

difference being the gear ratio, will have different GCWRs and maximum trailer weight ratings. The Ram trailer towing chart provides a good example of this. (See previous page.)

The important thing to remember when someone states that their truck tows it “just fine with no problems” is to be cautious of that statement. The simple act of towing it, is no proof that the tow vehicle is not exceeding weight safety ratings, nor does it prove another family of a different size can do the same. Similar to finger prints being different for every person, not all towing situations are the same for every individual or family.

A good example would be if two families purchased identical tow vehicles. Family A consists of two adults only, while family B consists of two adults, three children ages 8 to 16 and one German shepherd. Obviously, the total weight in family B’s truck will weigh significantly more. The heavier weight of family B’s truck decreases the available payload, therefore reducing the amount left for tongue or pin weight. Total gross vehicle weight (GVW) directly affects the towing capacity. Every auto manufacturer warns owners to subtract the additional vehicle weight that is above the curb weight from the published max trailer weight ratings. (See “Same Truck Chart” at right.)

Rather than being too quick to answer “yes” to someone’s towing capability question, all the right questions must be asked and answered in order to know how much weight a tow vehicle can realistically tow.

What is the tow vehicle’s GCWR?

What is the tow vehicle’s GVWR?

What is the scaled weight of the tow ready vehicle (GVW)?

Knowing how to use the answers to the questions above is the critical issue. There are two calculators

SAME TRUCK CHART

**FAMILY “A” TOWS IT WITHOUT ANY PROBLEMS.
THAT DOESN’T MEAN FAMILY “B” CAN WITH THE SAME TRUCK.**

Family A	Family B
Certification Ratings	Certification Ratings
*GCWR 17700	*GCWR 17700
*GVWR 7400	*GVWR 7400
Vehicle Scaled Weight	Vehicle Scaled Weight
*GVW 5235	*GVW 5235
(*) Required entries	(*) Required entries
Additional Unscaled Weight	Additional Unscaled Weight
5th Wheel Hitch → <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5th Wheel Hitch → <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Gear/Cargo & Misc.	Gear/Cargo & Misc.
150	280
Driver/Passenger’s Weight	Driver/Passenger’s Weight
335	926
Calculate	Calculate
Max 5th Wheel Towing	Max 5th Wheel Towing
Pin Weight Percentage Selector	Pin Weight Percentage Selector
15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25	15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25
7400	3795
Max Conventional Towing	Max Conventional Towing
Tongue Weight Percentage Selector	Tongue Weight Percentage Selector
10 11 12 13 14 15	10 11 12 13 14 15
11980	7991

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online that are useful and will aid an RVer in matching a tow vehicle and trailer. One such calculator that provides results for fifth-wheel and travel trailers simultaneously is the SAE J2807-compliant mobile-friendly, Web-based app, RV Tow Check (www.RVtowCheck.com). The other Website has individual towing calculators and is called Changin’ Gears (www.ChanginGears.com).

Towing Over 10,000 Pounds

Do you currently own a three-quarter-ton truck and are you towing a fifth-wheel trailer that has a GVWR more than 10,000 pounds? If you do, I highly recommend you have your rig weighed if you haven’t already done so. There is a simplified, easy-to-follow, five-step weight safety plan available on my Website, Fifth Wheel St (www.FifthWheelSt.com).