*

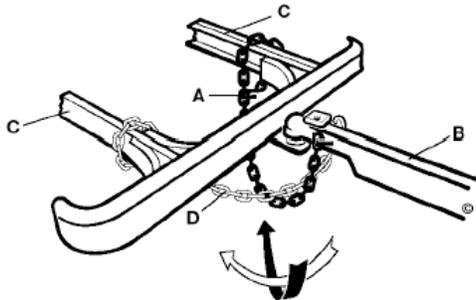


Fig. 5

## EMERGENCY BRAKE CHAIN (FIG. 6)

Trailers with brakes have a third chain, called the emergency brake chain (E). This chain applies the brakes automatically in the unlikely event of a separation of the trailer from the tow vehicle. Attach this chain to the tow vehicle frame member or structure or bumper bracket (C). Use slightly less slack than your safety chains. *Slack is necessary to prevent the emergency brake from activating on turns or inclined driveways.*

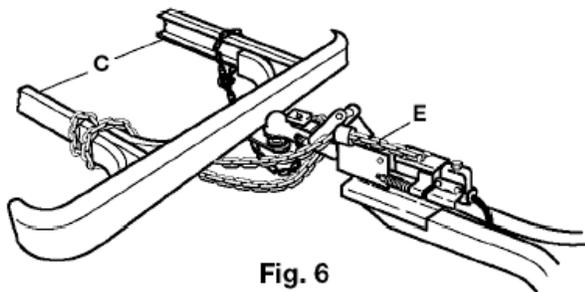


Fig. 6

## LIGHTING CONNECTIONS

Before starting your trip, get familiar with the lighting wire connections. Make sure all tow vehicle and trailer lights function properly. The connecting wires need slack to allow your tow vehicle to make turns. DO not allow wires to drag on the roadway.

### 4-Way Flat

If your tow vehicle has a 4-way flat lighting system, connect the trailer lights by plugging into the tow vehicle connection plug. If your tow vehicle does not have a 4-way flat lighting connection system, you will need an adapter.

## LOADING YOUR TRAILER

### WARNING!

Failure to follow these loading instructions may result in disturbances of your tow vehicle/trailer combination at the recommended maximum speed of 45 mph or below.

### WARNING!

Never allow passengers in the cargo area of any trailer. It is against the law in most states and passengers risk injury due to shifting cargo, asphyxiation and lack of collision protection.

**DO NOT load cargo on the outside of the trailer. Loading cargo outside the trailer may result in a disturbance of the vehicle/trailer combination at or below the recommended maximum speed limit of 45 mph.**

## VAN TRAILERS

*Load your trailer with at least 60% of the cargo weight in the front half of the trailer. Do this by loading the heaviest items first (such as appliances, tool boxes, boxes of books, etc.) in the front of the trailer, and then load your lighter items near the top and the rear. Pack all items closely and firmly. This will place the proper amount of weight on the hitch (tongue weight). Secure the heavy items with rope to the tie downs in the trailer. If the trailer is not completely full, secure the load with rope to the trailer tie downs. This will prevent the load from shifting or damaging your belongings.*

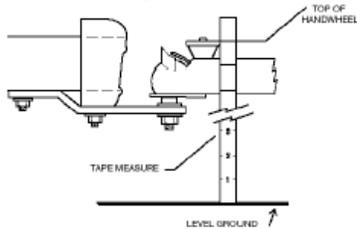


## TONGUE WEIGHT

The following guideline is to help you make sure enough weight is on the towing hitch (tongue weight)

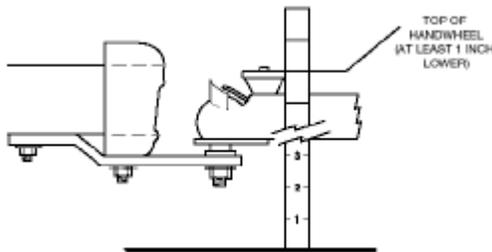
### DO NOT DISCONNECT THE TRAILER

Step 1: With the tow vehicle and trailer **empty**, and the trailer attached to your tow vehicle, measure the distance from the ground to the top of the trailer coupler handwheel.



Answer \_\_\_\_ inches

Step 2: With the trailer fully **loaded** and the tow vehicle **empty**, measure the distance from the ground to the top of the trailer coupler handwheel.



Answer \_\_\_\_ inches

Step 3: Subtract the answer in Step 2 from the answer in Step 1.

Answer \_\_\_\_ inches

If your answer in Step 3 is greater than or equal to 1 inch, your trailer has enough tongue weight. If your answer is less than 1 inch, it is recommended that you reload your trailer, and put more weight in the front of the trailer. An answer in Step 3 less than 1-inch can create a disturbance in your tow vehicle/trailer combination at the recommended maximum speed of 45 mph or below.

Take your tow vehicle/trailer combination for a short drive. If you feel the combination is not handling properly, reload your trailer.

### **DO NOT OVERLOAD**

Our trailer is designed to move household-type goods. Commercial loads (such as wood, food products, machinery, etc.) are heavier than household goods. **DO NOT** load the trailer with these items. Sand, dirt and gravel are even heavier, **DO NOT** load the trailer with these items.

**Our trailer's maximum gross (fully loaded) weight is 6,000 lbs Never load the trailer so that it exceeds this maximum gross weight. If in doubt, check the weight at a commercial site or state scale.**

## HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

### **WARNING!**

**DO NOT** transport hazardous materials, corrosives, explosives, or flammables such as gasoline or paint thinner. A container that is almost empty is just as dangerous as a full one. Flammables may explode or ignite through spontaneous combustion from vehicle movement.

Empty and air out the tanks of lawn mowers, camping stoves and lanterns before loading.

Propane tanks cannot be transported unless secured standing upright.

### **WARNING!**

**NEVER** fill a portable fuel container **IN** or **ON** the trailer. Vapors can be extremely flammable and explosive.

Securely close and properly package household cleaning products.

## TOWING

Be rested before driving. **DO NOT** drive when fatigued. Avoid driving at night. Night drivers have a 3 times greater fatality rate.

**Burford & Henry Real Estate Services does not recommend using cruise control or overdrive when towing a trailer.**

## SAFETY RESTRAINTS

Burford & Henry Real Estate Services recommend that all occupants wear appropriate safety restraints at all times while riding in a vehicle. State laws require children to be restrained while in a vehicle. Smaller children and babies should always be restrained in an approved child or infant restraint. Refer to vehicle manufacturer instructions and the child restraint instructions for proper application and usage for your child.

### **WARNING!**

Rear-facing infant seats should never be placed in the front seat of the tow vehicle equipped with a passenger-side air bag. A child may be seriously injured if an activated airbag strikes the child restraint.

## CELL PHONES

### **WARNING!**

**DO NOT** use a cell phone when you are driving. You may become distracted and cause an accident. If you need to use a cell phone while driving, find a safe place to exit the roadway, such as a rest area, before using the cell phone.

## SPEED LIMIT

### **WARNING!**

Avoid accidents by slowing down. When driving at a lower speed you are less likely to lose control of the vehicle than when driving at a higher speed. Excess speed is a major cause of vehicle/trailer combination accidents. The **recommended maximum speed when towing a trailer is 45 mph**. Observe this limit or the posted speed limit, whichever is lower. Slow down for curves, adverse weather, hazardous road conditions and expressway exits. Do not feel secure if your trailer tows easily at higher speeds. A road hazard that could be avoided at **45 mph** may become unavoidable at 55 mph.

## STOPPING/FOLLOWING DISTANCE

### **WARNING!**

Your vehicle/trailer combination is heavier and longer than your vehicle alone. This means it will take you longer to stop.

Allow at least 4 seconds between you and the vehicle in front of you. Start counting when the back of the vehicle in front of you passes a fixed object, such as a signpost, telephone pole, or crack in the road. Count "one thousand and one, one thousand and two, one thousand and three, one thousand and four." If the front of your vehicle reaches the object before the end of 4 seconds, ease off the gas pedal slightly to increase the distance, then check your following distance again.

If you are driving in adverse weather, such as rain, snow, or fog, use at least a 5 second gap.

## HILLS

To prevent your tow vehicle's engine from lugging when traveling up hills shift into lower gears. This will improve the gas mileage and reduce engine overheating.

### **WARNING!**

Disturbances happen more frequently going downhill. Prevent this by decreasing speed **BEFORE** starting down the hill. Shift into lower gears, allowing the engine to help you control your speed.

**DO NOT** ride the brake pedal going downhill. Prolonged use of your brakes can result in overheating and the loss of braking effectiveness. When you need to slow down, apply the brake pedal and slow down below the **45 mph recommended maximum speed**. Then let completely off the brake pedal.

## PASSING

Your vehicle/trailer combination is heavier and longer than your tow vehicle alone and you will require more time and distance to pass.

### **WARNING!**

Passing by another vehicle in the same or opposite direction can result in a disturbance. This disturbance is greater as the speed of your vehicle increases. See the COMBINATION DISTURBANCES section on what to do if a disturbance happens.

## COMBINATION DISTURBANCES

One or more causes (cross winds, passing vehicles, driver steering inputs, improper loading, excessive speed, etc.) may result in a disturbance.

### **WARNING!**

During a combination disturbance, applying your brakes or turning the steering wheel can cause a jackknife, loss of control or both.

If a disturbance happens:

- Let off the gas pedal. **NEVER** speed up to try to control a disturbance

- **DO NOT** apply your brakes

- Steer straight ahead, sufficient to maintain your lane of travel. **DO NOT** try to control the disturbance by turning the steering wheel.

After the disturbance has stopped:

- Pull a safe distance off the roadway and stop. Get all occupants out of the vehicle and away from the roadway.
- Check the cargo in the trailer to make sure the load has not shifted. Also make sure the trailer is loaded heavier in front.
- Check that all the tires are properly inflated and all lug nuts are tight.
- Check the trunk or cargo bed of the towing vehicle to make sure it is not overloaded.
- **DO NOT** exceed the **45 mph recommended maximum speed**. Disturbances happen most often at higher speeds.

## **ROAD SHOULDERS**

Sometimes the trailer is wider than your tow vehicle. Allow for this by driving in the center of your lane.

## **WARNING!**

If the wheel(s) of the vehicle/trailer combination go off the paved roadway:

- \* Hold the steering wheel firmly
- \* Let off the gas pedal and slow down below 25 mph
- \* **DO NOT** apply your brakes
- \* **DO NOT** turn the steering wheel sharply.
- \* After slowing below 25 mph, gradually turn the steering wheel to get back on the roadway.
- \* Proceed with caution when entering traffic.

## **BACKING UP**

Keep your hand at the bottom of the steering wheel. To move the trailer left, move your hand left. To move the trailer right, move your hand right. If your tow vehicle/trailer combination starts to jackknife, or isn't headed where you want it, STOP. Pull forward to straighten out and then start again.

## **BREAKDOWNS & ACCIDENTS**

### **GET OFF THE ROAD**

Immediately park your tow vehicle/trailer combination in a safe place, completely off the roadway. Turn on your emergency flashers. Get all occupants out of the vehicle and away from the roadway.

If you must continue on the roadway to reach a safe place off the road, turn on your emergency flashers and proceed with caution.

Do not hesitate to drive on a flat tire if it is necessary to reach a safe place completely off the roadway. Drive slowly, since the scraping tire and wheel could cause a fire.

### **MINOR BREAKDOWNS**

If the trailer's mechanical problem is minor, and the combination can be safely driven, proceed to the nearest destination and notify your agent for instructions.

**MAJOR BREAKDOWNS**

If the mechanical problem is major, or if the combination cannot be driven safely, be prepared to give your exact location and a callback telephone number. Call your agent and they will be able to give instructions to you.

**ALL ACCIDENTS**

In case of an accident get everyone out of the vehicle and completely off the roadway. Call a doctor or ambulance if anyone is injured. Care for yourself and the people with you. Notify the police as soon as possible.

Get the following information of all parties involved in the accident: name, address, home and business telephone number. From the other driver, get their driver's license number, the state the driver's license was issued and their insurance carrier's name. Use the form on the next page.

Be courteous and calm. Do not argue. Make no comment regarding the accident to anyone except the police, Burford & Henry Real Estate Services, or insurance carrier.  
For your protection, complete an Equipment Damage Report when returning the trailer.

**ACCIDENT REPORTING**

Fill out the On-Scene Accident Information Form found on the next page of this booklet. Completion of this brief form will ensure your prompt action. Bring this booklet with the completed form with you when returning your trailer.

**ON-SCENE ACCIDENT INFORMATION**

DATE & TIME OF ACCIDENT: \_\_\_\_\_

STREET OR HIGHWAY: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_

ACCIDENT INVESTIGATED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

ACCIDENT REPORT NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

**OTHER VEHICLE DRIVER'S INFORMATION**

OTHER DRIVER'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

CURRENT ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ BUSINESS PHONE: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER DRIVER'S LICENSE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER DRIVER'S INSURANCE CO: \_\_\_\_\_

POLICY NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

WITNESS/ADDRESS/PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

NOTES/DESCRIBE ACCIDENT: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

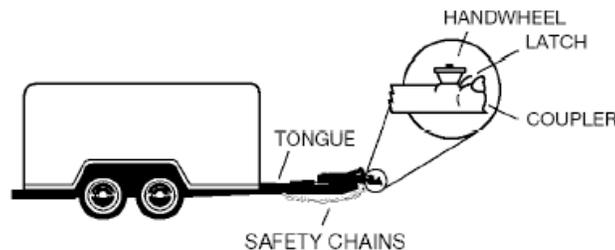
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## GLOSSARY

- COUPLER** - The part of the tongue that covers and connects to the hitch ball.
- HANDWHEEL** - The device on top of the coupler that tightens or loosens the ball clamp around the hitch ball.
- SAFETY CHAINS** - The chains that are attached to the trailer tongue with hooks on their free ends. These chains keep the trailer connected to the tow vehicle should the coupler come off the hitch ball or the hitch ball comes off the hitch.
- TONGUE** - The part of the trailer from the trailer box to the coupler.
- TONGUE WEIGHT** - The downward weight applied by the trailer on the hitch ball.



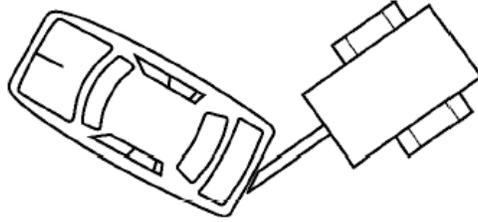
- CURB WEIGHT** - The weight of the vehicle with standard equipment, full of all fluids and appropriate options.
- GVWR** - The weight specified by the manufacturer as the recommended maximum weight of a single vehicle.
- HARD TOP** - A metal or fiberglass rigid structure that fastens to the vehicle and encloses the occupant compartment.
- HITCH** - The device providing the connection between the tow vehicle and the trailer. May be a permanent hitch or a rental hitch.



- HITCH BALL** - The ball-shaped portion of the hitch onto which the coupler is attached.
- SAFETY RESTRAINT** - Seat belts for adults and older children, approved child or infant restraints for smaller children. Refer to the vehicle manufacturer instructions and the child restraint instructions for proper application and usage for your child.
- TOW VEHICLE** - The vehicle that pulls the trailer.

**DISTURBANCE -** Movement of the tow vehicle, trailer or both from their intended path, due to one or more causes (i.e.: cross winds, passing vehicles, road surfaces, driver steering inputs, improper loading, excessive speed, etc.).

**JACKKNIFE -** When the tow vehicle and the trailer are at an excessive angle to each other.



**LUGGING -** The engine is temporarily overloaded, such as a vehicle going up a steep hill. The vehicle may jerk when the engine is lugging.

## TOWING CHECKLIST

- BEFORE TOWING:**
- Towing hitch and hitch ball are tight.
  - Coupler handwheel is tight.
  - Safety chains are properly attached and secure.
  - All lights are connected and working.
  - Check all tires for correct pressure.
  - Load trailer heavier in front.

- BEFORE DRIVING:**
- Fasten safety restraints.
  - Properly adjust mirrors.

- ON THE ROAD:**
- Reduce speed to **45 mph** or below.
  - Stop often for rest.
  - Inspect vehicles and connections at each stop.
  - Anticipate stops, brake early.

## **REMEMBER!**

### ACCIDENTS ARE CAUSED BY:

- \* Driver error
- \* Excessive speed
- \* Failure to load trailer heavier in front