

Ford Motorhome Towing Basics



Towing a trailer is demanding on your vehicle, your trailer and your personal driving skills. Follow some basic rules that will help you tow safely and have a lot more fun.

Tow/Haul Mode¹

A motorhome, even though not towing, is always hauling a heavy load and Tow/Haul should always be activated. Constant, frequent shifting creates a lot of heat in the transmission, slowly breaking down the transmission fluid and possibly leading to major premature transmission failure. Tow/Haul activates an alternate shift strategy in the transmission, delaying upshifts to reduce the frequency of transmission shifting. Tow/Haul also provides engine braking in all forward gears, which slows your vehicle and assists you in controlling your vehicle when descending a slope, minimizing the need to brake and decreasing brake pad wear.

On the Transit® chassis, select the Tow/Haul drive mode to switch Tow/Haul on. Select a different drive mode to switch Tow/Haul off. On an F-53 or E-Series chassis, Tow/Haul drive mode can be activated and deactivated by depressing the button at the end of the gear shift lever.

Weighing In

Base Curb Weight is the weight of the vehicle including a full tank of fuel and all standard equipment. It does not include passengers, cargo or any optional equipment. Your dealership sales consultant can give you this number for the vehicle(s) you are considering.

Cargo Weight includes all weight added to the Base Curb Weight, including cargo and optional equipment (check with your sales consultant). When towing, trailer tongue load or king pin weight is also part of the Cargo Weight.

Payload is the combined maximum allowable weight of cargo and passengers that the vehicle is designed to carry. It is the Gross Vehicle Weight Rating minus the Base Curb Weight.

Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) is the Base Curb Weight plus actual Cargo Weight plus passengers. It is important to remember that GVW is not a limit or specification – it is the actual weight that is obtained when the fully-loaded vehicle is driven onto a scale.

Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) is the maximum allowable weight of the fully-loaded vehicle (including passengers and cargo). This number – along with other weight limits, as well as tire, rim size and inflation pressure data – is shown on the vehicle's Safety Compliance Certification Label, located on the left front door lock facing or the door latch post pillar.

The GVW must never exceed the GVWR.

Gross Axle Weight (GAW) is the total weight placed on each axle (front and rear). To determine the Gross Axle Weights for your vehicle and trailer combination, take your loaded vehicle and trailer to a scale. With the trailer attached, place the front wheels of the vehicle on the scale to get the front GAW. For rear GAW, weigh the towing vehicle with trailer attached, but with just the four wheels of the vehicle on the scale. Subtracting front GAW from that amount gives you rear GAW.

Gross Axle Weight Rating (GAWR) is the maximum weight to be carried by a single axle (front or rear). These numbers are also shown on the Safety Compliance Certification Label.

The total load on each axle must never exceed its GAWR.

GVW must not exceed GVWR (obtain from Safety Compliance Certification Label on the left front door lock facing or the door latch post pillar).

¹This is a brief overview, please refer to your Owner's Guide for detailed information relating to using Tow/Haul on your specific vehicle model, year and installed transmission.

Towing Capacity



$$\text{Base Curb Weight} + \text{Cargo Weight} + \text{Passenger Weight} = \text{Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW)}$$

GVW must not exceed GVWR (obtain from Safety Compliance Certification Label on the left front door lock facing or the door latch post pillar).



$$\text{GVW} + \text{Loaded Trailer Weight} = \text{Gross Combination Weight (GCW)}$$

GCW must not exceed GCWR.

Gross Combination Weight (GCW) is the weight of the loaded vehicle (GVW) plus the weight of the fully loaded trailer. It is the actual weight obtained when the vehicle and trailer are weighed together on a scale.

Gross Combination Weight Rating (GCWR) is the maximum allowable weight of the towing vehicle and the loaded trailer - including all cargo and passengers - that the vehicle can handle without risking damage. (Important: The towing vehicle's brake system is rated for operation at the GVWR - NOT GCWR. Separate functional brake systems should be used for safe control of towed vehicles and for trailers weighing more than 15,000 lbs. when loaded.) The measured GCW must never exceed the GCWR.

Maximum Loaded Trailer Weight is the highest possible weight of a fully loaded trailer the vehicle can tow, based on a minimum towing vehicle GVW. It assumes a towing vehicle with any mandatory options, no cargo, tongue load of 10% (conventional trailer) or king pin weight of 15% (5th-wheel trailer), and driver and passenger (150 lbs. each). Weight of additional options, passengers, cargo and hitch must be deducted from this weight.

GCW must not exceed GCWR.

For the latest RV and Trailer Towing information, check out www.fleet.ford.com/towing-guides.