Top 10 Common Towing and Trailering Errors

Paul Johnson | Fleet and Materials Manager

#1 Truck Towing Capacity

- Common Error: Assuming the rating on the hitch is how much the truck can tow.
- Solution: Hitch ratings must be compared to published vehicle limits.
Maximum Towing Capacity and Other Cargo

• Common Error: Assuming the Max trailer weight is always OK to tow.
• Solution: Monitor other cargo weights.

#2 Unknown Weights

• Common Error: If it fits, it ships.
• Solution: Weigh and Tag Equipment.

**EQUIPMENT WEIGHT**

- With Bucket: 6,415 lbs.
- With Forks: 6,340 lbs.
#3 Load Balance

- Common Problem: Unbalanced Loads
- Solution: Calculate the Center of Balance

**DISTANCE: CENTER OF COUPLER TO CENTER OF AXLE**

\[ 120 \text{ INCHES} \times 10\% = 12 \text{ INCHES} \]

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### Trailer Incident

Common Towing and Trailering Errors
#4 Load Securement

- **Common Problem:** Insufficient load securement.
- **Solution:** Use 4 tie downs, each with a working load limit of \( \frac{1}{2} \) the weight of the cargo.

## Worst Case Scenario

![Common Towing and Trailering Errors](Common Towing and Trailering Errors)
#5 Mismatched Hitch Components

- **Common Problem:** Mismatched Hitches
- **Solution:** Standardize Hitches
  - Less than 5,000 lbs use 2” ball
  - More than 5,000 lbs use Pintle Ring

Bonus: Ball Coupler Issues

- **Common Problem:** Ball Coupler Not Fully Seated
- **Solution:** Visually Verify Hitch Connection
#6 Trailer Chains

- Common Problem: Chains Too Long, Worn, Spliced
- Solution: Inspect Often, and Use Adjustable Length Chains

#7 Trailer Brakes

- Common Problem: Breakaway cord connected to hitch.
- Solution: Connect cord to truck bumper.
- Trailer Brakes are required on all trailers with a GVWR over 3,000 lbs.
#8 DOT Inspection Stickers

- **Common Issue:** Expired or missing DOT inspection.
- **Solution:** Know the Law.
- **MN Requires** annual DOT inspection on all combinations over 26,000 lbs.

#9 Trailer Maintenance and Inspection

- **Common Problem:** Trailers not being inspected.
- **Solution:** Ensure daily and annual inspections are taking place. Budget for trailer maintenance and replacement.
#10 Driver Training

• Common Problem: Drivers are not trained on trailering procedures and rules.

• Solution: Train all operators, and empower to stop work if needed.

Thank You!

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Beyond Towing Capacity

• Truck Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR): Maximum allowable weight of loaded truck. Includes trailer tongue weight.
  • GVWR - Actual Weight = Payload Capacity
• Trailer Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR): Maximum allowable weight of loaded trailer.
• Gross Combined Weight Rating (GCWR): Maximum allowable weight of the truck and trailer combined.
• Tongue Weight Rating: Max allowed tongue weight for truck, hitch, coupler.
• Axle Weight Rating: Maximum allowable weight on any axle.