



BEFORE YOU PULL OUT

Truck and Horse-Trailer Pre-Trip Checklist

Complete this inspection before loading. If something is not right, stop and correct it before the trip begins.

Date		Destination	
Tow vehicle		Trailer	

1. Lights and Electrical Connection

Make sure you can see and that other drivers can see what you intend to do.

- ☐ Truck headlights, high beams, tail lights, brake lights, turn signals, and hazard flashers operate.
- ☐ Trailer running lights, marker lights, brake lights, turn signals, and hazard flashers operate.
- ☐ The 7-way connector is clean, fully seated, secure, and will not pull loose while turning.
- ☐ Wiring is supported and clear of sharp edges, heat, moving parts, and the road.

2. Tires, Wheels, and Spares

Check tires when they are cold and before the horses are loaded.

- ☐ All truck, trailer, and spare tires are properly inflated, suitable for their positions, and accessible if needed.
- ☐ Tread is adequate; no tire has cracks, bulges, cuts, exposed material, or suspicious wear.
- ☐ Tire age and date codes have been considered, not just tread depth.
- ☐ Wheels appear sound; lug nuts show no signs of looseness, movement, or missing hardware.

Cold tire pressures Truck front ____ psi | Truck rear ____ psi | Trailer ____ psi | Spare ____ psi

The penny test identifies the 2/32-inch tread threshold, but tread depth alone does not reveal age-related or internal damage.

3. Mirrors and Visibility

Adjust towing mirrors for the trailer, not for ordinary solo driving.

- ☐ Towing mirrors are extended, clean, secure, and adjusted to minimize blind areas.
- ☐ Cameras and sensors are clean and operating, if equipped.
- ☐ The new mirror view has been checked while parked before entering traffic.

4. Truck, Trailer, and Load Match

Advertised towing capacity is only one limit. Every applicable rating must be respected.

- ☐ Planned weights are within truck payload, GVWR, GAWR, GCWR, trailer GVWR, hitch, and tire limits.
- ☐ Tongue or pin weight has been included in the truck's payload.
- ☐ Tack, water, feed, tools, and other cargo are secured against movement.

5. Fluids and Tow-Vehicle Condition

Towing creates additional heat and load. Follow the manufacturer's towing or severe-duty maintenance schedule.

- ☐ Engine oil, coolant, transmission fluid, brake fluid, and other serviceable fluids are at proper levels.
- ☐ No fresh leaks, warning lights, unusual smells, or abnormal gauge readings are present.
- ☐ Required service is current or has been checked by a qualified professional.



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Finish the connection checks, confirm the route, and make a deliberate decision before loading and leaving.

6. Truck Brakes, Trailer Brakes, and Breakaway System

The combination must stop predictably before it enters traffic.

- ☐ Truck and trailer brakes have been inspected and serviced as required.
- ☐ Trailer brakes respond during a controlled low-speed test using the controller's manual control.
- ☐ The breakaway switch, cable, and battery are secure and tested according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- ☐ The breakaway cable is attached independently to the tow vehicle at an approved point.

7. Hitch, Ball, Coupler, and Hardware

Every part of the connection must be correctly sized, rated, seated, and locked.

- ☐ Receiver, ball mount, hitch ball, gooseneck ball, coupler, and related hardware are properly rated.
- ☐ The coupler is fully seated and locked; the latch, hitch pin, and safety clips are installed.
- ☐ The hitch ball and mounting hardware show no looseness, cracks, severe wear, or damage.
- ☐ The tongue jack, rear stabilizers, and any steps are fully raised and secured.
- ☐ Weight-distribution or sway-control equipment is installed and adjusted as directed, if used.

8. Safety Chains and Cables

Chains must restrain the trailer without dragging or preventing a full turn.

- ☐ Chains and attachment points are properly rated and free of serious wear, cracks, deformation, or damaged hooks.
- ☐ Chains are attached to the tow vehicle's designated connection points, not to the bumper.
- ☐ Bumper-pull safety chains are crossed beneath the tongue unless the manufacturer directs otherwise.
- ☐ Chains have enough slack for a full turn but cannot drag on the road.
- ☐ The breakaway cable is routed so it will not bind, drag, or activate during a normal turn.

9. Fuel, Route, Weather, and Stops

A towing rig needs more fuel and more room than the same truck traveling alone.

- ☐ Fuel range is sufficient, with planned stops that provide safe entry, maneuvering room, and a clear exit.
- ☐ The route has been checked for construction, closures, grades, narrow roads, and weight restrictions.
- ☐ Weather, heat, wind, smoke, and road conditions are acceptable for the animals and the rig.
- ☐ Roadside-assistance, veterinary, destination, and emergency contact information is available.

Planned fuel stops

10. Trailer Height and Clearance

Know the trailer's actual highest point, including vents, racks, air conditioners, and other equipment.

- ☐ Trailer height was measured while the rig was level and recorded where the driver can see it.

Actual measured height

_____ ft. _____ in.

Minimum planned clearance

_____ ft. _____ in.

FINAL DECISION

Are the tow vehicle, trailer, route, and conditions ready?

YES / NO

What must be corrected before loading and leaving?

This checklist is a planning aid, not a substitute for manufacturer instructions, required inspections, maintenance procedures, or professional service. If a check fails, correct the problem before loading or hauling.