

UTILITY TRAILER OWNER'S MANUAL

WARNING

This Owner's Manual contains safety information and instructions for your trailer.

You must read this manual before loading or towing your trailer.

You must follow all safety precautions and instructions.

FLATBED TRAILERS

October 2020

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INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

Congratulations on the purchase of your trailer. We believe you will be happy and completely satisfied with your purchase. Our goal is to provide a valued customer a quality trailer at a reasonable price.

For your safety, read and understand this manual before operating your trailer. If there are any questions about information in this manual, please consult your dealer.

When calling about your trailer, please have the VIN number available for the dealer. The VIN number is normally on the front left side of the trailer.

For future reference, please write your VIN number in the space below:

This manual covers the basic trailer. You must read, understand and follow the instructions given by the trailer manufacturer, tow vehicle and trailer hitch manufacturers. Keep all manuals provided with your trailer in a safe place at all times.

Inserts providing information on axles and tire warranty are provided with this manual. Please keep these inserts for future reference

2. SAFETY

2.1 SAFETY ALERT SYMBOLS AND SIGNAL WORDS

An Owner's Manual that provides general trailer information cannot cover all of the specific details necessary for the proper combination of every trailer, tow vehicle and hitch. You must read, understand and follow the instructions given by the tow vehicle and trailer hitch manufacturers, as well as the instructions in this manual.

Our trailers are built with components produced by various manufacturers. Some of these items have separate instruction manuals. Where this manual indicates that you should read another manual, and you do not have that manual, contact your dealer for assistance.

The safety information in this manual is denoted by the safety alert symbol:



This symbol means ATTENTION! BECOME ALERT! YOUR SAFETY IS INVOLVED!

The level of risk is indicated by the following signal words:

DANGER

DANGER - Indicates a hazardous situation, which, if not avoided, WILL result in death or serious injury.

WARNING

WARNING - Indicates a hazardous situation, which, if not avoided, could result in death or serious injury.

A CAUTION

CAUTION - Indicates a hazardous situation, which, if not avoided, could result in minor or moderate injury.

NOTICE

NOTICE - Indicates a situation that could result in damage to the equipment or other property.

2.2 Major Hazards

Loss of control of the trailer or trailer/tow vehicle combination can result in death or serious injury. The most common causes for loss of control of the trailer are:

- Improper sizing the trailer for the tow vehicle, or vice versa.
- Excessive Speed: Driving too fast for the conditions.
- Improper braking and steering under sway conditions
- Overloading and/or improper weight distribution.
- Not keeping lug nuts tight.
- Failure to adjust driving behavior when towing a trailer.
- Not maintaining proper tire pressure
- Improper or mis-coupling of the trailer to the hitch.

2.2.1 IMPROPER SIZING OF TRAILER TO TOW VEHICLE

Trailers that weigh too much for the tow vehicle can cause stability problems, which can lead to death or serious injury. The additional strain put on the engine and drive-train may lead to serious tow vehicle maintenance problems.

Do not exceed the maximum towing capacity of your tow vehicle. The towing capacity of your tow vehicle, in terms of maximum Gross Trailer Weight (GTW) and maximum Gross Combined Weight Rating (GCWR) can be found in the tow vehicle Owner's Manual.

A DANGER

Use of an under-rated hitch, ball or tow vehicle can result in loss of control leading to death or serious injury.

Make certain your hitch and tow vehicle are rated for your trailer.

2.2.2 DRIVING TOO FAST

With ideal road conditions, the maximum recommended speed for safely towing a trailer is 55 mph. Driving too fast can cause the trailer to sway, thus increasing

the possibility for loss of control. Also your tires may overheat, increasing the possibility of a blowout.

WARNING

Driving too fast for conditions can result in loss of control and cause death or serious injury.

Adjust speed down when towing trailer.

2.2.3 Adjust Driving When Towing Trailer

When towing a trailer, you will have decreased acceleration, increased stopping distance, and increased turning radius.

The trailer will change the handling characteristics of the tow vehicle, making it more sensitive to steering inputs and more likely to be pushed around in windy conditions or when being passed by large vehicles. In addition, you will need a longer distance to pass, due to slower acceleration and increased length. With this in mind:

- When encountering trailer sway, take your foot off the accelerator, and steer as little as possible in order to stay on the road. Use small "trim-like" steering adjustments. Do not attempt to steer out of the sway; you'll only make it worse. Also do not apply the tow vehicle brakes to correct trailer swaying. On the other hand, application of the trailer brakes alone will tend to straighten out the combination, especially when going downhill.
- Check rearview mirrors frequently to observe trailer and traffic
- Be aware of trailer height, especially when approaching bridges, roofed areas and trees.
- Be alert for slippery conditions. You are more likely to be affected by slippery road surfaces when driving a tow vehicle with a trailer, than driving a tow vehicle without a trailer.
- Anticipate the trailer "swaying." Swaying can be caused by excessive steering, wind gusts, roadway edges, or by the trailer reaction to the pressure wave created by passing trucks and busses.
- Use lower gear when driving down steep or long grades. Use the engine and transmission as a brake. Do not ride the brakes, as they can overheat and become ineffective.

2.2.4 Trailer Not Properly Coupled To Hitch

It is critical that the trailer be securely coupled to the hitch, and that the safety chains and emergency breakaway brake lanyard are correctly attached. Uncoupling may result in death or serious injury to you and to others.

WARNING

Proper selection and condition of the coupler and hitch are essential to safely towing a trailer.

A loss of coupling may result in death or serious injury.

Hitch size must match coupler size.

Be sure hitch load rating is equal to or greater than load rating of the coupler.

Be sure hitch components are tight before coupling trailer to tow vehicle.

Observe hitch for wear, corrosion and cracks before coupling. Replace worn, corroded or cracked hitch components before coupling trailer to tow vehicle.

MARNING

An improperly coupled trailer can result in death or serious injury. Do not move the trailer until:

- Coupler is secured and locked to hitch.
- Safety chains are secured to tow vehicle.
- Trailer jack(s) are fully retracted.
- Trailer brakes are checked.
- Tires and wheels are checked.
- Breakaway switch is connected to tow vehicle:
- The trailer lights are connected and checked.
- Load is secured to trailer.

2.2.5 Proper Use Of Safety Chains

Safety chains are provided so that control of the trailer can be maintained if your trailer comes loose from the hitch.

WARNING

Improper rigging of the safety chains can result in loss of control of the trailer and tow vehicle, leading to death or serious injury, if the trailer uncouples from the tow vehicle.

Cross chains underneath hitch and coupler with enough slack to permit turning and to hold tongue up, if the trailer comes loose.

Fasten chains to frame of tow vehicle.

Do not fasten chains to any part of the hitch unless the hitch has holes or loops specifically for that purpose.

2.2.6 Proper Connection Of Breakaway Brake

If equipped with brakes, your trailer will be equipped with a breakaway brake system that can apply the brakes on your trailer if your trailer comes loose from the hitch. You may have a separate set of instructions for the breakaway brake if the trailer is so equipped. The breakaway brake system, including battery, must be in good condition and properly rigged to be effective.

MARNING

An ineffective or inoperative breakaway brake system can result in a runaway trailer, leading to death or serious injury if the coupler or hitch fails.

Breakaway lanyard must be connected to the tow vehicle, NOT to any part of the hitch.

Before towing trailer, test the function of the breakaway brake system. If the breakaway brake system is not working, do not tow the trailer. Have it serviced or repaired.

2.2.7 MATCHING TRAILER AND HITCH

A DANGER

Be sure hitch and tow vehicle are rated for the Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) of your trailer.

Use of a hitch with a load rating less than the load rating of the trailer can result in loss of control and may lead to death or serious injury.

Use of a tow vehicle with a towing capacity less than the load rating of the trailer can result in loss of control, and may lead to death or serious injury.

2.2.8 WORN TIRES, LOOSE WHEELS AND LUG NUTS

Inspect all trailer tires before each tow. If a tire has a bald spot, bulge, cut, cracks, or is showing any cords, replace the tire before towing.

If a tire has uneven tread wear, take the trailer to a trailer service center for diagnosis. Uneven tread wear can be caused by tire imbalance, axle misalignment or incorrect inflation.

Tires with too little tread will not provide adequate frictional forces on wet roadways and can result in loss of control, leading to death or serious injury.

Improper tire pressure causes increased tire wear and may reduce trailer stability, which can result in a tire blowout or possible loss of control. Therefore, before each tow you must also check the tire pressure.

The proper tire pressure is listed on the Certification / VIN label, normally mounted on the front left side of the trailer, and should be checked when tires are cold. Allow 3 hours cool-down after driving as much as 1 mile at 40 mph before checking tire pressure.

WARNING

Inflate tires to pressure stated on the Certification / VIN label.

Improper tire pressure may cause unstable trailer. Blowout and loss of control may occur. Death or serious injury can result.

Make sure of proper tire pressure before towing trailer.

The tightness of the wheel nuts or bolts is very important in keeping the wheels properly seated to the hub. Before each tow, check to make sure they are tight.

WARNING

Metal creep between the wheel rim and wheel nuts or bolts may cause rim to loosen.

Death or injury can occur if wheel comes off.

Tighten lug nuts or bolts before each tow.

The proper tightness (torque) for wheel nuts or bolts and tightening sequence is listed in the Inspection, Service and Maintenance section of this manual. Use a torque wrench to tighten the lug nuts and use the crisscross star pattern sequence. Improper tightening of the lug nuts voids the axle warranty.

Wheel nuts or bolts are also prone to loosen after first being assembled. When driving a new trailer (or after wheels have been remounted), check to make sure they are tight after the first 10, 25 and 50 miles of driving and before each tow thereafter.

Failure to perform this check can result in a wheel separating from the trailer and a crash, leading to death or serious injury.

WARNING

Wheel nuts or bolts are prone to loosen after being first assembled. Death or serious injury can result.

Check wheel nuts or bolts for tightness on a new trailer, and after re-mounting a wheel at 10, 25 and 50 miles.

WARNING

Inadequate wheel nut or bolt torque can cause a wheel to separate from the trailer, leading to death or serious injury.

Verify wheel nuts or bolts are tight before each tow.

2.2.9 IMPROPER LOADING

The total weight of the load you put on the trailer, plus the empty weight of the trailer itself, must not exceed the trailer's Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR).

If you do not know the empty weight of the trailer plus the cargo weight, you must weigh the loaded trailer at a commercial scale. In addition, you must distribute the load in the trailer such that the load on any axle does not exceed the Gross Axle Weight Rating (GAWR).

If your trailer is equipped with a Tire & Loading Information Placard, mounted next to the Certification / VIN label, the cargo capacity weight stated on that placard is only a close estimate. The GVWR and GAWR are listed on the Certification / VIN label normally located on the front left side of the trailer.

WARNING

An overloaded trailer can result in failure or loss of control of the trailer, leading to death or serious injury.

Never load a trailer so that the weight on any tire exceeds its rating.

Never exceed the trailer Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) or axle Gross Axle Weight Rating (GAWR).

2.2.10 UNSAFE LOAD DISTRIBUTION

Improper front / rear load distribution can lead to an unstable trailer or poor tow vehicle handling. Poor trailer stability results from tongue weights that are too low, and poor tow vehicle stability results from tongue weights that are too high.

Refer to the "Loading And Unloading" section for more information.

In the following table, the second column shows the rule of thumb percentage of total weight of the trailer plus its cargo (Gross Trailer Weight, or "GTW") that should appear on the tongue of the trailer. For example, a large trailer with a loaded weight of 6,000 pounds, should have 10-15% of 6,000 pounds (600-900 lbs.) on the hitch.

Tongue Weight as a Percentage of Loaded Trailer Weight		
Percentage		
-15% for large trailers 10% for small trailers		

The numbers quoted are for example purposes only and should be tailored to the specific trailer.

For questions regarding the actual percent of tongue weight for the trailer, check with the manufacturer for specifics.

After loading, be sure to check that none of the axles are overloaded.

Uneven left / right load distribution can cause tire, wheel, axle or structural failure.

Be sure your trailer is evenly loaded left / right. Towing stability also depends on keeping the center of gravity as low as possible.

WARNING

Improper tongue weight (load distribution) can result in loss of control of the trailer, leading to death or serious injury.

Make certain that tongue weight is within the allowable range.

Be sure to:

- · Distribute the load evenly, right and left.
- Keep the center of gravity low.
- Distribute the load front-to-rear to provide proper tongue weight (see chart).

2.2.11 SHIFTING CARGO

Since the trailer "ride" can be bumpy and rough, you must secure the cargo so that it does not shift while the trailer is being towed.

WARNING

A shifting load can result in failure, or to loss of control of the trailer, and can lead to death or serious injury.

You must tie down all loads with proper sized fasteners, chains, straps, etc. to prevent the load from shifting while towing.

2.2.12 INAPPROPRIATE CARGO

The trailer may be designed for specific cargo. If your trailer is designed for specific cargo, only carry that cargo in the trailer. A trailer must not be used to carry certain items, such as people, containers of hazardous substances or containers of flammable substances.

MARNING

Do not transport people on your trailer. Besides putting their lives at risk, the transport of people on a trailer is illegal.

WARNING

Do not transport flammable, explosive, poisonous or other dangerous materials on your trailer.

The exception is fuel in the tank of a vehicle or equipment being hauled.

2.2.13 INOPERABLE BRAKES OR LIGHTS

If your trailer has electric brakes, your tow vehicle will have an electric brake controller that sends power to the trailer brakes.

Before towing the trailer, you must operate the brake controller while trying to pull the trailer in order to confirm that the electric brakes operate. While towing the trailer at less than 5 mph, manually operate the electric brake controller in the tow vehicle cab. You should feel the operation of the trailer brakes.

If your trailer has hydraulic "surge" brakes, pull the emergency breakaway brake lanyard to check the operation of the surge mechanism.

Be sure that the electric brakes and all of the lights on your trailer are functioning properly before towing the trailer. Electric brakes and lights on a trailer are controlled via a connection to the tow vehicle, generally a multi-pin electrical connector.

MARNING

Improper electrical connection between the tow vehicle and the trailer will result in inoperable lights and electric brakes, and can lead to collision.

Before each tow:

- Check that the electric brakes work by operating the brake controller inside the tow vehicle.
- Check that all lights and turn signals work.

You must provide mirrors that allow you to safely observe approaching traffic. Standard mirrors usually do not provide adequate visibility for viewing traffic to the sides and rear a towed trailer.

2.2.14 Trailer Modifications

Modification of the trailer structure or alteration of your trailer can make the trailer unsafe and will void all warranty options. Before making any alteration to the trailer, contact your dealer or the manufacturer and describe the alteration you are contemplating.

2.2.15 TRAILER TOWING GUIDE

Driving a vehicle with a trailer in tow is vastly different from driving the same vehicle without a trailer in tow. Acceleration, maneuverability and braking are all diminished with a trailer in tow. It takes longer to get up to speed; you need more room to turn and pass, and more distance to stop when towing a trailer.

You will need to spend time adjusting to the different feel and maneuverability of the tow vehicle with a loaded trailer. Because of the significant differences in all aspects of maneuverability when towing a trailer, the hazards and risks of injury are also much greater than when driving without a trailer.

You are responsible for keeping your vehicle and trailer in control, and for all the damage that is caused if you lose control of your vehicle and trailer.

Find an open area with little or no traffic for your first practice. Before you start towing the trailer, you must follow all of the instructions for inspection, testing, loading and coupling. Also, before you start towing, adjust the mirrors so you can see the trailer as well as the area to the rear of it.

Drive slowly at first, 5 mph or so, and turn the wheel to get the feel of how the tow vehicle and trailer combination responds. Next, make some right and left hand turns. Watch in your side mirrors to see how the trailer follows the tow vehicle. Turning with a trailer attached requires more room.

Stop the rig a few times from speeds no greater than 10 mph. If your trailer is equipped with brakes, try using different combinations of trailer/electric brake and tow vehicle brake. Note the effect that the trailer brakes have when they are the only brakes used. When properly adjusted, the trailer brakes will come on just before the tow vehicle brakes.

It will take practice to learn how to back up a tow vehicle with a trailer attached. Take it slow. Before backing up, get out of the tow vehicle and look behind the trailer to make sure that there are no obstacles.

Some drivers place their hands at the bottom of the steering wheel, and while the tow vehicle is in reverse, "think" of the hands as being on the top of the wheel. When the hands move to the right (counter-clockwise, as you would do to turn the tow vehicle to the left when moving forward), the rear of the trailer moves to the right.

Conversely, rotating the steering wheel clockwise with your hands at the bottom of the wheel will move the rear of the trailer to the left, while backing up. Be careful not to allow the trailer to turn too much, because it will hit the rear of the tow vehicle. To straighten the rig, either pull forward, or turn the steering wheel in the opposite direction.

2.2.16 SAFE TRAILER TOWING GUIDELINES

Before towing, check coupling, safety chain, brakes, tires, wheels and lights.

Check the lug nuts or bolts for tightness.

Recheck the load tie downs to make sure the load will not shift during towing.

Check coupler tightness after towing 50 miles.

Adjust the brake controller to engage the trailer brakes before the tow vehicle brakes. Follow the brake controller manufacturer's literature

Use your mirrors to verify that you have room to change lanes or pull into traffic.

Use your turn signals well in advance.

Allow plenty of stopping space for your trailer and tow vehicle.

Use lower gears for climbing and descending grades.

Do not ride the brakes while descending grades; they may get so hot that they stop working. Then you will potentially have a runaway tow vehicle and trailer.

Do not apply the tow vehicle brakes to correct extreme trailer swaying. Instead, lightly apply the trailer brakes with the hand controller.

Make regular stops, about once each hour. Confirm that:

- · The coupler is secure to the hitch and is locked.
- Electrical connectors are made.
- There is appropriate slack in safety chains.
- There is appropriate slack in breakaway lanyard.

- · The tires are not visibly low on pressure.
- The cargo is secure and in good condition.

Slow down for bumps in the road.

Do not brake while in a curve unless absolutely necessary. Instead, slow down before you enter the curve.

Do not drive so fast that the trailer begins to sway due to speed. Generally never drive faster than 55 m.p.h.

Allow plenty of room for passing. A rule of thumb is that the passing distance with a trailer is 4 times the passing distance without a trailer.

2.2.17 SAFETY WARNING LABELS ON YOUR TRAILER

Depending on trailer configuration, your trailer may not be equipped with all safety labels shown.



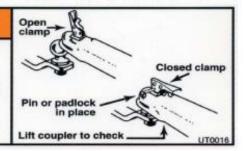
Uncoupling will cause trailer to com loose from tow vehicle. You must:

- 1. CHECK that ball LOAD RATING is same
- as or greater than coupler LOAD RATING.

 2. CHECK that ball SIZE is same as coupler.

 3. CLOSE COUPLER CLAMP on ball.
- LIFT coupler upwards to test that it will not separate from ball.
 LOCK coupler clamp with pin or padlock.

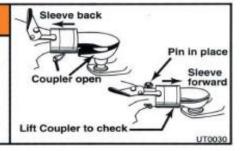
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Uncoupling will cause trailer to come loose from tow vehicle. You must:

- 1. CHECK that ball LOAD RATING is same or greater than coupler LOAD RATING.
- 2. CHECK that ball SIZE is same as coupler.
- 3. CLOSE COUPLER CLAMP on ball.
- 4. LIFT coupler upwards to test that it will not separate from ball.
- 5. LOCK sleeve with pin or padlock.

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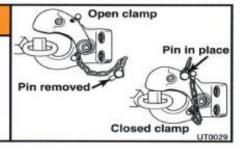


WARNING

Uncoupling will cause trailer to come loose from tow vehicle.

- 1. CHECK that pintle LOAD RATING is same or greater than ring LOAD RATING.
- 2. LOCK the clamp in place using a pin or lock.

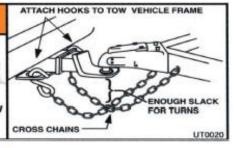
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ALWAYS use safety chains. Chains hold trailer if connection fails. You must:

- CROSS chains underneath coupler.
- ALLOW slack for trailer to turn.
- 3. ATTACH chain hooks securely to tow vehicle frame.

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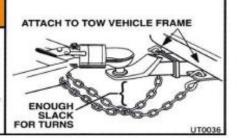


WARNING

ALWAYS use safety chains. Chains hold trailer if connection fails. You must:

- CROSS chains underneath coupler.
- 2. ALLOW slack for trailer to turn.
- 3. ATTACH chain hooks securely to tow vehicle frame.

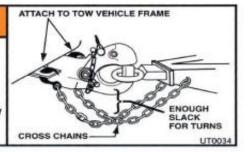
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▲ WARNING

ALWAYS use safety chains. Chains hold trailer if connection fails. You must:

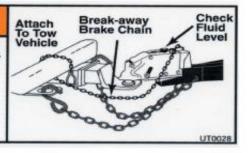
- CROSS chains underneath coupler.
- ALLOW slack for trailer to turn.
- 3. ATTACH chain hooks securely to tow vehicle frame.



Trailer can roll if it comes loose. Safety brake applies when chain pulls brake lever.

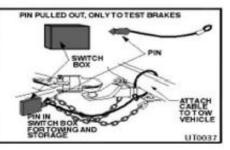
- 1. ATTACH brake CHAIN securely to tow vehicle so lever will be pulled if trailer separates.
- 2. CHECK brake fluid level.
- 3. DO NOT TOW trailer if brake fluid is NOT FULL.

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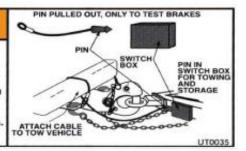
Trailer can roll if it comes loose. Electric safety brake applies when cable pulls pin out of switch box:

- 1. PULL hard to get pin out of switch box.
- 2. CHECK brake by PULLING TRAILER with tow vehicle.
 3. ATTACH pin CABLE to tow vehicle so
- pin will be pulled out if trailer separates. 4. Promptly REPLACE pin in switch box.



Trailer can roll if it comes loose. Electric safety brake applies when cable pulls pin out of switch box:

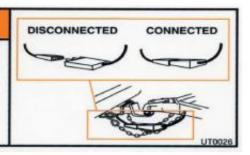
- 1. PULL hard to get pin out of switch box. 2. CHECK brake by PULLING TRAILER with tow vehicle.
- 3. ATTACH pin CABLE to tow vehicle so pin will be pulled out if trailer separates
- 4. Promptly REPLACE pin in switch box. © 2002 NATM



Lights can prevent trailer from being hit by other vehicles. You must:

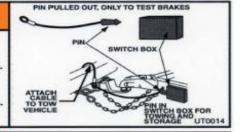
- 1. CONNECT trailer and tow vehicle electrical connectors.
- 2. CHECK all lights: tail lights, turn signal, and brake lights.
- 3. DO NOT TOW if lights are not working.

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Trailer can roll if it comes loose. Electric safety brake applies when cable pulls pin out of switch box.

- PULL hard to get pin out of switch box.
 CHECK brake by PULLING TRAILER with tow vehicle.
- 3. ATTACH pin CABLE to tow vehicle so pin will be pulled out if trailer separates. 4. Promptly REPLACE pin in switch box.

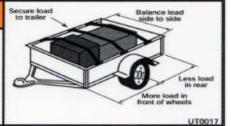


▲ WARNING

Improper loading can cause trailer sway and sudden loss of control. You must:

- · Make certain weight of load plus trailer weight does not exceed trailer's capacity (GVWR-Gross Vehicle Weight Rating)
- · Load heavier items in front of wheels.
- · Load evenly side to side.
- SECURE load to trailer.

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Tire, wheel or lugnut failure can cause loss of control. Before towing, you must CHECK:

- 1. Tire pressure and tread.
- 2. Tires and wheels for damage.
- 3. Lug nuts for tightness.

For new and remounted wheels, re-tighten lug nuts at the first 10, 25 and 50 miles of driving.

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WARNING

OVERLOAD HAZARD

RISK OF DEATH DUE TO LOSS OF CONTROL NEVER EXCEED GROSS VEHICLE WEIGHT RATING (GVWR)

- BEFORE LOADING THE TRAILER FOR THE FIRST TIME, YOU MUST VERIFY ITS CARGO CAPACITY:
 YOU MUST WEIGH THE EMPTY TRAILER OF THE MAXIMUM LOADED TRAILER WEIGHT (GWWR)
- (see VIN / SERIAL NO. tag). DO NOT LOAD TRAILER BEYOND VERIFIED CARGO CAPACITY.

MAXIMUM LOADED (GVWR) = EQUALS

MAXIMUM CARGO WEIGHT +PLUS

WEIGHT OF EMPTY TRAILER

MARNING WARNING

To protect you and others against death or serious injury, all applicable labels shown must be on the trailer and must be legible.

If any of these labels are missing or cannot be read, contact your dealer for replacement labels.

PRE – TOW CHECKLIST

3. PRE - TOW CHECKLIST

3.1 PRE - TOW CHECKLIST

Before towing, double-check all these items:

- Tires, wheels, and lug nuts.
- Tire Pressure. Inflate tires on trailer and tow vehicle to the pressure stated on the Certification / VIN label.
- · Coupler secured and locked.
- Safety chains properly rigged to tow vehicle, not to hitch or ball.
- Test Tail, Stop, and Turn Lights.
- Test trailer brakes.
- Safety breakaway lanyard fastened to tow vehicle, not to safety chains.
- Tongue weight and weight distribution set-up.
- Ramps secured for travel.
- Fire extinguisher.
- Flares and reflectors.

3.2 MAKE REGULAR STOPS

After each 50 miles, or one hour of towing, stop and check the following items:

- Coupler secured.
- Safety chains are fastened and not dragging.
- Cargo secured



LOCATION & CONTACT INFORMATION

MR STEEL TRAILERS

4100 W GLENROSA AVE PHOENIX, AZ 85019

PHONE: (602) 278-3355 EMAIL: INFO@MRSTEEL.COM

FOR MORE INFO CHECK US ONLINE www.MRSTEELTRAILERS.com