



11240.1
12 Nov 2013

MEMORANDUM

Eighth Coast Guard District Eight Coastal Region Auxiliary Policy Directive OPS-13-03

Subj: TRAILERING POLICY

Ref: (a) Motor Vehicles Manual, COMDTINST M11240.9 (series)
(b) Health, Safety and Work Life Trailing Performance Qualification Standard

1. **PURPOSE.** To provide policy guidance for surface operations and owner using trailers as a means of transporting operational facilities while assigned to orders within District Eight Coastal Region (D8CR).
2. **DIRECTIVES AFFECTED.** None.
3. **DISCUSSION.** A recent review of damage claim submissions throughout D8CR has identified a trend involving trailing accidents, both pre-underway and post-underway. At this time, there is no trailer Job Qualification Requirement or Performance Qualification Standard for use by the Auxiliary. Developing a standard trailing requirement for the Auxiliary would be difficult at best as there is no standardization of boats and personal watercraft within D8CR. However, the safety of both Auxiliarists and the general public exposed to trailing operations remains a paramount concern for the Director. In an effort to set the membership up for success, the following guidance has been enacted. Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in a member not being considered to have followed rules, regulations and policies of the Coast Guard should a damage claim be submitted as a result of a trailing accident.
4. **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS.** The following general requirements apply to all trailers used for transporting vessels, including personal watercraft (PWC).
 - a. All trailers shall be currently licensed, per state requirements, in the state of primary operational use. If required by the state, the tag shall be displayed in the method prescribed by state regulations.
 - b. The member shall maintain the trailer's preventative maintenance in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, the dealer's directions or other relevant and competent authority.
 - c. Brake and signaling lights shall be installed and properly working in accordance with state regulations.
 - d. While in transit, the trailer may not be towed at a speed greater than the maximum speed rated for the trailer or speeds above the maximum speed limit posted within the state of operation.
 - e. The member shall ensure that the vehicle's hitch, ball and towing system is appropriate for the trailer to be towed including the weight of the towed vessel. Enclosures (1) and (2) are provided to the membership to assist them in making the appropriate determination.
 - f. All holding straps, including the trailer's safety chains, shall be routinely inspected and replaced as wear indicates.

- g. Tires on the trailer shall be inspected for damage and wear prior to any trailering operation. The tire pressure shall be set according to manufacturer's recommendation with regard to weather and weight towed.
- h. When launching or recovering a vessel with a trailer, a minimum of one spotter shall be used during the evolution. The spotter(s)'s responsibility during such an evolution is to guide the trailer to the point of recovery or launch, ensuring the safety of the tow and to notify the vehicle driver and bystanders of potential danger.
- i. Only matched vessel/trailer combinations are authorized.

5. **INDIVIDUAL REQUIREMENTS.**

- a. Enclosure (3) is the standard Trailering Safety Check-list to be used prior to trailering operations in D8CR. This form may be converted into a portable electronic application provided that the form can be printed out later if required. Loss of electronic data prior to printing will not support a claim that the form was completed.
- b. Owners may instead of subparagraph a, create their own unique trailering safety check list for their trailers. This check list should be based on the trailer's manufacturer's instruction book and any other pertinent and relevant information. The check list shall have the facility's call sign, trailer identification number and a blank space where the date of completion can be written. This form should have a space where the member conducting the inspection can sign the form.
- c. This trailer safety check list shall be used prior to any trailering evolution. Members should treat the trailer safety check list no differently than they do the pre-underway check list for a vessel.
- d. Organization Risk management shall be conducted prior to all trailering evolutions. The efforts of the members involved should result in either a GAR or SPE score, which shall be recorded on the trailer safety check list and signed by both the vehicle driver and spotter.
- e. In the event of a damage claim involving a trailer, the completed, applicable trailer safety check-list must be included in the member's package.

6. **ASSOCIATED OPERATIONS:** Though not required at this time, in order to promote higher safety standards, members are encouraged to create check list for launching and recovering vessels as well. Encl: (4) contains sample check lists taken from ref (b).

7. **OTHER TRAILERS:** The Director is aware and is concerned with trailering evolutions beyond those associated with the boat crew program. Trailers are used to tow COASTIE, radio facilities and other Auxiliary program gear and equipment. The requirement to use Enclosure (3) or create a trailer safety check list and to conduct risk mitigation practices, including recording a GAR score apply. Every member is responsible for ensuring the public's safety when trailering facilities, equipment and gear on public roads. Government owned trailers used by Auxiliarists may require the completion of a Performance Qualification Standard or Job Qualification Requirement separate from this policy.

8. **QUESTIONS:** Any questions, concerns or recommendation regarding this trailering policy should be directed to the Operations Training Officer at (504) 671-2142.



R. F. HELLSTERN
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Appendix C

Vehicle – Trailer Matching Checklist

Overview

Introduction This is meant to help units match an appropriate vehicle to a specific trailer.

NOTE: When obtaining weights, units should ensure that vehicles have a “normal” load in them. If a crew of four normally deploys and carries gear with them, then ALL weights should be obtained with the same people in vehicle with the same gear.

In this section This section includes the following information:

Topic

Trailer–Truck–Hitch Matching Guide

Self Check for Compatibility and Safety

Trailer-Truck-Hitch Matching Checklist

Trailer

1. _____ **GROSS TRAILER WEIGHT (GTW).** Obtained from trailer, boat (including gear) sitting detached from tow vehicle on scales. Boats should be at full fuel level and loaded with whatever gear is normally onboard during trailering operations. For utility trailers use maximum GVWR of the trailer (posted on identification plate).
2. _____ **TRAILER TONGUE WEIGHT (TTW).** This is usually obtained from detaching the trailer with normal load from the tow vehicle and weighing only the weight produced by the jack stand or nose-wheel. It is important to have the trailer adjusted to the height that it would be towed at.

Tow Vehicle

3. _____ **BASE CURB WEIGHT (BCW).** This is the weight of the vehicle with fuel and no passengers or cargo. This number can be obtained from the vehicle owner’s manual or the manufacturer.
4. _____ **GROSS VEHICLE WEIGHT (GVW).** This is the Base Curb Weight (BCW) plus the weight of any passengers and cargo. To obtain this weight, detach the trailer from the tow vehicle and weigh the vehicle with the passengers and cargo onboard. If crew and payload varies, use manufacturer’s Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR).

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5. _____ GROSS AXLE WEIGHT – FRONT (FRONT GAW). This is the total weight placed on the front axle. To determine your FRONT GAW, drive your vehicle to a scale and with the trailer attached park only the front wheels of the tow vehicle on the scale. This is your FRONT GAW.
6. _____ GROSS AXLE WEIGHT RATING – FRONT (FRONT GAWR). This is the total weight the front axle is capable of carrying. This information is printed on the safety placard located on the driver's door.
7. _____ GROSS AXLE WEIGHT REAR (REAR GAW). This is the total weight placed on the rear axle during towing operations. To obtain the REAR GAW place all four wheels of the tow vehicle leaving the trailer wheels off of the scale. From this number, subtract your FRONT GAW. This is your REAR GAW.
8. _____ GROSS AXLE WEIGHT RATING – REAR (REAR GAWR). This is the total weight the rear axle is capable of carrying. This information is printed on the safety placard located on the driver's door.
9. _____ GROSS VEHICLE WEIGHT RATING (GVWR). This is the maximum allowable weight of the fully loaded vehicle.
10. _____ GROSS COMBINATION WEIGHT (GCW). This is the weight of the towing vehicle and fully loaded trailer, including passengers and any cargo (add #s 1 & 4).
11. _____ GROSS VEHICLE COMBINATION WEIGHT RATING (GVCWR). This is the maximum allowable weight of the towing vehicle and fully loaded trailer, including passengers and any cargo. This number is typically found in the owner's manual or through your local dealer.
12. _____ MAXIMUM TRAILER TOWING RATING (MTTR). Maximum amount the vehicle is designed to tow. This number is typically found in the owner's manual or through the manufacturer's representative.

Hitch
System

13. _____ HITCH CAPACITY (HC). This is the weight that the hitch is designed to safely tow. This information is typically found on a plate attached to the hitch frame.
14. _____ TOW BALL RATING (TBR). This is the weight that the towing ball is designed to safely handle. It is typically stamped onto the top of the ball.
15. _____ TONGUE WEIGHT RATING (TWR). This is the weight that the hitch system is designed to safely support. This number is typically stamped on the hitch frame.
16. _____ DRAW BAR TONGUE RATING (DBTR). This is the tongue weight that the draw bar is designed to safely carry. This is typically found stamped on the top of the draw bar.

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Self Check for Compatibility and Safety

- Self Check
1. _____ Is line 1 (GTW) less than line 12 (MTTR)? If no, then your vehicle is not authorized to tow the trailer.
 2. _____ Is line 2 (TTW) 10-15% of line 1 (GVTW)? If no, then you may have an improperly loaded trailer. 10-15% is an industry standard, manufacturer's guidelines may be different. Do not exceed manufacture's recommendation for tongue weight.
 3. _____ Is line 5 (FRONT GAW) less than line 6 (FRONT GAWR)? If no, you are overloading your front axle of the tow vehicle. Redistribution of weight or a different hitch system may be required to tow the trailer safely.
 4. _____ Is line 7 (REAR GAW) less than line 8 (REAR GAWR)? If no, you are overloading your rear axle. Redistribution of weight or a different hitch system may be required to tow the trailer safely.
 5. _____ Is line 10 (GCW) less than line 11 (GVCWR)? If no, then your vehicle is not authorized to tow the trailer as loaded. The combination of your vehicle and trailer are greater than the vehicle manufacturer maximum capacity. Some possible remedies are to increase the size of the tow vehicle to one with a higher GVCWR, or lower the GCW by removing gear or passengers.
 6. _____ Is line 1 (GTW) less than line 13 (HC)? If no, then your vehicle is not authorized to tow the trailer. You are exceeding the capacity of the hitch system.
 7. _____ Is line 1 (GTW) less than line 14 (TBR)? If no, then your vehicle is not authorized to tow the trailer. You are exceeding the capacity of the tow ball is rating. You will need to upgrade either your tow ball or the entire hitch system (See question 6).
 8. _____ Is line 2 (TTW) less than line 15 (TWR)? You are exceeding the capacity the hitch system. You will need to upgrade your hitch system to one which has a higher TWR.
- Self Check (cont.)
9. _____ Is line 2 (TTW) less than line 16 (DBTR)? You are exceeding the capacity the draw bar. You will need to upgrade your draw bar and/or your hitch system.

WARNING Vehicle and trailer GVWR are based on ideal driving conditions. For conditions such as rough roads, adverse weather conditions and/or inexperienced drivers, loads should be less than maximum capacity whenever possible. Trucking standards suggest 80% of maximum capacity when one or more of the above conditions are present. In sever weather conditions; trucking standards suggest 63% of maximum capacity.

District Eight Coastal Region

Trailer Safety Check –List

Facility Call Sign: _____ Trailer ID # _____

1. _____ Ensure vehicle and trailer are compatible.
2. _____ Ensure vehicle and trailer maintenance is complete.
 - A. _____ Check and correct tire pressure on the tow vehicle and trailer using pressure indicated on vehicle and trailer data plate/decal/instruction guide.
 - B. _____ Make sure the wheel lug nuts/bolts on the tow vehicle and trailer are tightened to the correct torque. This should be part of the periodic maintenance, not a per deployment step. Continuous loosening and tightening will generate more problems than the periodic inspection.
 - C. _____ Make sure receiver/draw bars connections are secure and pins are set properly.
3. _____ Ensure the tow ball installed is the same size as the trailer coupler.
 - A. _____ Make sure coupler is seated on the ball (or penile is properly engaged).
 - B. _____ Tighten all coupler connections, check again ensure coupler is seated properly on the ball hitch.
 - C. Attach safety chains to hitch receiver (or vehicle) in a criss-cross fashion under the trailer tongue. Ensure chains are secured to trailer and tow vehicle. Chains should be long enough to allow free movement of the trailer but should not drag or bounce on the pavement.
 - D. Check that the wiring harness is properly connected. It should not touch the road, but be loose enough to make turns without disconnecting or damaging wires.
 - E. _____ Make sure all running lights, brake lights, turning signals and hazard lights are working on both the tow vehicle and trailer.
4. _____ Verify the brake on the tow vehicle and traile If installed) are operating correctly.
 - A. _____ Check that all items are securely fastened on and in the trailer.
 - B. _____ Be sure the trailer jack, tongue support and any attached stabilizers are raised and locked in place.
 - C. _____ Check load distribution to ensure the tow vehicle and trailer are properly balanced front to back and side to side.
 - D. Ensure the load is adequately tied or strapped down.

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5. _____ Check side- and review mirrors to make sure the driver has proper visibility.
- A. _____ Check routes and restrictions on bridge and tunnel clearances.
 - B. _____ Make sure you have removed wheel chocks and jack stand and that they are properly stowed for use at the destination.

Remarks:

6. _____ Operation Risk Management conducted GAR/SPE Score: _____

Check-list completed by: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix G

Boat Launch Procedures

- Check the boat to insure that no damage was caused during the trip.
- Raise the lower unit of the engines to the proper height for launching so as not to hit bottom.
- Make sure the drain plug is in securely.
- Remove tie downs and make sure the winch is properly attached to the bow eye and locked in position. As an added safety feature, a redundant line may be added to the trailer eye to reduce risk in the event of a winch or winch cable failure.
- Disconnect the trailer lights to prevent shorting the electrical system or burning out the bulb.
- Attach a line to the bow and the stern of the boat so that the boat cannot drift away after launching and can be easily maneuvered to a docking area.
- Visually inspect the launch ramp for hazards such as a steep drop off, slippery areas and sharp objects.
- After everything has been double checked, back slowly to the ramp remembering that the boat is just resting on the trailer and attached only at the bow by the winch cable and safety line if you chose to add one. The ideal situation is to have one person in the boat and one observer at the water's edge to help guide the driver of the tow vehicle.

Caution: It is unsafe to stand on the tongue of the trailer when it is being backed down or driven up the boat ramp!

Warning: Always use a spotter as a guide while backing at a launch ramp or into a parking stall!

Warning: Never launch a boat with only one person. At least two personnel are required, one person inside the vehicle and one spotter outside attending to the boat.

- Keep the rear wheels of the tow vehicle out of the water. This will generally keep the exhaust pipes out of the water. The engine may stall if the exhaust pipes become submerged.
- Set the parking brake and place tire chocks behind front wheels.
- Make sure someone else on shore (or the dock) is holding the lines attached to the boat.
- Once in the water, lower the engine (be certain there is sufficient depth as not to damage the prop) and prepare to start the engine (after running blowers and checking for fuel leaks).
- Start the boat engine and make sure that water is passing through the engine cooling system.

- Release the winch and disconnect the winch line from the bow when the boat operator is ready.
- Push the boat off the trailer, or engage the motor and back off under power.
- Finish loading the boat at a sufficient distance from the ramp so that others may use the launch ramp.

Boat Recovery Procedures

- The steps for removing the boat from the water are basically the reverse of those taken to launch it. However, keep in mind that certain conditions may exist during retrieval that did not exist during launching. When approaching the takeout ramp, take special care to note such factors as
 - a change in wind direction or velocity;
 - a change in current or tide;
 - an increase in boating traffic; or
 - lower visibility, etc.
- Prior to recovery, unload gear and equipment from the boat at a dock or mooring if possible.
- Maneuver the boat carefully to the submerged trailer; stop the engines and raise the lower units. Secure the engines; then winch the boat onto the trailer and secure it. Ideally, three people will participate in boat recovery; one inside the boat, one in the vehicle, and one on the dock or ramp attending to the boat and trailer.

Warning: Never attempt to recover a boat with only one person. At least two personnel are required, one person inside the vehicle and one spotter outside attending to the boat.

Caution: Use the winch to position the boat on the trailer. Driving the boat onto the trailer may cause damage to the hull, sponsons, or collar, as the bow strikes the bow stop!

Warning: Never allow a person to stand in line with the winch cable when it is under strain!

- Drive the trailer with the boat aboard carefully to a designated parking area for cleanup, reloading, and an equipment safety check.