

Tow Dolly Instructions

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Safety alert symbol- This safety alert symbol precedes all the safety messages in these instructions. Safety messages alert you to possible hazards and instruct you on how to avoid or reduce the risk of injury.

WARNING

READ and FOLLOW all of these instructions and safety messages before operating the tow dolly. DEATH, DISMEMBERMENT or SERIOUS INJURY to you, your passengers, and others on the road may result if you do not follow these instructions. Make sure all drivers read and understand all these instructions.

Important towing information

PREVENT WHIPPING by properly loading the tow dolly. The vehicle-in-tow must be loaded facing forward (front wheels on tow dolly). Loading the vehicle-in-tow backwards can cause the tow vehicle and tow dolly "combination" to begin WHIPPING, which is violent and uncontrollable sway.

SIDE to SIDE MOTION (SWAY) THAT BEGINS as you reach a certain speed, will likely become WHIPPING at higher speeds. If you notice sway beginning SLOW DOWN IMMEDIATELY by letting off the gas pedal. Then stop to check the tow dolly and vehicle-in-tow as soon as possible.

IF WHIPPING or SWAY OCCURS, DO NOT steer, DO NOT apply your brakes, and NEVER speed up. Let off the gas pedal and hold the steering wheel in a straight-ahead position.

A "combination disturbance" is improper handling, whipping, sway, over-steering or other deviation of the tow vehicle or tow dolly from their intended path, due to one or more causes (improper loading, steering inputs, excessive speed, cross winds, passing vehicles, rough roads, etc). IF A COMBINATION DISTURBANCE OCCURS, DO NOT steer or brake. Steering or braking during a disturbance can cause a loss of control or crash.

If a WHEEL GOES OFF THE PAVED ROADWAY, DO NOT steer sharply and DO NOT brake. Let off the gas pedal and slow down below 25 mph. Then steer gradually back onto the roadway. Proceed with caution entering traffic

Loading your tow dolly

Your tow vehicle must be at least 750 pounds heavier than the vehicle-in-tow.

The MAXIMUM weight the vehicle-in-tow can be is determined by your specific tow vehicle.

This is done during the rental process, so NEVER place a vehicle-in-tow on the tow dolly that is

different than listed on your rental contract.

NEVER load cargo inside the vehicle-in-tow or on the tow dolly. Cargo weight inside the vehicle-in-tow can cause sway or WHIPPING.

NEVER overload your tow vehicle. Do not exceed the Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) and the Gross Axle Weight Ratings (GAWR), which are posted on a label inside the driver's door opening.

Make sure the tow dolly is securely attached to the tow vehicle before loading and unloading. Keep children and others at least 25 feet away during loading and unloading.

Slow down when towing

AVOID CRASHES by slowing down. Reduce your speed from what you would normally drive without a tow dolly under similar road conditions. The maximum speed is 55 mph when towing a tow dolly. Do not exceed any posted speed limit.

DRIVE DEFENSIVELY - anticipate stops, brake early, and never follow closely.

BEFORE going downhill, slow down and shift the transmission into a lower gear. DO NOT RIDE BRAKES on downgrades.

Slow down for curves, adverse weather, hazardous road conditions, road construction and expressway exits.

Before towing and on the road

Use the checklist at the end of these instructions before towing and while on the road.

Make sure your tow vehicle is properly equipped and maintained. Be sure all tires are inflated properly.

ALWAYS wear your seat belt. Be sure children are properly restrained.

DO NOT drive when you are fatigued, sleepy or distracted. Avoid driving at night.

NEVER use a cell phone when driving. If you need to use a cell phone find a safe place to exit the roadway.

NEVER drive under the influence of alcohol or any substance that might impair your vision, judgment, or ability to control the vehicle.

NEVER tow without properly installed tire straps and vehicle-in-tow security chains.

NEVER allow passengers to ride inside the vehicle-in-tow or on the tow dolly.

No open or soft-top sport utility vehicle is allowed to tow a tow dolly, because in the event of a crash, these vehicles offer less collision and ejection protection.

Equipment

Your tow vehicle

For occasional towing, your vehicle can tow the tow dolly, provided the curb weight of your tow vehicle is at least 750 lbs. more than the weight of the vehicle-in-tow. Example: A 2,750 lb. car may tow no more than a 2,000 lb. car.

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

Changes made to your tow vehicle after it was manufactured can affect its ability to tow. These changes can include different tires, suspension changes, etc. Check your owner's manual or with an authorized automotive dealer to make sure any changes to your tow vehicle are approved. DO NOT tow the tow dolly if your tow vehicle has changes that are not approved. Avoid driving on a compact spare tire any longer than necessary. Follow the vehicle manufacturer's instructions.

Maintenance

Maintenance and condition of your tow vehicle's engine, transmission, steering, suspension, front- end alignment and tires may affect your vehicle's ability to tow the tow dolly. Have an authorized repair facility inspect and repair your vehicle BEFORE towing.

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

Towing equipment requirements

Hitches

Hitches must be able to tow the weight of the tow dolly and your vehicle-in-tow.

Hitch Balls

Hitch-ball sizes of 1-7/8 and 2 inches are acceptable with our Tow Dolly coupler.

Other Hitch Systems

Weight distributing or sway control devices ARE NOT USED for towing our Tow Dolly. Towing a properly loaded tow dolly does not require these devices. These devices may have a negative effect on vehicle handling and braking and may restrict the operation of the tow dolly coupling mechanism.

Lights and Mirrors

When towing a tow dolly, all lights must be operational. Your tow vehicle may require external mirrors on both sides.

Loading your tow vehicle

To find how much weight you are allowed to put in your tow vehicle:

Step 1: Find your tow vehicle's GVWR on the label inside the driver's door.

Step 2: Subtract the curb (empty) weight of your tow vehicle from the GVWR. Contact a U-Haul representative for help in finding the curb weight of your tow vehicle.

Step 3: Subtract 200 pounds from the answer in Step 2. This accounts for tow dolly tongue weight.

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. Too much load in the rear can affect handling.

Tire pressure

Set all tires to the proper pressure. Find the recommended *COLD* pressure on the tire sidewall, owner's manual, your vehicle's door decal or on the tow dolly 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.

Air pressure in the rear tires of some tow vehicles may be increased to accommodate the additional weight of the tow dolly. Inflate rear tires approximately 6 psi above normal, but do not exceed the pressure limit stamped on tire.

Your vehicle-in-tow

The maximum weight the vehicle-in-tow can be is determined by your specific tow vehicle. This is done during the purchase process, so **NEVER** place a vehicle-in-tow on the tow dolly that is different than listed on your purchase contract. A different vehicle-in-tow than listed on your purchase contract may cause a disturbance or damage to your tow vehicle, tow dolly or vehicle-in-tow.

The vehicle-in-tow tires **MUST** fit on the tow dolly ramps without hanging over the sides. **DO NOT** load a vehicle-in-tow that is more than 75 inches wide at the front doors.

Low hanging equipment on your vehicle-in-tow, such as spoilers, air dams, ground effects, etc., may be damaged by contact with the Tow Dolly during loading and unloading. Make sure there is enough clearance for these items. If there is not enough clearance for these items, they must be removed, or do not load the vehicle-in-tow.

The tow dolly is designed for carrying vehicles with standard, factory-installed suspensions. Modified or lowered suspension vehicles may not fit on the tow dolly, damage may occur to the vehicles during loading or transport. We are not responsible for damage to vehicles with modified suspensions.

Transmission damage to your vehicle-in-tow

When towing a rear axle driven front engine vehicle, the drive shaft must be disconnected to prevent transmission damage. Simply placing the transmission in neutral is not sufficient and will not prevent damage due to a lack of internal lubrication. You must disconnect the drive shaft at the rear axle and tie or wire it up. The universal joint bearing caps must be taped on to prevent loss of the bearings. If you choose to remove the drive shaft entirely, it may be necessary to cap the transmission tail shaft to prevent fluid loss and possible future damage. Consult your vehicle owner's manual.

Front wheel drive vehicles do not need drive shafts disconnected because the drive wheels are

loaded on the tow dolly.

Connecting your tow dolly

Follow the instructions in this section while hooking up the Tow Dolly.

Lower the coupler onto the hitch-ball and follow the instructions below to properly fasten the coupler to the hitch-ball. Do not allow yourself to become distracted. Ensure that the coupler is properly fastened to the hitch-ball before moving to the next step.

Coupler

Check all connections at each stop. Make sure the hitch and hitch-ball are securely attached to your tow vehicle and that the tow dolly coupler is properly connected to the hitch-ball. Use the checklist at the end of these instructions. If you suspect or detect that something is wrong, contact the nearest representative.

Safety chains

The purpose of the safety chains is to keep the tow dolly 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 tow dolly tongue and are equipped with "S"- hooks on their free ends. DO NOT tow the tow dolly without the safety chains securely attached to the towing vehicle.

DO NOT attempt to pull the tow dolly by the safety chains alone, unless this is necessary to get the combination off the roadway to a safe place.

The left chain crosses underneath the tow dolly tongue and hooks to the right side of the tow vehicle permanent hitch, frame or structure, or to the tow vehicle bumper brackets. Do not attach chains to the ball or to a ball mount that is removable. The right chain 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. Control slack by hooking the chain back to itself or by twisting the links to shorten chain. Be sure the "S"-hooks are secured with a rubber retainer.

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

Lighting connections

Make sure all tow vehicle and tow dolly 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.

Even though the tow dolly has operating lights the law requires that a vehicle-in-tow rear-end be equipped with functioning stop, turn and running lights. Detachable vehicle-in-tow towing lights can be purchased at our location or online. Disconnect the tow dolly wires from the tow vehicle and plug in the vehicle-in-tow lights when the tow dolly is loaded.

When using a detachable tow light system, a ground wire between the tow dolly and vehicle-in-tow may be required as follows:

A. If the portable light system has a ground wire, attach it to the tow dolly or tow vehicle.

B. If the portable light system has no ground wire, install a suitable ground wire from the vehicle-in-tow to the tow dolly or tow vehicle.

NOTE: The ground wire must be attached to a metal surface that is solidly attached to the main structure.

4-Way Flat

If your tow vehicle has a 4-way flat lighting system, connect the tow dolly lights by plugging into the tow vehicle connection plug. If your tow vehicle does not have a 4-way flat lighting connection system, we can help you with this.

Loading

The vehicle-in-tow **MUST** be loaded facing forward (front wheels on tow dolly). Failure to load facing forward may result in sway or **WHIPPING** and lead to total loss of control.

DO NOT load cargo in your vehicle-in-tow or on your tow dolly. Loading cargo in your vehicle-in-tow or on your tow dolly may result in sway or **WHIPPING**.

Before loading your vehicle-in-tow, make sure the Tow Dolly is securely attached to your tow vehicle hitch. Turn the coupler handwheel clockwise. Make sure the safety chains are properly connected. During the loading process, keep children and others at least 25 feet away.

Be sure that you complete each step of the following instructions.

Park the properly hitched tow dolly on level ground in a straight line with the tow vehicle, in park, motor off, and parking brake set.

Pull on the ratchet release and raise the handle as far up as you can; (Figure 5) then pull on the tire strap to unroll adequate slack from the spool. Lay the strap assembly to the outside of the ramp, next to the tow dolly fender.

Continue pulling the ramp out until it stops, then lower it to the ground. Both ramps must be pulled out completely to properly load the vehicle-in-tow without damaging the tow dolly or the vehicle-in-tow

If you have a tow dolly with tilt platform loading ramps, tilt the wheel platform back for loading. Swing the bottom of the locking latch toward the coupler far enough to allow locking pin handle to be lifted. Swing the locking pin handle upward then pull locking pin towards the coupler as far as it will go. Wheel platform will tilt back to allow loading.

Position the vehicle-in-tow behind the tow dolly centered as well as possible. Make sure that the entire width of the tires will be on the ramps **BEFORE** driving on the ramps.

Approach ramps slowly. Make sure there is enough clearance for spoilers, air dams, etc. If

more clearance is needed, the spoiler or air dam may be removed to allow clearance. Keep doors closed and drive slowly up the ramp until tires are resting firmly against the wheel stops. DO NOT brake quickly or ram the tire stops at the front of the ramps. Make sure the vehicle is centered on the platform. There must be at least three inches of clearance between the side of the towed vehicle and the tow dolly fenders. Towed vehicle tires must fit in wheels troughs without overhanging sides.

If you have a tow dolly with pullout ramps, lift and push the loading ramps back into the storage compartments inward until the pin engages the hole in the ramp.

If you have a tow dolly with tilt platform loading ramps, slide platform-locking pin back into lock position.

The vehicle-in-tow steering wheel must be locked. If the vehicle is not equipped with locking steering column the steering wheel will have to be tied securely.

Securing the vehicle-in-tow

Center the tire strap ratchets in the front of the tires. Place the tire straps over the tires. Route the tire straps behind the tube and through the slot in the ratchet spool. Pull about 6 inches of the tire strap through the ratchet spool. Keeping the strap evenly over the tire, operate the ratchet until the strap is tight. Your vehicle-in-tow tires are too big if 6 inches of the tires strap will not pull through the ratchet spool. DO NOT put a vehicle-in-tow that has tires that are too big on the tow dolly.

Make sure that the part of the strap that was placed through the slot is secure between the ratchet shaft and the tire strap. After tightening the straps, push the handles down and completely rearward.

Perform the same procedure for the tire on the other side.

Connect the two (2) vehicle security chains, found next to the ratchets, to the vehicle-in-tow frame or other structural member. Keep the security chains away from brake and fuel lines and other items that may be damaged by the chain. DO NOT place the chain hook on the vehicle's frame member or other structural member. Loop the chain around the member and place the hook through the hole in one of the chain links. Leave several inches of slack in the security chain. Be sure the "S"-hook is secured with a rubber retainer.

Disconnect the drive shaft if required. Make sure the vehicle-in-tow parking brake is released. Install portable towing lights on the vehicle-in-tow as instructed in the Lighting Connections section.

When loading and securing is complete, take a test drive making slow left and right hand turns. Recheck the tire tie down straps and retighten as necessary.

Towing - Reduce speed

Slow down for curves, adverse weather, hazardous road conditions, road construction and expressway exits. Do not feel secure because the tow dolly tows easily at higher speeds. A road hazard that could be avoided at 55 mph, may become unavoidable at a higher speed.

When driving at a lower speed you are less likely to lose control of any vehicle, than when driving at a higher speed. Excessive speed is a major cause of accidents.

We do not recommend using cruise control or overdrive when towing a tow dolly.

Stopping and following distance

Your 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 line or crack in the road. If the front of your vehicle reaches the object before the end of the 4 seconds, increase your distance.

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

Whipping

Whipping is violent and uncontrollable sway caused by loading a tow dolly heavier in the rear half. Persistent side to side sway motion is not normal. If this occurs at a certain speed, it is a signal that WHIPPING will likely occur if speed is increased by a small amount. If you notice this behavior immediately slow down and maintain at least 10 mph below the speed this sway was first noticed. Then stop at the first opportunity and reload the vehicle-in-tow facing forward and remove any cargo from the vehicle-in-tow.

Combination disturbances

A "combination disturbance" is improper handling, whipping, sway, over-steering or other deviation of the tow vehicle or tow dolly from their intended path, due to one or more causes (improper loading, steering inputs, excessive speed, cross winds, passing vehicles, rough roads, etc).

If a combination disturbance occurs:

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

DO NOT apply your brakes.

HOLD THE STEERING WHEEL in a straight-ahead position. DO NOT try to control the combination disturbance by turning the steering wheel.

After a combination 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 vehicle-in-tow to make sure the tire straps are properly attached. Also make sure there is no cargo in the vehicle-in-tow and it is loaded facing forward.

Check that all the tires are properly inflated and all lug nuts are tight.

Check the trunk or rear cargo area of the towing vehicle to make sure it is not overloaded.

REDUCE SPEED to 55 mph or LESS. Combination disturbances happen most often at higher speeds.

If the combination disturbance persists, contact the nearest U-Haul representative and have them inspect or exchange the tow dolly. If the combination disturbance still occurs, something is wrong with your tow vehicle.

Passing

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

Passing by another vehicle in the same or opposite direction can result in a combination disturbance. See the combination disturbances section on what to do if a combination disturbance happens.

Hills

SLOW DOWN BEFORE starting down hill. Shift into lower gear and let off the gas pedal, this allows the engine to help you control your speed. Combination disturbances happen more frequently going downhill and at higher speeds.

DO NOT ride the brake pedal going downhill. Prolonged use of your brakes results in overheating and possible loss of braking. When you need to slow down, apply the brake pedal and slow down below the intended speed. Then let off the brake pedal completely. Repeat as needed.

Shift into lower gear to prevent your tow vehicle from jerking due to engine lugging when traveling up hills. This will improve gas mileage and reduce engine overheating

Road shoulders

If a wheel goes off the paved roadway:

DO NOT turn the steering wheel sharply.

DO NOT apply your brakes.

Let off the gas pedal and slow down below 25 mph. Then steer gradually back on the roadway. Proceed with caution entering traffic.

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

Backing up

DO NOT BACK UP. To avoid damage to the hitch system, the vehicle-in-tow or the tow dolly, do not attempt to back the tow dolly up.

Rough road

To prevent bouncing and damage to the tow vehicle or the tow dolly, reduce speed when towing the unloaded tow dolly over rough roads.

Turning

Avoid U-turns. Avoid turning too sharply. Turning too sharply may cause the side of the vehicle-in-tow to come in contact with the rear of the dolly fender and cause damage to both.

Sharp corners

Avoid turning too sharp on corners, in gas stations or parking lots. Because the combination is longer the vehicle-in-tow will track inside the turn and may sideswipe a vehicle or object. Drive slightly past the corner before turning or turn wider than you would with a car to avoid this. Or simply plan ahead and avoid sharp turns where you can.

Unloading

Before unloading the tow dolly make sure it is securely attached to the tow vehicle. Turn the coupler handwheel clockwise. Make sure the safety chains are properly connected. Place the combination on level ground. Make sure the tow dolly is directly behind the tow vehicle, in a straight line. Set the tow vehicle's PARKING BRAKE firmly and turn the motor off. Allow room behind the tow dolly to back the vehicle-in-tow clear of the tow dolly.

During the unloading process, keep children and others at least 25 feet away.

Be sure to follow these instructions

- Remove portable towing lights from vehicle-in-tow.
- Connect drive shaft if previously disconnected.
- Disconnect the security chains from the vehicle-in-tow and lay them on the ground in front of the tow dolly.
- Disconnect the tire straps and lay them to the sides of the ramps.
- If you have a tow dolly with pullout loading ramps, pull both loading ramps completely out. To release the loading ramp pull and hold the (spring-loaded) ramp release pin outward. Pull the ramp rearward a short distance, then release the pin. Continue pulling the ramp out until it stops, then lower it to the ground. Both ramps must be pulled out completely to properly unload the vehicle-in-tow without damaging the tow dolly or the vehicle-in-tow.
- If you have a tow dolly with tilt platform loading ramps, swing the locking pin handle upward then toward the coupler. This will allow the platform to tilt as you drive off the tow dolly.
- Straighten the front wheels of the vehicle-in-tow if necessary, then SLOWLY back the vehicle-in-tow off the tow dolly.
- Reconnect the tow dolly lighting wires to tow vehicle if they are disconnected.
- After unloading the tow dolly. Lift and push the loading ramps back into the storage compartments push inward until the pin engages the hole in the ramp. NEVER tow the tow dolly with the loading ramps out.
- After unloading the tow dolly with tilt platform loading ramps, pivot platform fully forward, and slide platform locking pin back into lock position. NEVER tow the tow dolly with platform in tilted (loading) position.

- Place the end of the tire strap through the spool, then tighten the tire strap as far as the ratchet allows.
- Route the security chains through the triangular rings on the frame, then attach the hook through the chain. Remove as much slack as possible. Secure the "S"-hooks with a rubber retainer.

Breakdowns

Immediately park your 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.

If necessary, drive on a flat tire to reach a safe place completely off the roadway. Drive slowly.

If the tow dolly's mechanical problem is minor and the combination can be safely driven, proceed to the nearest service location, get help at by calling us at (403) 664-5376

If the mechanical problem is major or if the tow dolly is inoperable or cannot be driven safely, get help at (403) 664-5376. Be prepared to give your exact location and a callback telephone number. Have your contract with you when you call.

Accidents

In case of an accident, get everyone out of the vehicle and completely off the roadway. Call an ambulance if anyone is injured. Notify the police as soon as possible and then report the accident if you feel it is our fault at (403) 664-5376

Towing checklist

(Use at each stop) Before towing

- Towing hitch and hitch-ball are tight.
- Coupler handwheel is tight.
- Safety chains tire straps and security chains are properly attached and secure.
- All lights are connected and working.
- Check all tires for correct pressure.
- Vehicle-in-tow is facing forward.
- Ramps securely stored and latched.

Before driving

Fasten seat belts.

Properly adjust mirrors.

On the road

Reduce speed to 55 mph or below.

Stop often for rest.

Inspect your vehicles and tow dolly connections at each stop.

Anticipate stops; brake early.

Remember - crashes are caused by

Driver error or Inattention.

Excessive speed.

Failure to load vehicle-in-tow facing forward.

You should always

Load vehicle-in-tow facing forward.

Reduce your normal driving speed.

Wear your seat belt.