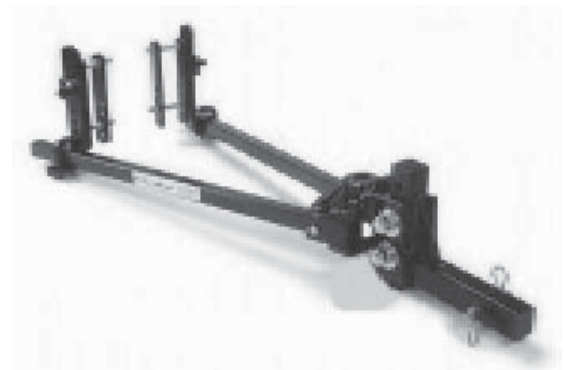


RVConsumer Group presents

How To Tow Safely

A Complete Towing Guide



Second Edition

by JD Gallant

**How To Tow Safely — A Complete Towing Guide
Second Edition**

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How to Select, Inspect, and Buy an RV

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About the Author



JD Gallant has been an RV enthusiast and RV trekker for over 40 years. Besides loving the fun and adventures of RVing, he has actively worked as a technical writer, teacher, auto and RV salesperson, and consultant for many years. Through his books, seminars, and workshops he has been instrumental in raising the awareness level of consumers when searching, buying, and using their autos, trucks, and RVs.

JD is co-founder and chairman of RV Consumer Group, a nonprofit organization dedicated to consumer education. He has authored other books including *The Green Book—RVs Rated*, *The Language of RVing*, *How to Buy an RV Without Getting Ripped-off!*, *They're All Crooks!*, *How to Outwit Any Auto, Truck, or RV Dealer Every Time*, and *How to Select, Inspect, and Buy an RV*.

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Section 2

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I've included a sampling of Frequently Asked Questions with specific examples that should help you tow with greater confidence. With our periodic updates to this CD-ROM, we'll expand on the existing FAQs and add new ones. RVCG welcomes your questions and suggestions. If we add your question to the CD, we will send you a copy of our response.

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The towing glossary takes some of the mystery out of towing technicalities and serves as a review of the basic principles.



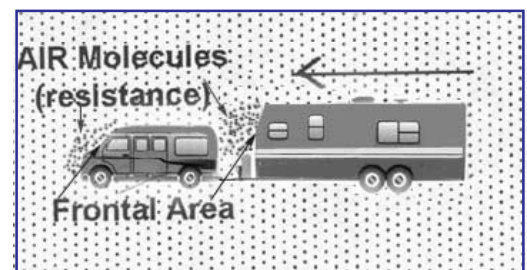
An Introduction to Safe Towing

RV owners often think they can tow anything because they have the horsepower. Power has almost nothing to do with handling characteristics. Just because your vehicle has a powerful engine and low gear ratios (determined as GCWR), it doesn't mean you can tow any size trailer your heart desires. The size of the engine is not relevant to safe towing. If anything, it can be considered detrimental. A lot of power can lull the driver into thinking that he or she has good control of the situation at any speed. Power gives you speed and speed is a major cause of towing accidents with fatalities. Having the right-size engine and gearing is important for economy, but it does not tell you how large a trailer you can tow. Remember this equation: **engine power + complacency = tragedy**.

In relation to engine power, it's also necessary to consider frontal area. Frontal area is defined by Ford as the total area in square feet that a "moving vehicle and trailer exposes to air resistance," and other auto manufacturers use a similar definition (Illustration 1). Because frontal area is based on flat resistance into the wind, if vehicles are aerodynamically designed, the air resistance will obviously be less. It also makes sense that the effect of air resistance will vary in proportion to engine size and axle ratios. Thus, the more power, the less noticeable the effect of the resistance. Manufacturers' manuals usually give a figure for the frontal area based upon the engine size, gear ratios, and heavy-duty cooling packages. If you exceed the manufacturer's recommendations for trailer frontal area or weight, you need to realize that the efficiency and longevity of the vehicle will be decreased accordingly.

When I give seminars on towing techniques and equipment, I always emphasize wheelbase — which I illustrate with the scenario of a trucker pulling his 50-foot trailer with three axles onto an exit at highway speed, totally unaware that there's a curve ahead covered with gravel. If the truck is a Kenworth with a long wheelbase, it should have no problem overcoming the tendency of the multiple axles to go straight, but if it's a short-wheelbase cabover truck, the gravel might prevent the front wheels from "grabbing" the road and pulling the multiple axles around the corner. If this happens, the truck goes off the road. Simply: any short-wheelbase vehicle has difficulty controlling the tendency of multiple axles to go straight ahead or to return to a straight course after it has been forced off that course by

Illustration 1



Frontal area is the total area in square feet that a towing combination exposes to air resistance.