



Checklist to Trailer Safety

- Assess your horse for health and fitness before trailering and only trailer a healthy horse, unless it's being shipped to a vet hospital for treatment under the direction of the veterinarian.
- Make sure the trailer is the appropriate size for your horse in both width AND height.
- Know how to safely haul the trailer BEFORE you load the horse and inspect it before every trip.
- If you can, avoid travelling alone.
- If you are hauling someone else's horse in your trailer, be sure to agree in advance who will be responsible if the horse is injured or the trailer is damaged.
- Train your horse to load and unload in a safe and calm manner ahead of time.
- Wear gloves, boots, and a helmet when loading and unloading horses.
- Make sure there are no hazards near the horse trailer (farm machinery, fencing, ditches) when you are loading and unloading horses.
- Apply leg wraps and head bumper before your horse gets into the trailer.
- Never put a horse into a trailer that is unhitched, or unhitch a trailer with the horse still inside.
- If the trailer is dark inside, open the doors and turn on the lights to increase visibility.
- Never load a horse into the trailer if you do not have an easy escape route.
- Always load a single horse on the left side, or tie on the left side in slant loads, as roads are "crowned" in the middle.
- If more than one horse is being unloaded from the trailer, keep at least one horse in sight of the last horse until he has been safely unloaded.
- Never get into the trailer or open the door if the horse is panicked. Instead, seek assistance.
- Make sure all inoculations are current and you are carrying the certificates.
- Carry a complete emergency first aid kit (for both human and horse) and know how to use it.
- Make sure the trailer is well vented and the trailer mats fit properly (snugly).
- Check that all trailer doors are secured and locked before setting out and after each stop.



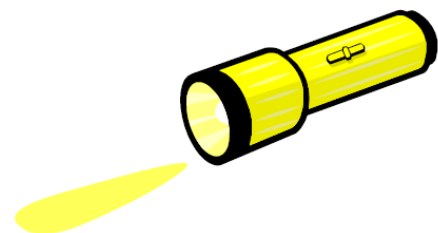
- Ensure that the trailer has reflective tape top, bottom and sides.
- Drive defensively. Allow double the normal braking distance, and travel at lower than normal speeds.
- Both towing vehicle and trailer should be safetied annually in accordance with local laws.

For your horse trailer:

- Water
- Buckets/sponges
- Spare halters and lead ropes
- Broom, shovel, disposal bags
- Emergency triangles or flares
- 2 spare tires
- Wheel chocks (wedges to prevent accidental movement)
- Hydraulic jack – capable of jacking your trailer while loaded
- Lug wrench
- Spare bulbs for all lights
- 2 flashlights (one large Maglite flashlight or portable spotlight, one headband flashlight)
- Duct tape and electrical tape
- WD-40
- Knife
- First aid kit (equine/human)
- Fire extinguisher
- Portable fencing or a roll of construction fencing

For your tow vehicle:

- Vehicle and trailer registration
- Proof of insurance and roadside assistance membership
- Gloves
- Jumper cables
- Spare tire, jack and tire iron
- Tool kit including wiring, fuses, spare belts and hoses
- Tow chain
- Map book



Trailer Walkaround:

- I am within my gross vehicle rated capacity
- Tires are in good condition
 - The wheel bearings were serviced this year
 - Lug nuts are tight
- Check tire pressure on ALL tires (including inside ones)
- The trailer hitch is secured to the frame of the vehicle, not the bumper
- The ball size is correct and ball is tightly secured to the ball mount
- The hitch is in good condition, is lubricated, and is not showing signs of wear
- The hitch is seated properly on the ball and is locked
 - I can feel the clamp around the bottom of the ball when the coupler is connected
- Safety chains are properly connected UNDER the hitch
- Trailer jack is fully retracted or removed
- The electrical connection is the right one and is properly connected
- The emergency breakaway system is properly connected
- The breakaway battery is charged
- All trailer lights (brakes/turn signals/running/perimeter) are working
- Interior lights have safety cages to protect them from horses' heads
- The brake controller is working
- The trailer is sitting level
- The floor has been checked and is in good condition. Mats are tight fitting
- Check trailer for any hazards – rough edges, chains that don't open properly, loose wiring, door locks that are difficult to open or that don't lock, butt bars/chains that don't close properly



Equine Guelph thanks the experts for providing and reviewing content.

For more about trailer safety, take Equine Guelph's short online courses
[Horse Behaviour & Safety & Horse Trailer Safety, Part 1](#)