

SAFE TRAILERING GUIDE



by Cherry Hill

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The **Safe Trailering Guide** was researched and written by Cherry Hill.

To learn more on trailering, read **“TRAILERING YOUR HORSE, A PHOTOGRAPHIC GUIDE TO SAFE TRAINING AND TRAVELING”** by Cherry Hill. It's available at your local bookstore or tack shop and from <http://www.horsekeeping.com> or from Storey Books at 1-800-441-5700.



When you travel with your horse, the number one priority is that both of you arrive safely. For peace of mind, develop safe trailering habits.

1. Prepare and plan before every trip
2. Use practical, effective horse care procedures en route
3. Follow through with post-travel care for the trailer so it is ready for the next trip

Plan and Prepare Before Every Trip

Use this handy guide to help you make your own custom checklists so you will be organized for every trailer trip.

Truck checklist

- Be sure your truck is of the adequate weight, length and towing capacity to safely pull your trailer!
- Have your truck regularly serviced and keep a service log in your glove box.
- Fill all tanks with gas and check oil, power steering fluid, transmission fluid, differential, radiator coolant and windshield washer fluid.
- Be sure to have a good spare tire.
- Locate the jack and know how to use it.

Be sure you have the following **Vehicle Emergency Equipment** in your truck:

- A star-shaped lug wrench to give you increased leverage for tough nuts
- Can of WD 40 to loosen tight lugs
- Cloth to lay on
- Gloves for tire changing
- Tire chains
- Sportsman's lantern or flashlights with spare batteries
- Flares and triangle reflectors
- Jumper cables
- Fuses and bulbs
- Water for radiator (or for horses)
- 8" x 8" board to put under jack in soft soil
- Wheel chocks to block tires while jacking
- Fire extinguisher (be sure it is charged)
- Trailer hitch lock in case you have to leave your trailer



In addition, carry these **Specialized Emergency Items** with you:

- Cellular phone and emergency numbers for help along the way
- First Aid Kit with supplies for horses and humans
- Extra halter and lead rope (for each horse) carried in truck
- A rubber hoof boot that can be applied if horse steps off a shoe
- Hot weather breakdown supplies (e.g. water, chemical ice pack, insect repellent, electrolytes)
- Cold weather breakdown supplies (e.g. horse blanket, sleeping bag, chemical heat pack)
- Snacks that have long shelf life (e.g. Power Bars®)

In your truck's **General Tool Kit**, be sure you have a:

- Crowbar
- Hammer
- Screwdriver
- Pliers
- Set of wrenches
- Duct tape



A flavored electrolyte powder, such as Farnam's Elite™ Electrolytes, can help prevent your horse from going "off water" while away from home. This will reduce the chances of dehydration and fatigue.

Trailer Checklist

- ✓ Be sure you have a good spare tire.
- ✓ Oil any hinges, latches or other moving parts that do not function freely.
- ✓ Check the inside of the trailer for such things as hornet or mouse nests.
- ✓ Check the hitch for cracks, rust or loose parts. Check safety chains.
- ✓ Add fresh bedding (sawdust) if desired.
- ✓ Pack a water bucket so horses can drink en route.
- ✓ Pack fork, broom and muck bucket and other necessary clean-up tools.
- ✓ Take along hay nets or bags to use en route and/or upon arrival.
- ✓ Open the overhead vents and if the weather is warm, open all of the windows as well.

The Truck and Trailer

- ✓ Check the tire pressure on all vehicle tires including spares.
- ✓ Check to see that the wheel lug nuts are tight.
- ✓ Check running lights, turn signals, brake lights and emergency flashers.
- ✓ Adjust electric trailer brakes.
- ✓ Be sure the hitch cup is securely seated over the ball and the locking mechanism is engaged.
- ✓ If you have a gooseneck, make sure the area around the hitch remains clear so the hitch, chains and cables can operate freely and do not get hung up.
- ✓ When the trailer is attached to the truck, be sure the trailer is level. If it is not, adjust the level of the truck's receiver or gooseneck hitch.
- ✓ Check trailer breakaway mechanism and be sure its battery is fully charged.
- ✓ Put trailer registration in the towing vehicle along with the truck registration.

The Horse

- ✓ Prior to traveling, any horse should be in good health and be current on all necessary vaccinations and deworming.
- ✓ Be sure the horse has had proper trailer training so that he will load calmly and without hesitation or gimmicks.
- ✓ Outfit your horse with:
 - Leg Wraps
 - Tail Wrap
 - Fly mask to keep pests and debris from harming a horse's eyes
 - Traveling sheet or blanket (optional)



A fly mask, such as Farnam's SuperMask® is designed to stay on a horse when stabled or pastured as well as during trailering.

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Health Papers

Depending on the states you will be traveling through and the health requirements at your destination, you will need some or all of the following:

- A recent health certificate (usually within 30 days of departure)
- Proof of vaccination
- Recent Negative Coggins Test for Equine Infectious Anemia (usually within 6 or 12 months depending on the state)
- Permanent ID Card or Brand Card
- Xerox of horse's registration papers

★ TAIL WRAP CAUTION ★

Use light to moderate, even tension as you wrap the tail. Non-slip rubberized tail wraps really stay put but it is easy to apply them too tightly. If a tail wrap is too tight or left on too long, it can cut off the circulation of the dock and the tail hairs could fall out.

En Route

Always allow yourself more traveling time than it seems is necessary. Don't use car-driving times to estimate how long it will take you to get somewhere. Know your route ahead of time. Pack a detailed map and locate rest stops and places where you can get help along the way. If you don't belong to a 24-hour roadside assist program, consider it if you do a lot of traveling.

- ☑ Make all acceleration and deceleration gradual
- ☑ Take curves at moderate speed
- ☑ Use turn signals well in advance

Pit Stop!

Shortly after you leave, stop for a trailer check. After the first check, plan to stop at least every 2 hours for at least 15 minutes per stop. Give yourself a good stretch as you walk around the rig and check on your horse.

Rig Check

- ✓ Look at tires. Know what looks normal. If one looks low, check the tire pressure.
- ✓ Feel tires and wheels. Know what is normal heat and how much heat means brake problems.
- ✓ Check the hitch, chains and breakaway cable.
- ✓ Check all door latches.

Horse Check

- ✓ If horse is wearing a sheet or blanket, slip your hand under it. If the horse is wet, he is too hot or has broken into a nervous sweat. Depending on the situation, you might change the blanket, unload the horse, or put a cooler on the horse to help him dry gradually. Check and adjust vents.
- ✓ Perform a pinch test to evaluate level of dehydration. Know what is normal for your horse.
- ✓ Offer the horse water with electrolytes.
- ✓ If you suspect a problem, take the horse's temperature, pulse and respiration and capillary refill time. Know what is normal for the horse.
- ✓ Clean manure from the back of the trailer.
- ✓ Check leg wraps and tail wraps.
- ✓ Keep your horse on his regular feeding schedule.
- ✓ In general, clean grass hay is the safest traveling ration but feed your horse the type of hay he is accustomed to.



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If you are going to travel over 400 miles or 8 hours, consider stopping for the night or at least unloading the horse for an hour of exercise or turnout.

If a horse is not urinating regularly on a long trip, you can encourage him to urinate en route by bedding the trailer stall deeply with sawdust. Be sure to remove urine soaked bedding to prevent irritation to the horse's respiratory tract from ammonia fumes. Some horses that are reluctant to urinate on board will readily urinate when unloaded along a grassy roadside or in a turnout pen.

POST- TRAVEL FOLLOW-UP TRAILER MAINTENANCE

After Every Trip

- ✧ Sweep out the trailer stalls.
- ✧ Remove mats so the floor can dry out.
- ✧ Check floor for rotting, splintering, shrinking or warping. Repair immediately.
- ✧ Remove hay and grain from manger or feeders and sweep or vacuum clean.
- ✧ Wash exterior and hose out trailer as needed.
- ✧ Clean and organize tack room.

Semi-Annually or Annually

- ✧ Wax twice per year.
- ✧ Acid bath aluminum trailers.
- ✧ Grease wheel bearings annually and replace seals.
- ✧ Remove wheels and blow dust out of electric brakes.
- ✧ Check brake pads for wear and replace as needed.
- ✧ Rotate trailer tires to equalize wear.
- ✧ Grease springs and shackles annually and check bushings.
- ✧ Check shocks and replace when necessary.

Five Tips For Buying A Trailer

By **Judson Pigg**

*Southeast District Manager
Sundowner Trailers*

When investing in a horse trailer, look for the following:

- 1 A reputable and established dealership . . .**
Do they offer a service and repair facility?
- 2 Brand name recognition . . .**
This will ensure a dependable warranty and high resale value.
- 3 High quality workmanship . . .**
Look for well-engineered design and attractive overall appearance.
- 4 A smooth and clean finished interior . . .**
Consider the comfort and safety of your horses.
- 5 User friendly and easy to clean . . .**
With easy to open doors, dividers and latches.

SAFE TRAILERING

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

ZIMECTERIN[®]

(ivermectin)



BROADEST SPECTRUM PARASITE CONTROL



FLEXUS[®] PLUS



This **Safe Trailering Guide** is brought to you by ZIMECTERIN[®] paste dewormer, SUNDOWNER Trailers and new FLEXUS[®] PLUS Self-adhesive protective bandage. It's a sign of their dedication and commitment to the safety of horses and their owners.

SAFE TRAILERING TIPS

TIRE PRESSURE

Tire pressure specifications are listed on the sidewall of your tires and will likely be different for your truck and trailer tires. For each type of tire you run, write the correct tire pressure on a 3 x 5 card and keep it in your glove box along with a tire gauge.

ADJUSTING ELECTRIC TRAILER BRAKES

With the trailer empty, drive on a gravel driveway or road. Stop the rig using only the manual controller for the electric brakes. Refer to your brake controller's instruction manual to adjust the brakes so the stop occurs without a lurch or skid.

PROTECTION

Properly applied leg wraps or shipping boots are the best way to prevent serious injury to the coronary band, bulbs of the heels, knees and hocks. In order to be effective, the thick padding should extend at least to the midpoint of the hoof and should cover the knees and hocks.

Be sure your horse is used to shipping boots, a tail wrap, a fly mask, a head bumper and a traveling sheet before you load him in the trailer. You want to protect him with these items, not add more stress or complications to his loading and traveling.

DEHYDRATION PREVENTION

The most common cause of dehydration during travel is a horse going "off water." Horses detect differences in the smell and taste of water and will sometimes refuse to drink water away from home. Carry as much home water as you can such as in a tack room water caddy. If you do not have a way to carry home water or if your home water supply runs out, you can flavor the new water with a flavored electrolyte powder. Be sure to accustom the horse to the electrolyte powder in his water at home for several days before the trip.