



LOADING AND TOWING TRAILERS SAFELY

Trailers used by packs, troops, crews, and other units in the Boy Scouts of America are commonly used for two reasons. The trailers usually serve as storage for the unit's equipment and gear. The second use is to be towed behind the leader's vehicle for trips and outings. **LOADING AND TOWING TRAILERS SAFELY** can prevent accidents that lead to a ruined trip.

When loading gear or cargo into the trailer, load the trailer heavier in the front half of the trailer. Load 60 percent of the weight near the axle and toward the front and 40 percent of the weight behind the axle. Always secure the load with ropes or tie-downs, even in enclosed trailers. Unsecured loads can shift and cause a dangerous driving situation.

When hooking the trailer to the towing vehicle and before leaving, always check:

- The trailer is safely and securely hitched to the vehicle and locked if necessary.
- Safety chains of the trailer are secured to the vehicle's trailer hitch.
- Tires are inflated to the proper tire pressure and have sufficient tread.
- Plug in the light connection and make sure the trailer lights are working properly.

Driving with a trailer creates different driving characteristics than driving without a trailer. While towing a trailer, practice these safe driving habits:

- Reduce the speed when traveling.
- Leave extra distance in front and more room on the sides of the vehicle.
- If passing is necessary, remember it will take more time due to the added length.
- Slow down before going downhill.
- When turning a corner, pull out farther before making the turn to allow for the trailer to turn.
- Maintain constant speed without sudden acceleration and quick braking.
- If the trailer begins whipping side to side, take your foot off the gas pedal and do not brake.
- When parking, stop the vehicle in a place that you can pull forward when leaving.
- When parked, place chocks or something against the wheels to secure the trailer in place.

BE PREPARED. Properly loading and hitching a trailer can help provide for a safe trip. Proper driving habits will not only get you safely to the destination but can also help with fuel efficiency.