

Trailer Hook Up & Pre-Flight Checklist – Bumper Pull

- » Secure your hitch in your tow vehicle's receiver and make sure the large nut securing the ball isn't loose. Make sure the R clip is fully seated and locked onto the J-shaped hitch pin.
- » Before backing up to the trailer, jack up the tongue sufficiently high so that you don't smack into it with your hitch ball!
- » Back the tow vehicle up to the trailer and position the ball so it's directly below the coupler. When you're perfectly positioned, put the vehicle in park and set the parking brake before taking your foot off the brake pedal.
- » Remove the coupler latch lock/pin and ensure the latch is locked in the open position.
- » Lower the jack until the coupler is fully seated over the ball and you can see the tongue weight of the trailer slightly begin to compress the suspension of the tow vehicle.
- » Close the coupler latch, reinsert and secure the lock/pin.
- » **Jack the trailer back up until you clearly see the trailer's jack lifting the tow vehicle's rear end – this is how you can be sure the coupler is seated over the ball and the latch is properly locked.**
- » Retract the jack until the removable foot/wheel is high enough off the ground to remove the locking pin, slide the foot/wheel off the jackshaft, then replace and lock the pin into the foot/wheel.
- » Fully retract the jackshaft until the handle stops rotating. Always make sure the shaft is fully retracted or you'll risk scraping it on the ground while underway, possibly ruining the jack and your trip!
- » Attach the safety chains to the hitch, crossing them over each other under the tongue to form an X. Make sure there's sufficient slack in the chains to accommodate turns and vertical pivots but not so much that they drag on the ground – a good rule of thumb is 6" of slack below the tongue of the trailer.
- » Attach the emergency break-away cable to your hitch. This cable and its clip must be completely free and independent of your safety chains or it won't function properly.
- » Insert the trailer's electrical plug into the tow vehicle's receptacle and make sure the plug lock is secured behind the plug head so it doesn't wiggle out while underway.
- » Put the jack foot/wheel and, if applicable, your jack ground block in the tow vehicle. Don't forget your keys on the tongue of the trailer.
- » Remove your wheel covers (yes, you should use wheel covers) and wheel chocks, put them in your tow vehicle.
- » While you're removing the covers and chocks, you should be conducting a visual check of your tires, fenders, doors, windows, vents, latches etc. If a tire looks low, check it with the air pressure gauge that should live in your tow vehicle's glove/tool box.
- » Check your spare tire and ensure you have the jack, wrenches, blocks, etc., that comprise your tire change kit.
- » Once you're certain the trailer is sound and all obstructions have been removed, fire up the tow vehicle and check all your lights.
- » Confirm that your brake controller shows a connection to the trailer and it's set to the proper braking gain for this particular trip's load and conditions.
- » Before you rock out with your rig, take one last walk-around and double check your hitch/coupler/chains, wheels, doors, windows, vents, and tie-downs if applicable.
- » It goes without saying that you need to make sure your load is secure, be it a horse, boat, ORV, machinery, etc. Tie-downs tight, tag ends secured and nothing loose that could blow out of your boat!