

Towing a Trailer

Driving Safely With a Trailer

The added weight, length, and height of a trailer will affect your vehicle's handling and performance, so driving with a trailer requires some special driving skills and techniques.

For your safety and the safety of others, take time to practice driving maneuvers before heading for the open road, and follow the guidelines discussed below.

Towing Speeds and Gears

Drive slower than normal in all driving situations, and obey posted speed limits for vehicles with trailers. If you have an automatic transmission, use the Over drive (O/D) mode when towing a trailer on level roads. Turn off the Over drive (O/D) mode when towing a trailer in hilly terrain (see page 207). (See “***Driving on Hills***” in the next column for additional gear information.)

Making Turns and Braking

Make turns more slowly and wider than normal. The trailer tracks a smaller arc than your vehicle, and it can hit or run over something the vehicle misses. Allow more time and distance for braking. Do not brake or turn suddenly as this could cause the trailer to jackknife or turn over.

Driving on Hills

When climbing hills, closely watch your temperature gauge. If it nears the red mark, turn the air conditioning off, reduce speed and, if necessary, pull to the side of the road to let the engine cool.

If the automatic transmission shifts frequently between 3rd and 4th gears while going up a hill, turn off the Over drive (O/D) mode (see page 207).

If you must stop when facing uphill, use the foot brake or parking brake. Do not try to hold the vehicle in place by pressing on the accelerator, as this can cause the automatic transmission to overheat.