

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	GCWR	GVWR	GVW	5th Wheel Hitch	Gear/Cargo & Misc.	Driver/Passenger's Weight	Total Weight	Max 5th Wheel Towing	Max Conventional Towing
Family A	17700	7400	5235	Yes	150	335	7400	11980	7991
Family B	17700	7400	5235	Yes	280	926	3795	7400	3795

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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).