

Trailer-Safety Checklist

Hauling your horse down the highway? Check off these safety points before you go, and have a trouble-free trip. By Karen Hayes, DVM, MS

SAFETY POINT	WHAT TO DO
Tires	Check pressure, and look for signs of wear in truck, trailer, and spare tires.
Wheels	Make sure lug nuts are tight on all wheels.
Hitch	Look for loose bolts, hairline cracks, and other signs of wear. Check for proper hookup. (In conventional trailers, the socket should be seated on the ball and locked in place.)
Safety chains	Make sure chains are crossed and hooked to vehicle frame (not bumper).
Breakaway	Check cable length. It should be shorter than your safety chains, but not so short that it'll break free when you make a tight brake cable turn. Weave the cable through a link of one chain, so it won't snag and pull free. Make sure coupler is fully plugged in.
Truck	Check fluid levels and fill fuel tanks.
Gear	In addition to hay, water, buckets, and other horse supplies, pack emergency equipment in your tow vehicle. (See our top-10 list, below.)

Don't leave home without:

- Extra halter and lead rope for each horse, for off-loading in an emergency.
- Emergency flares and reflector triangles.
- Flashlight (rechargeable, with an adapter that fits vehicle cigarette lighter).
- Jumper cables and spare fuses.
- Spare tires, jack, chock blocks, torque wrench, and WD-40 for changing tires.
- Tool kit-crowbar, hammer, screwdrivers, wrenches, pliers.
- Duct tape, for covering sharp edges in a damaged trailer and other uses.
- Fire extinguisher. (Make sure it's pressurized.)
- Horse and human first-aid kits.
- Cell phone and phone numbers.

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INFO: Horse Trailer Safety Checklist

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Always have the horse trailer safety checklist with you whenever you travel.

Store these items in the trailer so you always have them on board!

Equine First aid kit with splint - Know how to use the items in the kit and do not use tranquilizers or other drugs unless you have been instructed by a veterinarian when and how they may be used. Use of tranquilizers in the wrong situation can cause death to your horse.

- Spare Tire/Jack/Tire Iron
- Three emergency triangles/flares
- Chocks
- Flashlight with spare batteries
- Electrical tape and duct tape
- Knife for cutting ropes in emergency
- Water - 5 - 20 gallons. Enough for drinking, cooling the horse if overheated, or washing of wounds in the event of injury.
- Buckets/sponge
- Spare halter and lead rope
- Spare bulbs
- Spare fuses if applicable
- Fire extinguisher
- WD-40 or other lubricant
- Broom, shovel, fork, manure disposal bags
- Insect spray (Bee and wasps)

During winter months:

- Shovel
- Sand
- Red flag (for your antenna if stranded)
- Horse blankets
- Human blankets
- Candle, matches, or lighter
- Tire chains

For the Tow Vehicle

- Hawkins Guide: Horse Trailering on the Road
- Hawkins Guide: Equine Emergencies on the Road
- Registration for the vehicle and trailer and proof of insurance
- Jumper cables
- Spare tire/jack/tire iron
- Tool kit
- Spare belts and hoses
- Tow chain
- Cellular phone or CB radio (CB may be more helpful in remote areas where cellular phones may not work)
- Replacement fuses
- Road Atlas
- Work gloves
- Portable air compressor
- Extra cash/credit card
- For crossing state lines and visiting places where other horses are gathered - Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (health certificate) and proof of negative Coggins (Equine Infectious Anemia)

If you are in an accident and have been injured yourself, the EMS personnel and police will most likely not be capable of taking care of your horses. Prepare for this situation by keeping some sort of emergency directions in a very visible place. Write the name of someone you know who can be called to help or to advise what to do with the horses if you are incapacitated - a knowledgeable friend, your veterinarian, or someone else who is familiar with your horses and all current telephone numbers.

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