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Your Guide To Towing - Know Before You Tow

By Gray Rollins

If you love to camp, hike, fish, water ski and enjoy the great outdoors; chances are there will come a time when you want to tow a boat or camping trailer. Know before you tow with this guide to towing.

Here are some terms you should be familiar with and what you need to check. The Base Curb Weight + Cargo Weight + Passenger Weight = GVW or Gross Vehicle Weight. The GVW + Loaded Trailer Weight = GCW or Gross Combination Weight.

The GVW must not exceed the GVWR which can be found on the safety Compliance Certification label. The GVWR is the maximum weight allowed on a fully loaded vehicle. This includes passengers and cargo. Once you have this information, you will be able to figure out what size trailer a vehicle can tow.

There are two different types of hitches on the market. A weight carrying hitch is common for small to medium size trailers. Use a good weight carrying hitch that properly distributes the weight. You'll find a label on the hitch that provides the weight carrying and weight distributing capacity of the hitch. Don't exceed the rating.

The weight distributing hitch uses a hitch platform to distribute the tongue load to all the wheels of the towing vehicle and trailer. It is the required type of hitch for most Class III and IV trailers. This type of hitch is welded or bolted to the frame of the vehicle and it has equalizing arms that are connected from the hitch to the trailer's frame.

Besides the GVWR and the correct type of hitch, you also need to make sure your braking system is adequate. If your load is more than 1500 pounds, the law requires a separate braking system. There are two types on the market.

Electronically controlled brakes provide both automatic and manual control of the trailer brakes. The tow vehicle needs to be equipped with a controlling device and requires some wiring. Surge brakes are independent and are activated by a master cylinder that is located at the junction of the trailer tongue and hitch. Make sure your braking system conforms with all legal requirements.

Your Guide To Towing – Know Before You Tow

The trailer will also need to be equipped with trailer lights that meet government regulations. Do not connect the trailer lights directly to the vehicle's lighting system. They need to be installed with a proper wiring harness. See your dealer to ensure you have the correct wiring harness for your vehicle.

Safety chains should always be used when towing. They provide a connection between the trailer and the vehicle should the hitch fail. Cross the chains under the trailer tongue to stop the tongue from connecting with the ground if the hitch fails, and leave only enough slack to allow for a full turn.

A trailer is a great investment. It will take you from the mountains to the valleys and from the river to the lakes. If you haven't towed before it's natural to feel overwhelmed about choosing a vehicle and trailer to tow safely. This guide to towing will have you confidently towing in no time!

Gray Rollins is a featured writer for UpTowing. To learn more about towing, visit us at

<http://www.uptowing.com/towingequipment/>

and read our towing guide at

<http://www.uptowing.com/towingguide/>

How to tow another kayak

By Jakob Jelling

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While there are a lot of different techniques to get people back in their kayaks should they capsize while they're out kayaking, these techniques are not all foolproof. It is always possible that no matter what you try, there is no way you can possibly get all of the water out of the kayak. If this is the case, then you'll probably have to drain the kayak on the beach, and then re-launch both kayaks.

Knowing how to tow another kayak is an important part of being safe on the water. After all, if there is some reason why the other person cannot paddle back to shore, then you are going to need to provide a tow. If you ever find yourself in a situation where you cannot continue paddling, then you should also make sure that you're prepared to accept a tow. There are plenty of reasons why you might need to be towed, and you should not feel embarrassed about any of them. Anybody can become tired or injured, and you should always ask for help when it is needed, especially if you are kayaking out at sea.

The first thing that you should do before you tow another kayak is talk to the person in the kayak. There are a lot of reasons why somebody might have to stop paddling, and you should probably determine which one is the problem now. Once you determine that, you'll be able to provide a little more help than just a tow. For instance, if the person in the kayak is dehydrated or hungry, then you can provide food or water. If they are cold, then you may want to suggest that they put on more clothing.

Your Guide To Towing – Know Before You Tow

You should always make sure that the person you are towing has a whistle, just in case something happens while you are towing their kayak. That way, you'll be able to respond right away.

There are several different towing options. First, if you only have one person who is capable of towing the other kayak, then you can just use one towline and tow the kayak by yourself. If there are other people to help, then you can try either the V tow or an inline tow. The V tow is probably the most effective method if there are two paddlers – essentially, both kayakers are attached to the one being towed in a V-like formation. If there are several people who are capable of towing, you may want to try an inline tow. What this means is that the kayakers are connected in a straight line, and the first kayak is the only one that is not being towed a little. This is helpful if most of the people in your group are starting to feel a little bit tired.

Other techniques that you can use while rescuing somebody are the stern tow and the bow tow. These different towing methods essentially involve what parts of the kayak you will connect to when you decide to give somebody a tow. It's important for you to learn several different towing methods so that when you are actually in the situation where they are needed, you'll be able to figure out which method works the best for you.

Jakob Jelling is the founder of <http://www.kayakhelp.com>. Please visit his complete kayaking guide for all skills and ages.



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