

# Towing

Information on towing safety, hook-up and vehicle requirements.

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## Safety

Towing the DC Trainer safely is not a difficult task. There are 3 basic elements: it takes the right equipment, proper hook-up and a driver with good situational awareness. Take away just one of these elements and the danger increases.

General towing safety information may be obtained by doing a search of the internet or checkout the [NHTSA's pamphlet on towing safety](#) (282 kb pdf).

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## Hook-up

A proper hook-up helps make for a safe tow. Doing it correctly will save a person frustration and possibly an embarrassing accident.

[Hook-up procedure placard](#) (113 kb pdf)

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## Vehicle Requirements

Using a vehicle that has sufficient capabilities to tow the DC Trainer is very important. There is increased load on the engine, increased strain on braking systems, increased load on the rear axles of the tow vehicle possibly causing an improper profile. There are several factors to consider when selecting a tow vehicle.

The first item is weight. How much weight will you be towing and what can your vehicle handle?

**How much does the DC Trainer weigh?** When the first 10 DC Trainers that were built in early 1998 (fabricated from Metal-Fab of Spokane, Washington), the weight was approx. 2100 pounds. The axles that came on these trailers are rated at 3500 pounds. That means the total weight of the DC Trainer including equipment, water, modifications may not exceed 3500 pounds while you go down the road. The best way to know for sure is to take the DC Trainer to a scale and weigh the trailer. Some container yards might do this for you at no charge, or take it to a certified truck scale in your area. Usually costs about \$10 per weigh. The tongue weight will depend upon any modifications that have been done to any area between the tongue and axle. The original models had approx. 100 pounds of tongue weight.

**How much can my vehicle tow?** Check your owners manual. The maximum load and towing capacity is a function of the vehicle's engine and axles/springs.

**What about a hitch?** Now that you know the weight of the DC Trainer, you can decide which class of hitch will safely tow the trailer.

**Class II:** Tow up to 3500 pounds and 350 pounds of tongue weight. Hitch is bolted or welded to the vehicle's frame. It accepts 1" receivers.

**Class III:** Most common hitch system. Carry up to 5,000 pounds without an equalizing system and 500 pounds of tongue weight. Hitch is bolted or welded to the vehicle's frame. It accepts 2" receivers.

The MSO Puget Sound DC Trainer has been towed with both classes of hitches without any problems or difficulties. Check local hitch installers for price and specific requirements. Most hitches installed range from \$200-\$500. This price usually includes the wiring of a 4-flat or 7-pin connector.

**Trailer brakes:** Check your state's rules on trailer brakes. Washington requires trailer brakes on trailers over 3500 pounds. Other states require them on smaller trailers that would include the DC Trainer. Some states offer reciprocity rules that since it is a vehicle with out of state (government) plates then it defaults to the state the vehicle is registered. If trailer brakes are required the trailer must have the brakes installed (usually these are electric drum or hydraulic surge brakes). If electric brakes are used then a brake controller must be installed in the tow vehicle. These items will raise the cost of outfitting the vehicle substantially. Double check with local authorities.

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