Towing Large Loads Meeting Kit

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Knowing the towing capacity of a vehicle is critical when choosing which model will work best for your hauling needs as well as determining what you will be able to haul with your current vehicle.

There are two primary types of trailers that will be used for towing purposes. An open, or flatbed trailer, refers to a trailer that has no sides and is the ideal choice for objects that may have an unconventional shape. Or you can also opt to use an enclosed trailer that will be covered on all sides and topped with a roof. This type of trailer is often used for any type of cargo that needs protection, such as livestock or furniture.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

DANGERS OF HEAVY-DUTY VEHICLE TOWING

Heavy-Duty Vehicles Are Difficult to Maneuver. When Heavy-Duty Vehicles tow or transport other heavy vehicles or bulky items, manoeuvring them becomes incredibly difficult. Heavy vehicles require more space and time than regular vehicles to come to a standstill or accelerate. Should traffic start and stop frequently, it will prove to be problematic for an amateur truck driver.

Unpredictable Weather Conditions Can Worsen the Process. Tow truck drivers must stay alert and aware of bad weather. Moreover, since it is not only one vehicle they are driving, they need to be extra careful while towing the heavy vehicle behind them.

Driver Fatigue Can Lead to Serious Implications. Unpredictable weather, dangerous road conditions, and encountering other aggressive drivers on the road can make driving and towing large-sized vehicles a constant challenge. All this can lead to driver

fatigue that can impair their concentration and alertness, and their decision-making process as a whole can be adversely affected.

PRIMARY DANGERS OF HAULING LARGE LOADS

1. **Stopping Distances.** A loaded tractor-trailer will require about 200 feet to come to a complete stop, compared to an ordinary passenger vehicle that needs about 135 feet. The more weight and mass a truck is hauling, the longer it will take to stop. For every 20,000 pounds added after the first 80,000 pounds, stopping distances will increase by a little over 25 percent.
2. **Approved Routes.** The surface upon which trucks travel can create substantial difficulties in the form of potholes and other existing damage that can unsettle a load. The route taken should be pre-planned carefully.
3. **Height.** When an oversize load is due to height, it’s imperative that drivers travel on approved routes to avoid bridges, overpasses and other obstacles that are lower than the height of the load.
4. **Weight.** Only travel on approved routes that avoid bridges that can’t handle the weight, along with roads that are unable to accommodate the load without damage.
5. **Length.** Length of the load will also be a factor. It requires wider turns and extra care if the driver will need to back up.
6. **Securing Loads.** Drivers should never assume load security throughout the haul. Every load should be inspected at every stop to ensure safety.
7. **Crashes and Accidents.** An oversize load won’t be able to navigate sharp curves and turns the way other haulers can. Rollovers and jackknife crashes are a very real danger if a driver must brake quickly. There’s also the potential for a load to shift or break loose.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

SAFETY MEASURES TO TOW A HEAVY LOAD

1. **Use the Right Trailer and Vehicle.** Always check the load capacity and safety rating of the trailer. Keep in mind that uneven terrain or bumps can increase load weight.
2. **Proper Load Securing and Distribution.** It is essential to consider the placement of the items being transported to keep the overall weight balanced. Uneven loads increase the likelihood of tipping while making it difficult for the driver to maintain control of the trailer and the vehicle. Ensure that everything is secured properly to avoid shifting during transit. Cargo that is locked in place always guarantees that it doesn’t fall off on the road.
3. **Optimise Route Planning.** Take the time to map out an ideal route and identify possible issues that could cause problems. Avoid routes with heavy traffic, road construction, low hanging bridges and toll roads. Always check to ensure that the roads are capable of handling the height, weight, and width of the load.
4. **Double Check the Load.** It can be useful to have a safety system in place where several people can inspect the load. Try not to rely on a single person to do the safety check.

BEST DRIVING TIPS FOR SAFE TOWING

Know your trailer. In many cases, the trailer weighs more than the truck. All that extra weight behind the truck will have a huge impact on the truck’s ability to stop quickly and navigate sharp turns.

Make wider turns at curves and corners. Safe towing requires that the driver take constant care to give a wider berth than usual around any corner.

Allow for longer stopping distances. Stopping distances will increase from what your tow vehicle can normally achieve on its own, because of the added weight of the trailer.

Drive in the right lane on highways. Drive in the right lane to use the extra stopping room of the right shoulder of the road in case you need to brake suddenly.

Adjust trailer brakes according to load. Many trailers have electric brakes, and the power level can be adjusted by the driver if the truck is fitted with an optional in-vehicle trailer brake controller system. It’s important to adjust how heavily the trailer’s brakes are applied.

Don’t ride your truck’s brakes on long downhills. Shift the truck’s transmission to a lower gear to help slow the vehicle and take some strain off of the brakes. Applying the brakes at intervals to keep the speed in check (as opposed to constant application on the brake pedal) will help keep the brakes from overheating.

Use a spotter when backing up. Have someone outside at the rear of the trailer while backing up whenever possible; mirrors—even wide tow mirrors—typically can’t provide all the visibility you may need, particularly in situations where there are other vehicles, objects, or people in close proximity.

Practice driving with a trailer. Before hitting the road, it’s a good idea to practice accelerating, backing up, braking, making wide turns, and using your sideview mirrors.

Disconnect wiring before launching a boat. Disconnect the trailer’s wiring from the tow vehicle before backing the trailer into the water at a boat launch.

Check your route ahead of time. Planning your route ahead of time will save you from the hassle of having to backtrack to find roads that allow your rig.

FINAL WORD

When you’re towing heavy loads. Over driving long-distance, you never know when a major storm is going to hit. Driving in severe weather is dangerous under normal circumstances. When you’re

towing a heavy load, those dangers definitely increase.