**INTRODUCTION**

Trailers range in size and application, however, they have common safety concerns.

**PRE-USE INSPECTION**

Do a walk-around of the trailer to ensure all items are present and in working order.

Lights

License Plate

Wheels and Tires

Do not use the trailer if anything is deficient. Report all problems immediately.

**HOOKING UP A TRAILER**

1. Check the vehicle and hitch ratings to make sure the tow vehicle is appropriate for the trailer and the load.
2. Check the ball size and the hitch size. They need to be the same.
3. Use the lifting device (if equipped) to raise the trailer hitch to the proper level.
4. Have somebody help you back in the vehicle (if available).
5. Close the latch and secure the pin.
6. Hook up the chains on opposite sides – they should cross.
7. Attach the electrical plug.
8. Check that trailer brakes (if equipped); and ball and hitch are seated properly by giving a tug test and wheel bearings are sufficiently greased (e.g. Bearing Buddy)
9. Fully raise the lift so it is not damaged during transport.

**LOADING A TRAILER**

1. Do not load trailers beyond their rated capacity.
2. Trailers need to be loaded evenly from side to side. Additionally, the front-to-back weighting needs to be close to equal, with an additional 10 to 20 percent of the weight on the front half of the trailer.

**TOWING A TRAILER**

**TRAILERS WITH BRAKES**

Adjust the brake actuator in the tow vehicle (if equipped) according to the weight of the load and the speed at which you are traveling.

**TOWING**

1. Adjust your turning radius to address the path of the trailer.
2. Depending upon the weight of the trailer, you will need extra room to stop. Allow for extra braking distance.
3. You should never drive at excessive speeds; however, this is particularly important when towing a loaded trailer as you could easily lose control or not be able to stop in time to avoid an accident.

**UNHOOKING A TRAILER**

**HAZARD ASSESSMENT**

1. Block the wheels so the trailer does not move after being detached.
2. Use the lift (if equipped) to lift the trailer off of the ball.

**BACKING UP A TRAILER**

Backing up a trailer can be difficult for the inexperienced.

**PRACTICE IF INEXPERIENCED**

* If inexperienced with backing up trailers, practice without passengers in a controlled environment when not under pressure.

**COWORKER ASSISTANCE**

* It is recommended that a co-worker guide the driver when backing-up the trailer. Ensure there is clear verbal communication established.
* Ensure that all unnecessary personnel and equipment are out of the area prior to backing up.

**BACKING UP SOLO**

* If backing up without a guide, pick points of reference prior to backing up to track progress; if in doubt, get out and reassess the situation before continuing.

**JACK-KNIFE AWARENESS**

* Do not jack-knife trailers when backing up; if trailer begins to jack-knife, pull ahead and attempt to back up further – it will only get worse.