

## **Texas Elks State Association Trailer Towing Information**

- It is important that both the tow vehicle and trailer are up to date on any recommended maintenance. Towing puts additional stress on the tow vehicle, making it very important that it is current on maintenance.
- Check and adjust the tire pressure if necessary on both the tow vehicle and trailer. Also check the condition of the tires, being sure to look for cracking and dry rot. Don't forget the tow vehicle and trailer's spare tire!
- Make sure the lug nuts/bolts on the wheels of the tow vehicle and trailer are torqued properly.
- Look to see that the grease caps and plugs are in place and not leaking.
- Check that the hitch and coupler that connect the trailer to the tow vehicle are properly secured with safety pins in place. Don't forget to make sure that the hitch and coupler are made to go together. For example, that the coupler and tow ball are of like sizing – 2" coupler for a 2" tow ball.
- Verify that the safety chains are attached properly. They should be crisscrossed and have enough length to allow for turning, but should not be dragging the ground.
- Make sure that the wiring is connected properly with enough length to allow for turning, but not be dragging the ground.
- Ensure that the brakes are operating correctly on the tow vehicle and trailer (if equipped with brakes). The tow vehicle needs to have an electric brake controller if towing an electric brake equipped trailer.
- Verify that the breakaway system is connected properly and working correctly. The breakaway lanyard should be secured to the body of the tow vehicle should the hitch fail.
- Ensure that the trailer jack is raised and locked into place once the trailer is on the hitch.
- Make sure that all lights are working properly.
- Check that the license plate is properly secured, illuminated, and up-to-date.
- Be sure wheel chocks are available for the trailer.
- Check that all cargo is properly secured to the trailer. Shifting cargo can cause issues while towing.
- Ensure that the weight load is properly distributed. The tow vehicle and trailer should be balanced from front to back as well as side to side.
- Set the mirrors on the tow vehicle so that you have good visibility of the trailer and the area surrounding the trailer.
- Use a spotter when backing up or pulling into tight spaces.