

HITCH ACCESSORIES

This month we want to talk about the safe and proper use of the hitch provided on your Winnebago Industries motor home. I think most understand the limitations placed on the hitch for towed vehicle weight and tongue load, but we are seeing an increase in the use of extensions, receivers with drop of more than four inches, ball mounts and a variety of carriers that create excessive forces. An extreme example is the use of a motorcycle carrier in the front of a tow car. Combinations such as this will place a surprising amount of stress upon the hitch receiver, and could potentially cause damage to the hitch or the frame rail extensions it is attached to.

The following is the current operators manual section concerning towing a car or a trailer. Note the required limits for ball mounts with the receiver style hitch and the recommendations for use of trailer brakes. It is also important that you visually check your hitch before each use.

CAR OR TRAILER TOWING

Hitch Pulling Capacity:
5,000 lbs max.

Tongue Weight: 500 lbs max.*

The factory installed towing hitch on this coach is capable of pulling 5,000 lbs. load (max.), however the vertical (tongue) weight may vary according to chassis and model combinations. (***See label on hitch**)

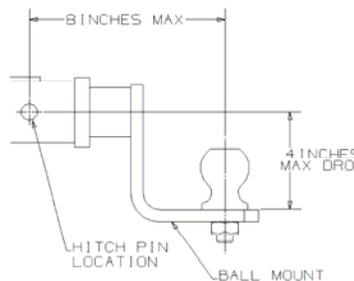
When towing a trailer or vehicle, do not exceed either the GVWR, the rear axle GAWR, or the chassis GCWR by the combined loaded weight of the coach and the towed vehicle. See preceding items "Loading the Vehicle" and "Weighing Your Loaded Vehicle" for explanation of weight ratings.

Because of individual vehicle use and loading habits, we recommend weighing the vehicle while fully loaded to avoid exceeding any of the listed Gross Weight Ratings. See "Vehicle Certification Label" in the Introduction Section for information on gross weight ratings.

Towing will affect vehicle handling, durability and fuel economy. Exceeding any of the listed Gross Weight Ratings will result in unacceptable overall vehicle performance. Maximum safety and satisfaction when towing depends on proper use of correct equipment.

When towing a vehicle behind your motor home, the tow bar should be level or pointing slightly upward towards the tow vehicle.

When coupling the vehicle tow bar to the Factory Receiver Hitch using a "drop receiver" or a conventional "ball mount" (commonly referred to as a "stinger" or a "draw bar"), do not exceed a 4" drop, nor one that the centerline of the hitch pin to the centerline of the ball exceeds 8".



If a towing "brake system" is required, we recommend that a "modulated" towed vehicle braking device be installed. This means that when the motor home brakes are applied, whether hard or soft, a mirror effect occurs in the braking of the towed vehicle. In other words, the more force

applied to the motor home brakes, the more force will be applied to the rear vehicle's braking system.

We do not recommend the usage of a "surge-style" braking device. The usage of a surge brake (especially when coupled with a hitch ball located outside our recommended limits) places excessive stress on the hitch. This abuse of the ball mount and the hitch may cause premature hitch assembly failure.

Finally, do not forget to consider the actual tongue weight. This should not exceed the stated hitch vertical load for your vehicle. This weight is typically defined as the tongue weight of a towed vehicle hitch, boat trailer tongue weight, or a receiver-mounted carrier rack.

Check state regulations on trailer weight and trailer brake requirements to be sure you select the right equipment before towing.

Before descending a steep or long grade when towing a trailer, reduce speed and shift into a lower gear to control vehicle speed. Avoid prolonged or frequent application of brakes which could cause overheating and brake failure.

⚠ WARNING

For safe towing and vehicle handling, maintain proper trailer weight distribution. The total weight of the motor home and the vehicle towed must not exceed the Gross Combined Vehicle Weight rating. See the "Body and Chassis Specification" chart in the Introduction Section.

⚠ CAUTION

Exceeding any of the recommended gross vehicle weight ratings may result in vehicle damage. Do not install a frame equalizing type hitch on your vehicle.