

Trailer & Towing Pre-trip Safety Inspection Checklist

Note: This checklist is intended to provide general guidance to the public only and does not meet commercial vehicle safety inspection requirements. For information on commercial vehicle inspections, please visit <https://www.alberta.ca/commercial-transportation.aspx> For information specific to your vehicle or trailer, please consult your owner's manual, the manufacturer and/or a licensed automobile mechanic.

As towing puts additional stress on a tow vehicle, make sure your vehicle and trailer maintenance are current before departing!

Tow vehicle

- Check the tire pressure and tread wear on the tow vehicle, including any spare tires. Correct tire pressure if required.
- Make sure all wheel lug nuts/bolts on the tow vehicle are tightened to the correct torque.
- Check the vehicle's tow rating. The GVWR (gross vehicle weight rating) of the trailer should be equivalent to or lower than your vehicle's tow rating.
- Make sure the vehicle's running lights, brake lights, turn signals and hazard lights are working.
- Check side and rear-view mirrors for visibility.
- Verify that the brakes on the tow vehicle are operating correctly.

Hitch

- Make sure the hitch, coupler, draw bar and other equipment that connect the trailer and the tow vehicle are compatible and are properly secured and adjusted. **Make sure your vehicle's towing equipment equals the tow rating specified by the vehicle's manufacturer.**
- Make sure the hitch ball mount is rated for the weight of the load you plan to tow.**
- Check the hitch ball and coupler - are they the same size? If they are the correct size, the ball should be firmly seated in the coupler and the latching mechanism should be locked.
- Make sure the safety chains are properly criss-crossed and connected. The chain links should not have any kinks or touch the road but should have enough slack to make turns.
- Make sure the power and brake control wiring are properly connected. The wiring should not touch the road but should be slack enough to make turns without disconnecting or damaging the wires.

Ensure the breakaway system lanyard is connected to the tow vehicle but not to the safety chains or ball mount.

Trailer

Check the tire pressure and tread wear on the trailer, including any spare tires. Correct tire pressure if required.

Make sure all wheel lug nuts/bolts on the trailer are tightened to the correct torque.

Make sure all trailer running lights, brake lights, turn signals and hazard lights are working.

Verify that the brakes on the trailer are operating correctly.

Check the trailer's weight rating. Make sure it is rated to carry the weight of your load.

Load

Check load distribution to make sure the tow vehicle and trailer are properly balanced front to back and side to side.

Check that all items are securely fastened on and in the trailer.

Be sure the trailer jack, tongue support and any attached stabilizers are raised and locked in place.

Other

Know before you go! Check travel routes for disruptions and any restrictions on bridges and tunnels.

Make sure you have a roadside safety kit, including wheel chocks and jack stands.