

Safety Category	Tip Description
Hitch Connection	Ensure gooseneck hitch is properly secured and locked to the ball socket in the truck bed.
Weight Distribution	Load horses and cargo evenly; avoid rear-heavy loading to maintain trailer balance.
Tire Condition	Inspect all tires (truck and trailer) for wear, proper inflation, and correct load rating.
Brake Functionality	Test trailer brakes before departure; consider integrated brake controllers for smoother stops.
Safety Chains	Cross safety chains under the gooseneck and ensure they are securely fastened.
Electrical Systems	Check lights, turn signals, and brake lights for full functionality.
Clearance & Turning	Practice wide turns and check for sufficient overhead clearance, especially in parking areas.
Suspension & Axles	Inspect suspension system and axles regularly for wear or damage.
Visibility	Use extended side mirrors and ensure you have clear visibility of the trailer sides and rear.
Emergency Equipment	Carry fire extinguisher, jack, spare tire, and roadside emergency kit onboard.
Driver Readiness	Avoid towing when fatigued; stay alert to changes in road conditions and trailer movement.
Route Planning	Select horse-friendly routes with limited steep grades and minimal sharp curves.
Speed Control	Drive at conservative speeds; sudden maneuvers or braking can destabilize the trailer.
Pre-Trip Inspection	Perform a checklist inspection every time before hauling—never skip this step.
Legal Compliance	Know and follow local regulations regarding trailer brakes, safety equipment, and size limits.
Hitch Ball Size	Verify correct 2-5/16" ball size and proper coupler fit before latching.
Breakaway System	Test breakaway switch operation and confirm the battery is charged.
Lug Nut Torque	Torque trailer wheel lug nuts to manufacturer specs; recheck after first 50 miles.
Wheel Chocks	Use chocks when parked or during loading/unloading to prevent movement.
Load Securement	Use rated tie-downs; check floors, D-rings, and partitions for integrity before loading.
Door & Latch Check	Verify all doors, ramps, and latches are closed and locked; secure ramp springs.
Fluid Levels	Check engine oil, transmission, coolant, and washer fluid in tow vehicle.
Spare & Tools	Carry spare fuses, bulbs, a tire repair kit, and appropriate tools.
Weather & Wind	Avoid towing in high winds or severe weather; adjust speed for conditions.
Brake Controller Settings	Set and test brake controller gain for balanced braking without wheel lockup.
Mirror Adjustment	Adjust mirrors for lane changes and backing; consider clip-on towing mirrors if needed.
Communication	If traveling with others, establish hand signals or radio/phone check-ins.
Backing Spotter	Use a spotter when backing in tight areas; agree on clear signals before moving.
Maintenance Intervals	Service axles, bearings, and brakes per manufacturer schedule (e.g., annually).
Tire Age	Replace tires older than 5–6 years regardless of tread; check DOT date codes.
Reflective Triangles	Carry reflective triangles or flares; place behind vehicle if stopped roadside.
Fire Extinguisher Inspection	Inspect extinguisher charge and mounting; know how to use it (PASS method).
First Aid Kit	Keep a stocked first aid kit accessible to the tow vehicle cab.