

Trailer towing can be safe when the trailer is properly loaded, secured, inspected, and matched to the towing vehicle. Improper loading or towing can cause trailer sway, loss of control, cargo movement, equipment damage, and serious injuries. When applicable to CMV /FMCSA regulations, follow 49 CFR Part 393, including cargo securement, equipment, lighting, brakes, inspection, and driver requirements, along with all federal, state, and company requirements.



Know Towing Limits

- Never exceed the tow vehicle, hitch, coupler, or ball capacity. Check trailer GVWR/payload and consider the combined trailer + cargo weight.
- Use the correct hitch type, size, and rating. Verify proper installation and that the coupler locking device/safety pin is secured.
- Do not exceed the manufacturer's tongue-weight rating. A larger/properly equipped tow vehicle may have greater capacity because of its engine, transmission, brakes, axle, and other components.

Load the Trailer Correctly

- Incorrect weight distribution is a major cause of trailer sway and loss of control.
- Keep approximately 60% of the load in the front half; keep heavy items low and centered; distribute weight evenly left-to-right; avoid excessive rear weight.
- Don't overload/exceed gross vehicle weight ratings. Proper tongue weight helps stability: too little can cause fishtailing/sway; too much can overload the hitch, rear axle, or coupler. Adjust the load to the manufacturer's limits.
- Materials extending beyond the rear must meet applicable DOT/state requirements for warning flags, lights, and markings. Secure projecting materials and make them clearly visible to other drivers.

Secure the Load

- Cargo must not shift, roll, fall, or become dislodged. Use appropriate chains, straps, binders, and tie-down points.
- Chains, binders, straps, or other securement devices shall NOT be attached to removable attachments, accessories, hydraulic components, cylinders, buckets, blades, forks, booms, or other components that are not designed or designated by the manufacturer as securement points.
- Make sure tie-downs are properly attached, tight, and in good condition, with adequate working load limit (WLL) for the cargo.
- Secure loose materials before moving. Recheck the load whenever conditions indicate cargo may have shifted.

Hitch, Safety Chains & Breakaway

- Fully seat and lock the coupler onto the correct-size/rated hitch ball; insert the required locking/safety pin.
- Connect safety chains/cables to the towing and towed vehicles. Cross chains under the coupler to support the trailer tongue if coupling fails. Keep enough slack for turning without excessive slack.
- Inspect chains, cables, hooks, links, and attachment points. Connect the breakaway cable/device when equipped.



Toolbox Talk Attendance Form

Supervisor / Project Manager: _____ Date: _____

PRINT NAME	SIGNATURE