

MotorHome
SPECIAL

2008 GUIDE TO **DINGHY TOWING**

- HOOK, PLUG & PLAY
- CHOOSING A CHASSIS
- OFFICIAL LIST OF TOWABLES
- TOWING ACCESSORIES



If you enjoy the thrill of exploring the open road in your motorhome, you've probably found a few instances where bigger is not always better. That's where towing a dinghy behind your coach becomes advantageous. Want to know more? The 2008 *Guide to Dinghy Towing* provides a selection of informative articles and a listing of new vehicles ready-made to enhance your RVing lifestyle.

Granted, no manufacturer has yet to engineer a plug-and-play setup directly from the factory, but it's never been simpler to equip both dinghy and coach for road duty.

For starters, as highlighted in "Hook, Plug & Play" (page 6), the hard hookup between coach and car (or truck or SUV) has become an easy one-person operation: self-aligning tow bars make cinching up a breeze; and with some tow-bar designs even routing cables and wiring through hollow arms, the connection is more than easy, it's eye-pleasing. Plus, manufacturers are offering an array of accessories to help keep it that way: An RV underskirt, fitted beneath the equipment, will safeguard the dinghy vehicle and towing hardware from debris. But for more ironclad protection, nearly indestructible rock guards are available that quickly attach to the tow bar and shield the dinghy from road refuse.

Yet another device to aid in safe dinghy transport, supplemental braking systems have likewise evolved. Portable systems can be installed in less than an hour, and even permanent installations remain unobtrusive. Dinghy brakes may not be mandatory in some states — yet — but anytime you add a few tons of weight to the back of your motorhome, you really do need a way to slow it down without taxing the brakes on your coach.

And make no mistake, contemporary motorhomes can accommodate a lot of dinghy weight. While many new chassis are rated to handle at least 4,000 pounds of dinghy weight, certain luxury motorcoaches today carry gross combined weight ratings (GCWR) of 60,000 pounds or more — with up to 25 percent of that dedicated to towing. Because motorhome chassis limitations directly figure into dinghy selection, we've also included information on all popular motorhome underpinnings, including entries from Chevrolet, Dodge, Ford, Freightliner, Spartan and Workhorse (see "Choosing a Chassis," page 12) in addition to specifications for proprietary chassis built by the major coach builders including Country Coach, Fleetwood, Foretravel, Monaco and Western RV.

However, the real focus of any dinghy towing guide is the dinghies themselves. Manufacturers are becoming increasingly sensitive to the needs of the motorhome community, and the "2008 Dinghy Roundup" (beginning on page 20) lists nearly 100 passenger cars, SUVs, light trucks and hybrids that have been certified for four-wheels-down towing. The list includes many of the newest vehicles — including a plethora in the subcompact car segment. For all-terrain fun, there are plenty of 4WD vehicles to choose from.

As motorhomes continue to grow in size and stature, life on the road has never been more comfortable. A dinghy adds to that enjoyment. *

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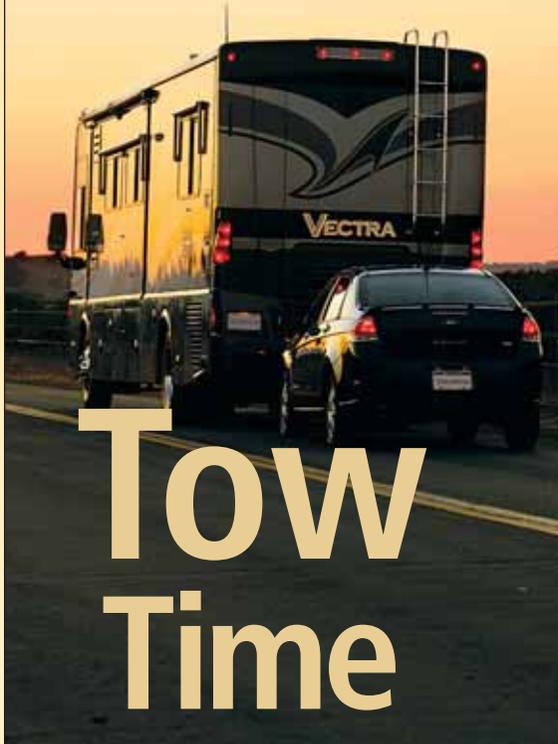
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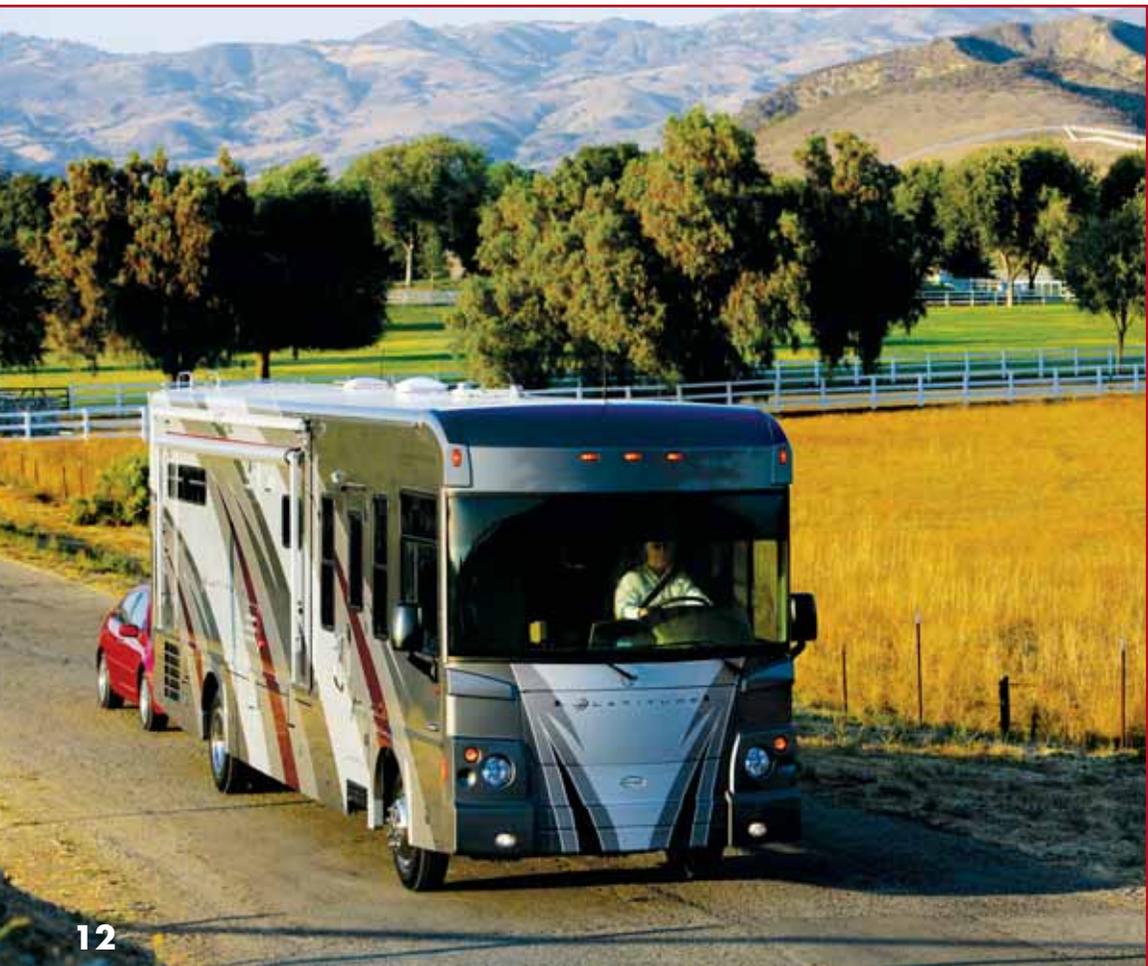
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Hook, Plug & Play



Linking up with the correct equipment adds safety, simplicity and convenience to dinghy towing

Traveling with a dinghy vehicle is almost a given with today's larger motorhomes. Although the trend to bigger coaches has injected "camping" with more creature comforts than a luxury hotel room, it's not without its drawbacks. Even rigs with a 60-degree wheel cut will

encounter some difficulty negotiating narrow roads in smaller towns during sightseeing tours — and it's just not fun trying to park a 40-footer at local markets when replacing perishables.

A dinghy simplifies such tasks, and eliminates the need to break camp and stow everything each time you need (or want) to venture away from the campground. Additionally, the dinghy can stow gear securely when motorhome storage is filled (within weight restrictions), and there is the security of having a spare set of wheels in the event of an emergency.

However, it isn't for free; towing a dinghy will affect the acceleration, fuel economy and braking of any motorhome, to some degree. That said, proper selection of a dinghy and towing equipment will enable you to safely and conveniently enjoy the benefits of auxiliary transportation.



ONCE THE TOW BAR IS ATTACHED TO BOTH VEHICLES, MAKE SURE ELECTRIC CONNECTIONS AND SAFETY CABLES ARE SECURE.



WHILE DRIVING YOUR DINGHY, THIS TOW BAR REMAINS ON THE COACH, TUCKED OUT OF HARM'S WAY.

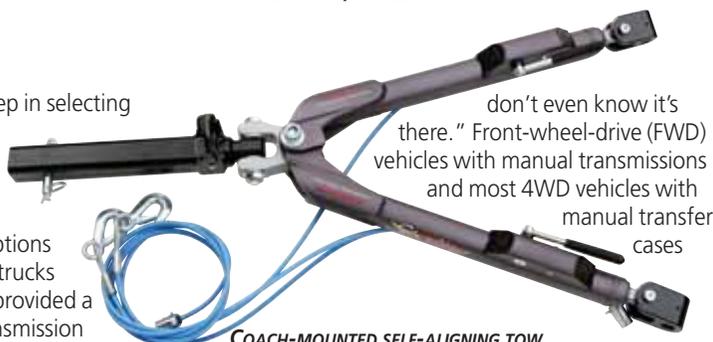
Flat Towing

The first and most essential step in selecting a dinghy vehicle is to make sure it is approved by its manufacturer for flat towing (see "2008 Dinghy Roundup," page 20). While you do have other options — most passenger cars or light trucks can safely be used as a dinghy, provided a towing accessory (such as a transmission lube pump) is available for that specific model as an aftermarket add-on, or towing on a dolly or trailer is planned — these vehicles have been certified for four-wheels-down towing without affecting their warranties. **That said, however, buyers should always first confirm flat-towability by consulting the vehicle owner's manual before the purchase is finalized.**

When selecting a dinghy, first determine the maximum towing limit of your motorhome and then decide what vehicles fall within that limit. Towing limits aren't the only factor to consider, but they help to eliminate many choices based on weight alone. The weight rating of the motorhome's hitch receiver is another concern, although most are adequate, and receivers can be upgraded. Keep in mind, however, that an upgraded hitch receiver cannot increase the specified towing limit set by the coach manufacturer.

An economical four-passenger compact car can double as a family's second car when not traveling, but even a larger SUV or sport truck can be towed, providing its weight is within the towing limit of your chassis (refer to "Choosing a Chassis," page 12).

Most flat-towed dinghies track so well that many motorhome drivers have commented, "You



COACH-MOUNTED SELF-ALIGNING TOW BARS MAKE HITCHING A ONE-PERSON JOB.

don't even know it's there." Front-wheel-drive (FWD) vehicles with manual transmissions and most 4WD vehicles with manual transfer cases

are among the easiest and most economical to tow. Plus, they tend to rank among the lightest vehicles.

Some auto manufacturers also produce FWD vehicles equipped with automatic transmissions that are flat-towable.

They are popular because the expense of towing equipment is minimal, and readying for towing involves fewer steps.

But some vehicles do require special procedures, such as starting the engine

every 200 miles to circulate transmission fluid. Note that this cannot simply be circumvented by overfilling the transmission prior to towing, because the problem isn't caused by lack of sufficient fluid but rather by lack of oil circulation. Such practices,

A-FRAME TOW BARS ARE ECONOMICAL, BUT REQUIRE STORAGE WHEN NOT IN USE.



A BALL COUPLER ON A TOW BAR LOOKS SIMILAR TO THAT ON A TYPICAL TRAILER A-FRAME.

The Motorhome/Dinghy Link

An essential ingredient in safe dinghy towing involves a solid, properly designed-and-installed mechanical linkage between the motorhome and towed vehicle. Hitch receivers, tow bars and baseplates must all be in good working order, rated for the weight you intend to pull and, when applicable, designed for the specific application.

Hitch receivers: Check the rating of your hitch receiver to ensure that it is rated for the heaviest load you intend to pull. If a receiver is already installed on your coach, the weight limits and class should be clearly visible on it.

However, the riding height of a motorhome rarely matches up with that of the chosen dinghy, oftentimes

necessitating the use of an adjustable-height drop receiver to allow the tow bar to ride level. Receivers should be bolted (not welded) in place, using at least Grade 5 bolts and lock washers, locking nuts and thread-locking sealer.

Tow bars are available in two basic styles: A-frame, or self-aligning. A-frame tow bars (offered as "solid" or "folding"), while the most economical, are designed to fit a limited number of baseplates (the mounting brackets affixed to the dinghy) or specific applications; however, the folding design will fit a wider range than the solid design. These types of tow bars are strong, but heavy, and require storage space when not in use. Hitching is easier with a helper to guide alignment.



BASEPLATE INSTALLATION DOES NOT REQUIRE WELDING OR SPECIALIZED TOOLS, BUT CAN BE INVOLVED. IF YOU HAVE ANY DOUBTS, HAVE A PROFESSIONAL DO IT.



TO HOOK UP USING A TELESCOPING TOW BAR, DINGHY VEHICLE ONLY NEEDS TO BE NEAR CENTER AND MIDLENGTH OF BAR.

Self-aligning tow bars are available in two styles: dinghy-mounted and coach-mounted.

Coach-mounted units are the most desirable, as there is less chance of damage when not in

although inconvenient, are designed to prevent drivetrain damage and must be incorporated into the towing routine.

Another vehicle-specific consideration is that towing some dinghies with the ignition switch in a position that allows the steering column to remain unlocked also leaves power applied to various electrical circuits. Over the course of a full day of towing, this can lead to significant battery drain. While strategies for dealing with this vary considerably by model, most fixes involve temporarily unplugging one or more fuses from the vehicle's fuse box prior to towing. A more involved alternative is to connect the offending circuit through an owner-added switch, allowing these circuits to be made tow-ready by the mere flip of a switch.



**DROP RECEIVERS
KEEP TOW
BARS LEVEL.**

Before You Tow

Make sure your equipment is rated for the dinghy's weight and that you are not exceeding your motorhome's gross combination weight rating (GCWR).

and wiring connections are engaged and secure; all safety chains or cables are attached; and all locking pins are properly installed.

- Confirm hitch height is correct.
- Confirm all hitch bolts and tow-bar and baseplate fasteners are securely tightened.
- Confirm all hitch
- Connect brake system and break-away device.
- Check motorhome and dinghy for proper function of taillights, brake-lights and turn signals.



ONCE THE PINS ARE IN, THE MOTORHOME IS DRIVEN AHEAD SLOWLY (OR DINGHY BACKED) TO LOCK THE ARMS IN POSITION.

use — and hitching is a one-person operation. Highly adaptable, self-aligning tow bars fit a broad range of vehicles by attaching to model-specific baseplates: Class III (5,000-lb.) or Class IV (10,000-lb.) models are available. Contact tow-bar manufacturers to find out if baseplates are offered for the dinghy you plan to tow.

Baseplates are perhaps the most critical variable in this link. While tow bars and,

obviously, hitch receivers are intended for mass fitment, different brands, models and years of dinghy vehicles require different baseplates and installation procedures, so proper selection and installation are essential.

Installing a baseplate typically entails very specific procedures. For example, fitting baseplates on three popular dinghy models — the Saturn VUE, Honda CR-V and Suzuki Grand Vitara — requires different steps.

Installing a baseplate on the VUE is relatively simple, requiring only some minor drilling, as well as temporary removal of the bumper covering (fascia). Due to the vehicle's shape, the baseplate's two attachment points are located at a nonstandard distance from each other, requiring the installation of an adapter to fit the tow bar.

To install a baseplate on the CR-V, the bumper covering (fascia) must be temporarily removed. Some minor drilling is required and the bumper covering and/or grille may also require some trimming.

Installing the Grand Vitara's baseplate is a bit more involved, requiring temporary removal of the bumper covering, front fascia panels and some minor trimming of the grille inserts and shock absorption pads.

On some vehicles, the baseplate installa-

tion process can be even more intricate. For example, the air dam may need to be trimmed or the factory-installed belly pan may require either trimming or permanent removal. Such requirements are described in the manufacturer's fitment charts — hopefully eliminating any unpleasant surprises at installation time. Today's baseplates do a good job of blending into the exterior lines of the dinghy vehicle.

Remember, too, that all 50 states require properly rated safety chains or cables to keep the dinghy from separating from the motorhome if the tow bar or ball fails. Safety chains or cables should be connected securely to the dinghy and crossed under the tow bar, then secured to the hitch receiver. They should be long enough to allow full turning without binding, but not drag when slack.

As You Go

- Check tire pressure of all tires on motorhome and dinghy — including spare tires.
- Make sure the dinghy is set up for towing: steering unlocked; hand brake off; gear selector in the position specified by manufacturer; ignition in proper position; lube-pump switch, driveshaft coupler, 4WD transfer case and hubs (if applicable) in proper position.
- Observe the speed limit for towing in each state or province you traverse.
- Maintain adequate stopping distance from the vehicle in front of you. A minimum five-second interval is recommended.
- Avoid towing in snowy or icy conditions.
- Pay particular attention to traffic merging onto the freeway, and be prepared to take evasive action to avoid "daydreamers."
- Plan ahead — most flat-towed dinghies can't be backed more than a few feet, so it's necessary to focus on easy ingress and egress. Most tow-bar manufacturers will not warrant damage caused by backing. Dollies tend to jackknife quickly. It's better to disconnect the dinghy and drive to a safe place to reconnect.
- Avoid having to make tight turns; they put a lot of pressure on tow bars.
- Towing in deep sand or gravel may cause the dinghy's front wheels to turn completely to one side. If this happens, you must manually recenter them before continuing.
- Walk around the motorhome and dinghy to inspect all connections, check tire pressure and look for signs of trouble every time you stop.

Other Towing Equipment



BASEPLATE KITS ARE DESIGNED FOR SPECIFIC MODELS, AND COME COMPLETE WITH ALL MOUNTING HARDWARE.

Should you choose (or already own) a vehicle that is not flat-towable as produced, there are retrofit kits for many models. One retrofiter, Remco Manufacturing (www.remcotowing.com) estimates 80 percent of passenger vehicles can be modified to serve as dinghies with its line of retrofit products.

For rear-wheel-drive (RWD) and some 4WD applications, couplers enable the driveshaft to be easily disconnected from the transmission or differential by a cable or lever mounted near the driver's seat. These kits run about \$650 and can be installed in about three hours.

A transmission-lube pump can be mounted and plumbed into some automatic transmissions to keep fluid circulating while the vehicle is in tow.

Other FWD vehicles can be adapted using a Remco axle-lock disengagement device. Check with your dealer to make sure a specific modification does not affect the dinghy's warranty.

Tow dollies also offer an alternative to flat-towing, although they take up space in camp. Remember that the dolly weight must be figured in with the total weight of the dinghy.

Trailers track better than dollies, but they take up even more precious space in camp. Also, the weight of the trailer drastically cuts



ONCE THE PROPER BASEPLATE IS INSTALLED, THIS CLEAN-LOOKING SETUP IS ALL THAT REMAINS WHEN THE TOWED VEHICLE ISN'T HOOKED UP; COOLING DOESN'T SUFFER.

into the total weight that can be pulled behind a motorhome, thereby making this method a distant third choice.

There are a number of other accessories for dinghy towing. Some, like dinghy braking devices, should be considered mandatory, while



LUBE PUMPS ALLOW TOWING OF SOME AUTOMATIC-TRANSMISSION-EQUIPPED VEHICLES NOT MANUFACTURER-APPROVED FOR FLAT TOWING.

others (such as rock guards and RV underskirts) protect against road debris. These components are addressed in "Towing Accessories" (page 28), along with dinghy wiring and lighting. *

2008 Guide to Dinghy Towing Sponsors

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50 YEARS ON THE ROAD

Choosing a Chassis



New motorhome chassis offer enhanced ride comfort, unlimited floorplan possibilities, safety improvements and greater towing capacities

Ever get down on your hands and knees and take a look at what lives under a modern motorhome? Chances are, if it's a big Class A, you'll see elements of the front and rear suspension, but the backbone of the motorhome is tucked up underneath the coach, providing ample storage potential, structural stability and torsional rigidity.

However, when it comes to chassis, there's nothing particularly eye-catching about the massive steel rails used to support our on-the-road lifestyles. But while full-body paint schemes ensure that we roll down the highway in style and state-of-the-art electronics guarantee that we do it in comfort, it's the chassis that allows us to do so virtually without compromise.

The past few years have seen a number of

innovations by Workhorse Custom Chassis — a company that helped to almost eliminate the traditional weight-carrying differential between diesel and gas underpinnings — and contemporary chassis are evolving at an amazing rate. Along the way, chassis manufacturers have cast off historical limitations. For example, Freightliner has moved diesel engines to the front, and Workhorse returned the favor with the industry's first contemporary rear-engined gas chassis.

Evolution, however, is usually tracked in smaller increments — and less-stunning, but still impres-



**WORKHORSE UFO
CHASSIS**



SPARTAN MM

sive, changes are apparent virtually across the board as innovation among chassis builders is more competitive than ever.

Steel frames continue to get stronger in order to support the weight of one of the industry's newest trends, full-length slideouts, and some manufacturers have developed new designs that locate drivetrains lower in the chassis — providing flat floorplans from front to rear and a much lower center of gravity to improve handling. Wheel cut (the turning angle of the front wheels, measured in degrees) also continues to evolve. Where longer motorhomes once backed out of tight spaces, you can now find coaches with a 60-degree wheel cut, providing a turning radius akin to that of a full-size SUV.

What's New for 2008

While Class C chassis makers continue to refine their products, the biggest news for 2008 is being generated by Class A chassis engineers. Ford has added two new Class A chassis to its F-Series lineup, offering 24,000- and 26,000-pound gross vehicle weight ratings (GVWR). Freightliner offers a new 34,600-pound GVWR XCL diesel-pusher chassis

— the third chassis entry in the XC Series and the optional ZF IFS suspension with its 60-degree wheel cut.

Workhorse recently introduced the UFO chassis that carries a diesel-like 26,000-pound GVWR. However, the real newsworthy aspects of this unit can be found in its name, an acronym for Unlimited Floor Option — signifying the chassis' flat floor, front-to-back — as well as Universal Fuel Option. Simply put, the chassis can be ordered with either gas or diesel power — in pusher configuration. Workhorse has also implemented a number of refinements to existing systems, chief among them the chassis cool pack for the W20, W22, W24 and W25.5 units that eliminates traditional coolers for the transmission fluid and engine oil (replaced by a larger and more efficient condenser). Without these coolers impeding airflow, auxiliary cooling fans in front of the radiator are no longer necessary. The system



SPRINTER CHASSIS

uses fewer parts and is claimed to be more reliable. Spartan Chassis has also released a number of refinements for 2008. With more horsepower and

Chassis Weight Formulas

GVW
(gross vehicle weight)

= ACTUAL WEIGHED TOTAL OF: Motorhome + full fuel, fluid tanks (holding and water) and LP-gas + cargo weight + passenger weight.

GVWR
(gross vehicle weight rating)

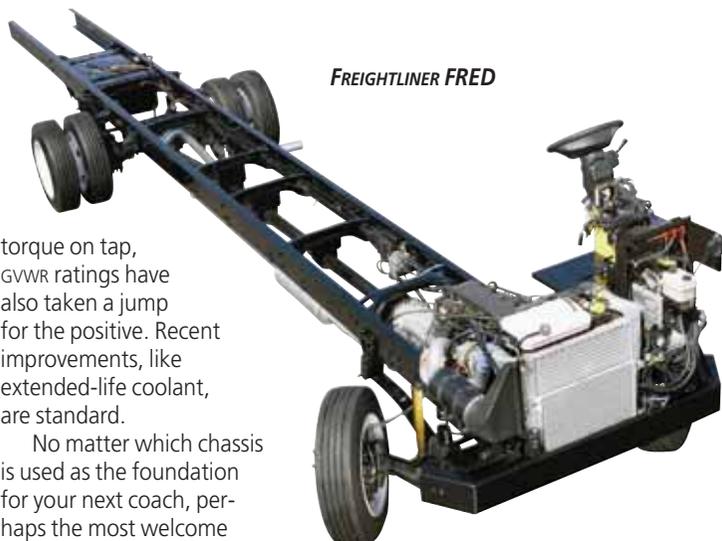
= Chassis manufacturers' maximum allowable weight of the fully loaded motorhome (including passengers, fuel, LP-gas, fluids and cargo).
The GVW must never exceed the GVWR.

GCW
(gross combined weight)

= ACTUAL WEIGHED TOTAL OF: Motorhome + full fuel, fluid tanks, LP-gas + cargo weight + passenger weight + the loaded weight of anything being towed (dolly, trailer or dinghy).

GCWR
(gross combined weight rating)

= Chassis manufacturers' maximum allowable weight of the fully loaded motorhome (including passengers, fuel and fluid tanks, LP-gas and cargo) + the loaded weight of anything being towed (dolly, trailer or dinghy).
The GCW must never exceed the GCWR.



FREIGHTLINER FRED

torque on tap, GVWR ratings have also taken a jump for the positive. Recent improvements, like extended-life coolant, are standard.

No matter which chassis is used as the foundation for your next coach, perhaps the most welcome change across the board is the increase in GVWR and gross combined weight rating (GCWR). The difference between

these two numbers is essentially the towing allowance for the coach, and should not be exceeded. With few exceptions, tow ratings of even the lowest-rated coaches (as seen in the accompanying charts) provide a towing capability of at least 4,000 pounds, covering most popular dinghy choices, with some rated to tow in excess of 10,000 pounds.

It's important to note that the numbers are for gross weight — with supplies and passengers aboard the motorhome and all supplies aboard the dinghy. The towing allowance suggested in the

CLASS C

Model	Wheelbases (inches)	Engine(s)	GVWR (lbs.)	GCWR (lbs.)	Towing Allowance (lbs.)*
Chevrolet					
G3500	139, 159, 177	GM 6.0-L V-8 345 HP/380 LB-FT	9,600-12,300	16,000	8,100
		GM 6.6-L V-8 Diesel 250 HP/460 LB-FT	9,600-12,300	17,000	10,000
Chevrolet/Workhorse					
	159, 169, 183, 191, 221	GM 6.0-L V-8 323 HP/373 LB-FT	14,050	17,500	3,500
Dodge					
Sprinter	144, 170	Mercedes-Benz 3.0-L V-6 Diesel 154 HP/280 LB-FT	8,550-11,030	18,530	7,500
		Mercedes-Benz 3.5 L V-6 254 HP/250 LB-FT			
Ford					
E-350SD	138, 158, 176	Ford 5.4-L V-8 255 HP/350 LB-FT	11,500	20,000	10,000
		Ford 6.8-L V-10 305 HP/420 LB-FT			
		Ford 6.0-L V-8 Diesel 235 HP/440 LB-FT			
E-450SD	158, 176	Ford 6.8-L V-10 305 HP/420 LB-FT	14,050	20,000	10,000
		Ford 6.0-L V-8 Diesel 235 HP/440 LB-FT			

* Depending on actual motorhome weight.

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accompanying data is viable only if the chassis is not overloaded. A trip to the scales will tell the tale; weigh the front and rear axles individually to ensure that one or the other is not overloaded, even if the GVWR is not violated.

In selecting a new motorhome, cargo carrying capacity (ccc), an industry weight designation that is posted in every new coach, is also an important consideration. It informs the owner of the cargo weight that can be added to the coach. For example, if the chassis is overloaded by 1,000 pounds, that amount of weight should be subtracted from the dinghy weight allowance in order to avoid

violating the GCWR. Of course, overloading, whether it be GVWR, gross axle weight rating (GAWR) or GCWR, must be avoided.

Chassis builders vary in their approach to recommending

auxiliary braking for a dinghy, with brakes recommended by most for towed loads exceeding 1,500 pounds. Compression- or exhaust-braking systems are highly recommended for diesel-powered chassis in any dinghy towing situation — especially one in which the owner has opted not to use a dinghy brake actuation system. *

CLASS A

Model	Wheelbases (inches)	Engine(s)	GVWR (lbs.)	GCWR (lbs.)	Towing Allowance (lbs.)*
DynoMax (Country Coach)					
Tribute	239, 263	Caterpillar C9 9.3-L I-6 425 HP/1,350 LB-FT Cummins ISL 8.9-L I-6 425 HP/1,200 LB-FT	37,200	47,200	10,000
Inspire	205, 229, 265, 277, 279	Caterpillar C9 9.3-L I-6 425 HP/1,350 LB-FT Cummins ISL 8.9-L I-6 425 HP/1,200 LB-FT	37,200-45,200	47,200-55,200	10,000
Allure	219, 243, 279, 296	Caterpillar C9 9.3-L I-6 425 HP/1,350 LB-FT Cummins ISL 8.9-L I-6 425 HP/1,200 LB-FT CUMMINS ISM 10.8-L I-6 500 HP/1,550 LB-FT	47,600	57,600-62,600	10,000-15,000
Intrigue	234, 270, 294	Caterpillar C13 12.5-L I-6 525 HP/1,750 LB-FT Cummins ISM 10.8-L I-6 500 HP/1,550 LB-FT	47,600	62,600	15,000
Magna	241, 265, 289	Caterpillar C15 15.2-L I-6 625 HP/1,900 LB-FT Cummins ISX 14.9-L I-6 600 HP/1,850 LB-FT	52,000	67,000	15,000
Affinity	241, 265, 289	Caterpillar C15 15.2-L I-6 625 HP/1,900 LB-FT Cummins ISX 14.9-L I-6 600 HP/1,850 LB-FT	52,000	67,000	15,000

* Depending on actual motorhome weight.

CLASS A

Model	Wheelbases (inches)	Engine(s)	GVWR (lbs.)	GCWR (lbs.)	Towing Allowance (lbs.)*
Rhapsody	292	Caterpillar C15 15.2-L I-6 625 HP/2,150 LB-FT	59,000	79,000	20,000
Ford					
F-Series	158, 178, 190,	Ford 6.8-L V-10	16,000, 18,000,	26,000-30,000	4,000-10,000
Super Duty	208, 228, 242	362 HP/457 LB-FT	20,500, 22,000, 24,000, 26,000		
Foretravel					
Phenix	252, 276, 304	Cummins ISX 15-L I-6 600 HP/1,850 LB-FT	52,000	60,000	18,000
Nimbus	228, 252, 276	Cummins ISL 8.9-L I-6 425 HP/1,200 LB-FT Cummins ISM 11-L I-6 500 HP/1,550 LB-FT	34,800-46,800	51,000-60,000	15,200-16,200
Freightliner					
MC (FRED)	178, 190, 208, 228, 242, 246, 250, 252, 254, 260, 270	Cummins ISB 5.9-L I-6 300 HP/620 LB-FT 340 HP/660 LB-FT	22,000-27,500	26,000-30,000	NA ⁽¹⁾
XCS	190, 193, 200, 203, 208, 228, 242, 252, 262, 266, 276	Cummins ISB 5.9-L I-6 300 HP/620 LB-FT 340 HP/660 LB-FT 325 HP/750 LB-FT 350 HP/750 LB-FT Cummins ISC 8.3-L I-6 360 HP/1,050 LB-FT	26,000-32,400	30,000-42,400	NA ⁽¹⁾
XCR	193, 200, 203, 208, 216, 228, 234, 238, 242, 248, 252, 262, 266, 272, 276, 282 (Tag), 288 (Tag)	Cummins ISB 5.9-L I-6 300 HP/620 LB-FT 340 HP/660 LB-FT 325 HP/750 LB-FT 350 HP/750 LB-FT Cummins ISC 8.3-L I-6 360 HP/1,050 LB-FT Cummins ISL 8.9-L I-6 370 HP/1,200 LB-FT 400 HP/1,200 LB-FT 425 HP/1,200 LB-FT	26,000-45,600	30,000-55,600	NA ⁽¹⁾
XCL	228, 267	Cummins ISB 5.9-L I-6 350 HP/750 LB-FT Cummins ISL 8.9-L I-6 400 HP/1,200 LB-FT 425 HP 1,200 LB-FT	29,500-34,600	39,500-44,600	NA ⁽¹⁾
XCP Powerliner	252, 282, 292, 296	Cummins ISM 10.8-L I-6 500 HP/1,550 LB-FT	44,600-47,780	59,600-62,780	NA ⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ Determined by coach manufacturer.

Liberty (Fleetwood Enterprises)

40J, 40X, 40Z	266-278	Cummins ISL 8.8-L I-6 425 HP/1,200 LB-FT	34,600	49,600	15,000
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* Depending on actual motorhome weight.

CLASS A

Model	Wheelbases (inches)	Engine(s)	GVWR (lbs.)	GCWR (lbs.)	Towing Allowance (lbs.)*
42C, 42F, 42G, 42L, 42R, 42V	302	Cummins ISL 8.8-L I-6 425 HP/1,200 LB-FT Cummins ISM 11.0-L I-6 500 HP/1,550 LB-FT (available on select models only)	44,600	59,600	15,000
45A, 45B, 45D, 45E, 45H	266-304	Cummins ISM 11.0-L I-6 500 HP/1,550 LB-FT Cummins ISX 14.9-L I-6 600 HP/1,850 LB-FT (available on select models only)	44,600-50,600	59,600-65,600	15,000

Peak Custom Chassis (Western RV)

PC-Series	217 (PC-34) 242 (PC-36) 278 (PC-40)	Cummins ISL 8.9-L I-6 425 HP/1,200 LB-FT	33,000	43,000	10,000
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Roadmaster (Monaco Coach Corporation)

RSR	192-216	Cummins ISB-AD 5.9-L I-6 325 HP/600 LB-FT	22,000	26,000	4,000
RR4R	204-252	Caterpillar C7 7.2-L I-6 330 HP/860 LB-FT	27,500	33,000	7,000
RR8R	213-261	Cummins ISC 8.3-L I-6 330 HP/950 LB-FT Cummins ISL 8.9-L I-6 400 HP/1,200 LB-FT Caterpillar C7 7.2-L I-6 350 HP/860 LB-FT	33,000-43,000	43,000-53,000	10,000
RR8	5224-272	Cummins ISL 8.9-L I-6 400 HP/1,200 LB-FT Caterpillar C9 8.8-L I-6 400 HP/1,100 LB-FT	34,600	44,600	10,000
RR10S	270	Caterpillar C9 8.8-L I-6 350/400 HP/1,100 LB-FT Cummins ISL 8.9-L I-6 400 HP/1,200 LB-FT	34,600	44,600	10,000
S-Series	236-286	Cummins ISL 8.9-L I-6 400 HP/1,200 LB-FT Cummins ISM-II 11.0-L I-6 500 HP/1,550 LB-FT Cummins ISX 15.0-L I-6 525 HP/1,850 LB-FT Caterpillar C13 12.5-L I-6 525 HP/1,650 LB-FT	44,600-50,160	54,600-60,160	10,000

Spartan

NVS	Per coach-builder's specs	Cummins ISB 5.9-L I-6 300 HP/620 LB-FT	23,000-25,500	28,000	5,000
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* Depending on actual motorhome weight.

CLASS A

Model	Wheelbases (inches)	Engine(s)	GVWR (lbs.)	GCWR (lbs.)	Towing Allowance (lbs.)*
NVS GT	Per coach-builder's specs	Cummins ISC 8.3-L I-6 330 HP/1,000 LB-FT	24,000-29,500	34,000-39,500	10,000
NVS ME	Per coach-builder's specs	Cummins ISC 8.3-L I-6 330 HP/1,000 LB-FT	24,000-29,500	34,000-39,500	10,000
K2	Per coach-builder's specs	Cummins ISM 11-L I-6 500 HP/1,550 LB-FT	44,600-46,600 (with tag axle)	59,600-61,600 (with tag axle)	15,000
K3	Per coach-builder's specs	Cummins ISX 15-L I-6 600 HP/1,850 LB-FT	50,600-54,000 (with tag axle)	65,600-69,000 (with tag axle)	15,000
Mountain Master	Per coach-builder's specs	Cummins ISC 8.3-L I-6 360 HP/1,200 LB-FT	29,600-34,600	39,600-46,600	10,000-12,000
Mountain Master GT	Per coach-builder's specs	Cummins ISL 8.9-L I-6 425 HP/1,200 LB-FT	31,600-34,600 41,600-44,600 (with tag axle)	46,600-49,600 56,600-59,600 (with tag axle)	15,000
Mountain Master ME	Per coach-builder's specs	Cummins ISL 8.9-L I-6 425 HP/1,200 LB-FT	29,600-34,600 41,600-44,600 (with tag axle)	39,600-49,600 56,600-59,600 (with tag axle)	10,000-15,000

Winnebago

Maxum	267	Cummins ISL 8.9-L I-6 400/425 HP/1,200 LB-FT	32,350-34,320	42,350-44,320	10,000
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Workhorse

W16	158.5, 178, 190, 208, 228	GM 8.1-L V-8 340 HP/455 LB-FT	16,000	22,000	6,000
W18	158.5, 178, 190, 208, 228	GM 8.1-L V-8 340 HP/455 LB-FT	18,000	22,000	4,000
W20	190, 208, 228	GM 8.1-L V-8 340 HP/455 LB-FT	20,700	26,000	5,300
W21	208, 228, 242	GM 8.1-L V-8 340 HP/455 LB-FT	21,200	26,000	4,800
W22	208, 228, 242	GM 8.1-L V-8 340 HP/455 LB-FT	22,000	26,000	4,000
W24	208, 228, 242	GM 8.1-L V-8 340 HP/455 LB-FT	24,000	30,000	6,000
W25.5	208, 228, 242	GM 8.1-L V-8 340 HP/455 LB-FT	25,500	30,000	4,500
UFO	208, 228, 242, 262	GM 8.1-L V-8 340 HP/455 LB-FT	26,000	30,000	4,000
		International MaxxForce 7 350 HP/650 LB-FT			
R28	208, 228, 242, 252, 262, 276	Caterpillar C7 7.2-L I-6 360 HP/925 LB-FT	28,000	40,000	12,000
R30	208, 228, 242, 252, 262, 276	Caterpillar C7 7.2-L I-6 360 HP/925 LB-FT	29,500	41,500	12,000
R32	208, 228, 242, 252, 262, 276	Caterpillar C7 7.2-L I-6 360 HP/925 LB-FT	32,000	44,000	12,000

* Depending on actual motorhome weight.

2008 Dinghy Roundup

From lightweight to luxury and everything in between, this year's guide offers a number of interesting and exciting choices



FORD FOCUS

Choosing the right dinghy vehicle these days is simply a matter of personal choice—no longer are you limited to manual transmissions and front-wheel-drive cars. Today, you can choose from lightweight economy models to luxury cars, all-wheel-drive (AWD) models and even a few hybrids.

As with previous years, we're only listing those vehicles that have been approved by their manufacturers for four-down towing

(along with their specific requirements) and only those that can be towed at a minimum speed of 55 MPH for no less than 200 miles at a time. Bear in mind that because intro dates vary widely these days, and because much of the information from the manufacturer may be preliminary at press time, some of the facts and figures presented are subject to change. In fact, some potentially approved vehicles may not be included here because there isn't

NEW MODELS FOR 2008

Chrysler

Retaining its title as the only pickup in its segment to offer a V-8 engine, the 2008 **Dodge Dakota** ups the ante with a more powerful 4.7-L V-8 engine that not only offers 302 HP (31 percent increase) and 329 LB-FT of torque (13 percent increase), but also better fuel economy and increased refinement. Ordered as a 4WD, the midsize pickup is flat-towable with both the automatic and manual transmissions. The restyled Dakota is offered in two body styles – Extended Cab and Crew Cab – and six trim levels: ST, SXT, SLT, TRX4, Sport and Laramie.



Ford

In some cases, it's a case of "what's old is new again" at Ford. The sole "new" offering is the '08 **Focus** (facing page), which features all new styling and towability when ordered with the manual transmission. Apparently, consumers didn't get the Ford 500, so the company reverted to the trusty Taurus name. Available in front- or all-wheel drive, Taurus is powered by a 263-HP 3.5-L Duratec V-6 engine and a six-speed automatic transmission.



If the **Taurus X** looks familiar, that's because it's based on what used to be called the Ford Freestyle, but that doesn't mean it's the same vehicle. The seven-passenger Taurus X benefits from a new 3.5-L V-6 and six-speed automatic transmission, standard electronic stability control, side air bags and Ford's Safety Canopy curtain air bags for all three rows. One-touch flip-and-fold second-row seating and an available power lift

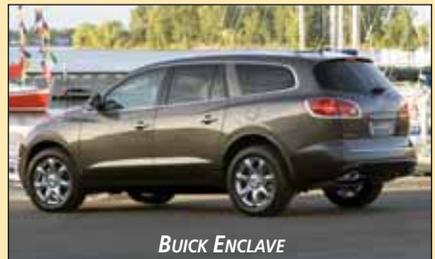
gate conspire to provide enhanced cargo convenience. A new look, inspired by the Ford Edge, features a three-bar chrome grille as well as a restyled hood, front fenders, front/rear fascia and chrome-tipped exhausts. You can also opt for AWD, as well as a number of other features, including DVD-based navigation.

GM

General Motors is definitely the star of this year's dinghy roundup, with many towable models to choose from. Having introduced the **GMC Acadia** and **Saturn Outlook** late in 2006 as 2007 models, this year it follows suit with the luxurious **Buick Enclave**. Like its sister products, the Enclave rides on GM's new Lambda chassis architecture and features smooth-riding four-wheel independent suspension, seating for up to eight and your choice of front- or all-wheel drive.

Chevy's smaller SUV, the **Equinox**, is now available in a Sport model that is also towable. The Sport brings the heat with a 3.6-L, 264-HP V-6 engine mated to a six-speed automatic transmission exclusively. Sport-tuned suspension and unique exterior/interior treatments are also part of the package.

Hummer has introduced an **Alpha** version of its popular **H3** SUV. Looking much like the current version, the Alpha model differs significantly in its underhood muscle with a 5.3-L V-8 pumping out 300 HP. It's connected to a standard four-speed automatic transmission.



enough information on them yet.

That said, it behooves you to do some additional research before buying one of the vehicles listed in this guide. Visit the dealer, and ask to see a copy of the owner's manual. Look in the index under "flat towing" or "recreational towing" to find instructions for towing the vehicle in question. This will not only tell you if the vehicle is, in fact, towable, but what is involved. Some vehicles are easy to tow, while others may

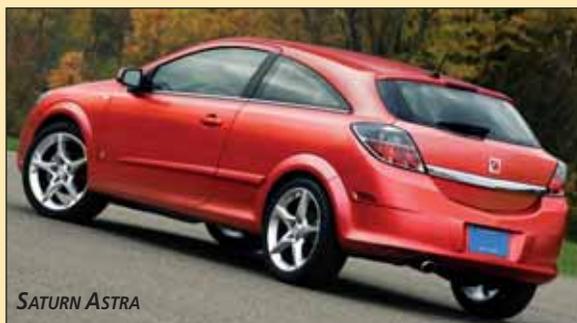
require very specific procedures be followed before/during towing to prevent damage.

If the owner's manual contains no information about flat-towing, or the section recommends against flat-towing, you're not necessarily out of luck; there are kits and products designed to make flat-towing a nontowable vehicle possible, and you've probably seen many "nontowable" cars being towed with success. However, there is the possibility that the act of flat-towing,

NEW MODELS FOR 2008

Pontiac's G6 and its new **Torrent GXP** SUV are also interesting dinghy choices. The sleek G6 is available in coupe or sedan, and this year the division introduced a sporty GXP model featuring a 3.6-L engine with 252 HP.

Saturn returns to dinghy-friendly status in '08 with its big sedan, the **Aura**, and its replacement for the ION, the all-new **Astra**. The Aura offers the choice of four- or six-cylinder power with automatic transmission, and a Green Line hybrid model is also available. The Astra, meanwhile, comes in three- and five-door iterations in two trim levels, and is powered by a 1.8-L Ecotec four-cylinder engine mated to either a manual or automatic transmission, both of which are towable.



SATURN ASTRA

Hyundai

Hundai has a variety of towable vehicles, and this year it adds its luxury SUV, the **Veracruz**, to the list. The Veracruz has three rows for up to seven passengers — perfect for those family visits. The Veracruz is available in three trim levels — GLS, SE and Limited — and comes standard with a 3.8-L engine, six-speed automatic transmission, stability control, anti-lock brakes and front, side and side-curtain air bags. Available equipment includes niceties such as an LG navigation system, leather seating and a rear-seat DVD entertainment system.



HYUNDAI VERACRUZ

Scion



SCION xD

This year, Toyota's youth division, **Scion**, has removed its compact xA, replacing it with the new **xD**. Based on Toyota's Yaris, the xD is a five-door hatchback powered by a fuel-sipping 1.8-L engine that produces a respectable 128 HP. The five-speed manual version is towable, and it can be had for less than \$15,000.

and/or the installation of a towing product on a nonapproved vehicle, can void the vehicle's warranty so check with the provider of the aftermarket kit for specific details.

We are well aware of the fact that there are a lot of vehicles out there that are towed successfully, regardless of what the manufacturer claims. (For example, Honda cars are not officially approved, but are often towed by motorhome owners.) This is usually because the manufacturer hasn't verified that the vehicle can be towed,

and/or because they don't want to deal with "perceived legal ramifications" that may arise as a result of dinghy towing.

The following is a list of the newest towables as well as a brief description of each.

*Happy shopping! **

This guide addresses only 2008 vehicles. Guides for earlier model years are available online at www.motorhomemagazine.com.

Passenger Cars

Model	Base Curb Weight	Speed/Distance Limits	Towable with Manual Trans.	Towable with Auto Trans.	Mileage City/Hwy.	Approx. Retail Price Range
Chevrolet						
Cobalt Sedan/Coupe	2,780	65 MPH/None	Yes	Yes	24/33	\$14,295-\$19,495
HHR	3,155	65 MPH/None	Yes	Yes	22/27	\$16,795-\$17,795
Malibu	3,415	65 MPH/None	NA	Yes	22/30	\$19,995-\$26,995
Chrysler						
PT Cruiser	3,070	None	Yes	No	21/26	\$15,655-\$23,300
Ford/Mercury						
Focus	2,588	None	Yes	No	24/35	\$14,695-\$16,995
Fusion/Milan	3,101	None	Yes	No	20/29	\$17,770-\$25,530
Taurus (FWD/AWD)	3,741	None	NA	Yes ⁽¹⁾	18/28	\$23,995-\$25,845
⁽¹⁾ All-wheel-drive vehicles cannot be towed on a dolly.						
Hyundai						
Accent	2,365	None	Yes	No	27/32	\$10,400-\$15,000
Elantra	2,723	None	Yes	No	25/33	\$13,400-\$17,900
Sonata	3,253	None	Yes	No	21/30	\$17,500-\$24,000
Tiburon	2,898	None	Yes	No	20/28	\$16,700-\$22,100
Infiniti						
G35 Sport Coupe	3,668	60 MPH/500 MI ⁽¹⁾	Yes	No	17/26	\$34,000-\$35,550
G35 Sport Sedan	3,532	60 MPH/500 MI ⁽¹⁾	Yes	No	19/26	\$31,000-\$33,000
⁽¹⁾ Idle engine in NEUTRAL for several minutes every 500 miles.						
Mercedes-Benz						
smart fortwo	1,800	None	NA	Yes	40+	\$11,590-\$16,590
Nissan						
350Z Coupe	3,339	60 MPH/500 MI ⁽¹⁾	Yes	No	20/27	\$27,650-\$36,850
350Z Roadster	3,580	60 MPH/500 MI ⁽¹⁾	Yes	No	19/26	\$35,000-\$41,000
Altima	3,107	60 MPH/500 MI ⁽¹⁾	Yes	No	26/35	\$17,750-\$29,650
Sentra	2,853	60 MPH/500 MI ⁽¹⁾	Yes	No	28/34	\$14,750-\$20,525
Versa	2,722	60 MPH/500 MI ⁽¹⁾	Yes	No	30/34	\$12,550-\$15,550
⁽¹⁾ Idle engine in NEUTRAL for several minutes every 500 miles.						
Pontiac						
G5	2,991	65 MPH/None	Yes	Yes	24/33	\$15,525-\$19,635
G6	3,305	65 MPH/None	No	Yes	22/30	\$18,495-\$27,215
<i>(all except convertible)</i>						
Torrent GXP	3,813	65 MPH/None	NA	Yes	16/24	\$27,995-\$29,595
Vibe	2,700	None	Yes	No	26/33	\$17,345-\$21,000
Saturn						
Aura Green Line Hybrid	3,529	65 MPH/Unlimited	NA	Yes	24/32	\$22,695
Aura XE I-4	3,529	65 MPH/Unlimited	NA	Yes	22/30	\$20,395
Aura XR V-6	3,647	65 MPH/Unlimited	NA	Yes	17/26	\$20,995-\$24,995
Astra 3-dr	2,833	65 MPH/Unlimited	Yes	Yes	NR	\$18,495
Astra 5-dr	2,921	65 MPH/Unlimited	Yes	Yes	NR	\$15,995-\$17,545
NR = No rating.						
Scion						
iC	2,905	None	Yes	No	20/27	\$15,300-\$17,000
xB	3,020	None	Yes	No	22/28	\$15,650
xD	2,625	None	Yes	No	27/33	\$14,550

Passenger Cars

Model	Base Curb Weight	Speed/Distance Limits	Towable with Manual Trans.	Towable with Auto Trans.	Mileage City/Hwy.	Approx. Retail Price Range
Subaru						
Impreza 2.5i Sedan/ WRX/Outback Sport	3,064	None	Yes	No	20/27	\$16,995-\$21,640
Legacy	3,270	None	Yes	No	20/27	\$20,495-\$34,640
Outback	3,350	None	Yes	No	20/26	\$21,995-\$34,840
Suzuki						
SX4 Crossover ⁽¹⁾	2,849	55 MPH/200 MI	Yes	No	23/28	\$15,270
SX4 Sport	2,745	55 MPH/200 MI	Yes	No	21/28	\$14,770
⁽¹⁾ Console-mounted selector must be in the 2WD position.						
Toyota						
Camry	3,285	None	Yes	No	21/31	\$18,570-\$28,640
Camry Solara	3,175	None	Yes	No	21/31	\$19,930-\$22,200
Corolla	2,530	None	Yes	No	28/37	\$14,405-\$15,615
Corolla Matrix	2,679	None	Yes	No	26/33	\$15,510-\$16,990
Yaris	2,293	None	Yes	No	29/36	\$11,300-\$12,975

Trucks/SUVs

Model	Base Curb Weight	Speed/Distance Limits	Towable with Manual Trans.	Towable with Auto Trans.	Mileage City/Hwy.	Approx. Retail Price Range
Buick						
Enclave 2WD CX/CXL	4,780	65 MPH/None	NA	Yes	16/24	\$32,790-\$34,990
Enclave 4WD CX/CXL	4,985	65 MPH/None	NA	Yes	16/22	\$34,790-\$36,990
Chevrolet/GMC						
Acadia 2WD SLE/SLT	4,722	65 MPH/None	NA	Yes	16/24	\$29,845-\$36,255
Acadia 4WD SLE/SLT	4,936	65 MPH/None	NA	Yes	16/22	\$31,845-\$38,255
Avalanche 1500 4WD	5,645	None	NA	Yes	14/19	\$36,610
Colorado/Canyon	3,375	None	Yes	Yes	17/22	\$13,810-\$24,900
Sierra	3,818	65 MPH/None	NA	Yes (Sport only)	16/24	\$27,995-\$29,595
Silverado 1500 4WD Reg Cab	4,687	None	NA	Yes	15/20	\$21,185
Suburban/ Yukon XL 1500 4WD	5,745	None	NA	Yes	14/19	\$40,985-\$41,790
Suburban/ Yukon XL 2500 4WD	6,328	None	NA	Yes	NR	\$42,370-\$43,190
Tahoe/Yukon 4WD	5,537	None	NA	Yes	14/20	\$38,795-\$39,490
TrailBlazer/Envoy 4WD	4,594	None	NA	Yes	14/20	\$25,440-\$35,280
Note: Chevrolet weights shown. GMC weights may be higher, depending on model. NR = No rating.						
Dodge						
Dakota 4WD	4,485	None	Yes	Yes	16/20	\$23,685-\$31,100
Durango 4WD	4,952	None	NA	Yes	13/18	\$29,735-\$37,215
Ram 4WD	5,240	None	Yes	Yes	13/17	\$26,050-\$48,925
Ford/Mazda/Mercury						
Edge (FWD/AWD)	4,078	65 MPH	NA	Yes ⁽¹⁾	16/24	\$25,330-\$32,070
Escape/Mariner Hybrid	3,594	75 MPH/None	NA	Yes	34/30	\$26,265-\$28,705
Escape/Tribute I-4	3,176	70 MPH/None	Yes	No	22/28	\$18,770-\$25,520

Trucks/SUVs

Model	Base Curb Weight	Speed/Distance Limits	Towable with Manual Trans.	Towable with Auto Trans.	Mileage City/Hwy.	Approx. Retail Price Range
Ford/Mazda/Mercury (continued)						
Explorer 4WD V-6	4,606	None	NA	Yes ^(e)	13/19	\$30,770-\$34,540
Explorer 4WD V-8	4,702	None	NA	Yes ^(f)	13/19	\$29,345-\$35,835
Explorer Sport Trac 4WD V-6	4,740	None	NA	Yes ^(e)	13/19	\$30,770-\$34,540
Explorer Sport Trac 4WD V-8	4,830	None	NA	Yes ^(f)	13/19	\$29,345-\$35,835
F-150 4WD ^(g)	5,058	55 MPH/None	NA	Yes ^(b,h)	13/17	\$23,190-\$38,795
F-150 V-6	4,904	None	Yes ^(c)	No	14/20	\$17,345-\$22,895
F-250/F-350	5,970	None	Yes ^(a,b,c)	Yes ^(b,h)	NR	\$22,390-\$39,100
Ranger/B-Series	3,012	55 MPH/None	Yes ^(a,c)	Yes ^{(d)*}	21/26	\$16,170-\$18,165
Taurus X (FWD/AWD)	4,033	65 MPH	NA	Yes ⁽ⁱ⁾	15/24	\$26,615-\$32,185

^(a) Electronic Shift-on-the-Fly rotary control in 2-high position and transmission in NEUTRAL (with 4 × 4 only).

^(b) Manual transfer case shifted into NEUTRAL (with 4WD only).

^(c) Manual transmission in NEUTRAL.

^(d) Only 4WD with dealer-installed Neutral Tow Kit (Part #3L2Z-7H332-AA).

^(e) Only 4WD with dealer-installed Neutral Tow Kit (Part #1L2Z-7H332-AB).

^(f) Only 4WD with dealer-installed Neutral Tow Kit (Part #6L2Z-7H332-A).

^(g) Excludes Harley-Davidson model.

^(h) 4WD with manual transfer case only (not Electronic Shift-on-the-Fly).

⁽ⁱ⁾ All-wheel-drive vehicles cannot be towed on a dolly.

* With Neutral Tow Kit available from Ford dealer (Ranger and B-Series mechanically similar).

NR = No rating.

Honda

CR-V FWD/AWD	3,500	65 MPH/None	Yes	Yes ⁽¹⁾	23/30	\$20,600-\$28,000
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⁽¹⁾ Recirculate transmission fluid every eight towing hours following the procedure in the vehicle owner's manual.

Hummer

H2	6,614	None	NA	Yes	NR	\$55,510
H2 SUT	6,614	None	NA	Yes	NR	\$55,555
H3	4,700	None	Yes	Yes	13/18	\$30,695
H3 Alpha	4,854	None	NA	Yes	13/16	\$38,645

NR = No rating.

Hyundai

Santa Fe 2WD	3,727	Legal/None	Yes	No	18/24	\$21,100-\$28,100
Tucson 2WD	3,240	Legal/None	Yes	No	20/25	\$17,000-\$23,900
Veracruz 2WD	4,266	Legal/None	Yes	No	16/23	\$26,300-\$34,000

Jeep

Commander Sport ⁽¹⁾	4,796	None	NA	Yes	13/18	\$18,225
Grand Cherokee Laredo 4WD ⁽¹⁾	4,640	None	NA	Yes	14/19	\$30,490
Liberty Sport 4WD	4,222	None	Yes	Yes	16/22	\$20,990-\$26,795
Wrangler 4WD	3,760	None	Yes	Yes	15/19	\$19,320-\$30,195

⁽¹⁾ With 4.7-L engine and NV245 transfer case (Quadra-Trac II/Quadra-Drive II option).

Nissan

Frontier 2WD I-4	3,675	60 MPH/500 MI ⁽¹⁾	Yes	No	22/25	\$16,000-\$17,100
Frontier 2WD V-6	4,139	60 MPH/500 MI ⁽¹⁾	Yes	No	17/21	\$18,950-\$25,100
Frontier 4WD V-6	4,307	60 MPH/500 MI ⁽¹⁾	Yes	No	15/20	\$21,650-\$27,500
Xterra 2WD	4,150	60 MPH/500 MI ⁽¹⁾	Yes	No	17/22	\$20,050-\$25,900
Xterra 4WD	4,360	60 MPH/500 MI ⁽¹⁾	Yes	No	17/21	\$22,100-\$27,950

⁽¹⁾ Idle engine in NEUTRAL for several minutes every 500 miles.

Trucks/SUVs

Model	Base Curb Weight	Speed/Distance Limits	Towable with Manual Trans.	Towable with Auto Trans.	Mileage City/Hwy.	Approx. Retail Price Range
Saturn						
VUE Green Line Hybrid	3,789	65 MPH/Unlimited	NA	Yes	25/32	\$24,795
VUE XE AWD	4,325	65 MPH/Unlimited	NA	Yes	15/22	\$24,515
VUE XE FWD	3,825	65 MPH/Unlimited	NA	Yes	19/26	\$21,395
VUE XR AWD	4,035	65 MPH/Unlimited	NA	Yes	16/22	\$26,895
VUE XR FWD	4,076	65 MPH/Unlimited	NA	Yes	16/23	\$24,895
Outlook XE AWD	4,905	65 MPH/Unlimited	NA	Yes	16/22	\$29,990
Outlook XE FWD	4,700	65 MPH/Unlimited	NA	Yes	16/24	\$27,990
Outlook XR AWD	4,955	65 MPH/Unlimited	NA	Yes	16/22	\$32,990
Outlook XR FWD	4,750	65 MPH/Unlimited	NA	Yes	16/24	\$30,290

Subaru

Forester 2.5X	3,090	None	Yes	No	20/27	\$21,195-\$27,895
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Suzuki

Grand Vitara ⁽¹⁾	3,582	55 MPH/None	Yes	Yes	17/21	\$19,349-\$23,749
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⁽¹⁾ Only Grand Vitara models fitted with 4WD are recommended for flat tow. Automatic-transmission models: flat tow with transfer case in NEUTRAL and transmission in PARK. Manual-transmission models: flat tow with transfer case in NEUTRAL and transmission in second gear and the steering wheel lock must be in the unlocked position.

NEW MODELS FOR 2008

Subaru

The **Subaru Impreza** and **WRX** sedan/wagon are all new this year. A more mainstream look, more interior space and improved overall refinement were Subaru's goals. And although larger in almost every dimension, Subaru maintains that there is no increase in weight. The engine and drivetrain are likely unchanged, although the engines have been retuned to improve low-end power. The Impreza and WRX are towable with a manual transmission, and all Subaru models benefit from full-time AWD.



SUBARU IMPREZA

Suzuki



SUZUKI SX4

Suzuki introduced its diminutive AWD **SX4** compact sport crossover last year, and follows up for '08 with the front-wheel-drive SX4 sedan. The SX4 sedan is powered by a 2.0-L four-cylinder engine that is rated at 143 HP, and is towable with the five-speed manual transmission only. Standard features include an AM/FM/MP3/CD audio system with four speakers, four-wheel disc brakes with ABS and six air bags. *

Towing Accessories

Proper dinghy prep, from auxiliary braking systems to lights, is essential for safe travel



ALL-IN-ONE KITS, LIKE THIS COMBO KIT FROM ROADMASTER, INCLUDE EVERYTHING NEEDED FOR A SAFE HOOKUP, FROM WIRING DIODES AND A SOCKET BRACKET TO SAFETY CHAINS AND PADLOCKS.

Adapters are readily available to electronically match the wiring systems of the dinghy and motorhome.

The traditional method of wiring a dinghy vehicle involves the use of steering diodes, which function as one-way gates to the flow of electricity, allowing power from either the motorhome or vehicle to be supplied to the rear bulbs. Because no electricity can flow backward through a diode, it also prevents power from the motorhome from being inadvertently introduced to any other circuits in the dinghy vehicle.

Many late-model vehicles are equipped with on-board diagnostics that continuously check for proper operation of the turn-signal and brakelight bulbs. Unfortunately, the introduction of aftermarket steering diodes into the vehicle's wiring can "fool" this diagnostic function, typically causing it to give false warnings about burned-out bulbs.

For this reason, it is becoming more common to modify each of

The research has been done, the financing arranged, the papers signed ... and that brand-new dinghy vehicle is now sitting in your driveway. You've shopped carefully to pick a model that's certified by its manufacturer for flat-towing, you've checked the vehicle's weight to confirm that it's within your motorhome's safe towing capabilities and you've ordered it with any requisite factory options to make it towable with all wheels rolling.

Now what?

As any seasoned motorhome owner will tell you, there are a lot of steps involved in getting a new vehicle to the point where it can be towed safely. Sadly, no automaker offers a plug-and-play solution that makes its products ready for safe dinghy towing right from the



PLUG RECEPTACLES ADDED TO DINGHY AND MOTORHOME ALLOW EASY HOOKUP OF ELECTRICAL CONNECTOR FOR TAILLIGHTS, TURN SIGNALS AND SUPPLEMENTAL BRAKING SYSTEM.

factory. Thus, it's up to you (and perhaps a knowledgeable towing equipment dealer) to get the job done right.

Dinghy Wiring

One of the most important aspects of dinghy prep involves connecting the wiring between the two vehicles. Tail, brake and turn signals on the back of

the dinghy are required in all 50 states and all Canadian provinces, so this isn't a step that you can overlook. (Neither side clearance nor back-up lights are required, and are rarely used.)

The most common source of dinghy wiring confusion revolves around differences in the way the turn-signal lights are wired on various cars and motorhomes. Some models are wired to supply turn-signal power to the same bulbs that are used for the brakelights (commonly referred to as a 4-wire system), while others use separate amber bulbs for the rear turn signals (a 5-wire system). Note that 4- and 5-wire systems are used on both motorhomes and cars, so any one of four different solutions may be needed for any particular application.



AN RV UNDERSKIRT WILL KEEP TOWING APPARATUS CLEAN — AND IT ALSO HELPS PROTECT THE FRONT OF THE TOWED VEHICLE FROM ROAD DEBRIS.

the vehicle's tail-lamp assemblies to accept a separate bulb. This bulb is then connected directly to the motorhome, eliminating any connections to the vehicle's existing wiring harness. This modification isn't for the squeamish, since it usually involves drilling a large hole in the tail-lamp reflector. Fortunately, special snap-in sockets are available that make this job somewhat easier. Since the new socket takes up considerable space behind the lamp assembly, care must be taken in selecting a location for the new hole that avoids socket interference with any other objects behind it.

Note that most states allow the turn signals to be either red or amber in color, but only permit the brakelights to be red. Thus, on automobiles equipped with amber turn signals, the new socket is typically installed behind the red brake-lamp lens.

In situations where modifications to the dinghy's original wiring either aren't desirable or practical, a set of removable towing lights often provides a workable solution. Most of these products are affixed with magnets,



AS AN ALTERNATIVE, YOU CAN INSTALL AN EXTRA PAIR OF LAMPS ON YOUR DINGHY INDEPENDENT OF ITS ELECTRICAL SYSTEM. ONE-WAY DIODES (LEFT) PREVENT ELECTRICAL FEEDBACK.



THE KARGARD SHIELD, FROM BLUE OX, ATTACHES TO THE TOW BAR AND ADDS YET ANOTHER LEVEL OF DINGHY PROTECTION, GUARDING AGAINST POTENTIAL DAMAGE FROM ROAD DEBRIS.

although some models can be equipped with suction cups or hook-and-loop fasteners (ideal for use on plastic or fiberglass surfaces). A cable is then snaked across the vehicle to the connector at the motorhome hitch receiver.

In some cases, the cable is semipermanently

routed inside or underneath the vehicle, allowing the lights to be quickly removed and stowed inside the trunk. Several companies offer wireless removable towing lights, thereby eliminating the need for this cable altogether.

Although many motorhomes come with a factory-installed 4- or 5-pin connector, there

pin for ground, in order to avoid drawing excessive current through the existing one). Also, some auxiliary braking systems require connections to the motorhome, further increasing the connector-pin count.

Ideally, the industry-standard connection scheme should be observed when installing this new connector, so that it can also be used when towing boats, ATVs, horse trailers, etc.

Unfortunately, since no industrywide standard exists for wire color codes used in automobiles, another hurdle in dinghy wiring involves identifying the proper wires for the stop, turn and tail lamps (as well as a suitable ground connection). If you've had the foresight to purchase a service manual for your particular vehicle, this can sometimes be accomplished by visual inspection of the wire harness. More often than not, it involves connecting a test light to each suspected wire in order to match it with the corresponding bulb. Note that on 4-wire systems, the same wire may be "hot" when either the brake or one of the turn signals is operated.

When splicing diodes or other connections into the vehicle's wiring harness, it is important to use top-quality connectors or splices. In order to prevent any chance of corrosion, all connections should be waterproof. Heat-shrink tubing works very well for this purpose, as does self-vulcanizing plastic tape.

are situations where a different connector is necessary. Some unapproved dinghies equipped with an automatic transmission must also be equipped with an electric lube pump, which requires a connector pin for 12-volt DC power (and ideally, a separate connector



ADDING LARGE RUBBER FLAPS AT THE REAR OF A MOTORHOME WILL MINIMIZE TOWED-VEHICLE DAMAGE FROM DEBRIS, DIRT AND GRIME KICKED UP BY COACH TIRES.



MOLDED OF LIGHTWEIGHT, HIGH-IMPACT POLYETHYLENE, ROADMASTER'S GUARDIAN ROCK SHIELD PROVIDES RVERS WITH ANOTHER OPTION FOR PROTECTING DINGHIES.

Dinghy Braking Systems

Adequate dinghy braking is an important consideration, because motorhome manufacturers tend to push the weight of their products right to the edge of the chassis manufacturer's ratings

— and the addition of up to several tons of extra rolling weight can be enough to put the combined vehicle pair's braking performance into unsafe territory.

Furthermore, some chassis manufacturers specify that towed loads in excess of 1,500 pounds should have independent brakes and safety breakaway systems.

Although a diverse range of dinghy braking systems is available, all aim to perform essentially the same task: to apply the dinghy's brakes in tandem with those on the motorhome.

One approach uses electronic signals generated in the motorhome to activate the dinghy-vehicle brakes. The motorhome components of the system measure deceleration and send a signal to a power unit connected to the dinghy-vehicle brake pedal. As the electronic signal varies with motorhome deceleration, the amount of brake-pedal pull varies in concert for variable braking.

The system includes a vacuum pump in the

dinghy vehicle that maintains full power-brake performance. An actuation lever on the control unit in the motorhome allows the motorhome driver to apply brakes manually, if desired.

Other products include those that utilize a self-contained power pack that temporarily attaches to the dinghy's brake pedal. This package usually contains an air compressor, air cylinder and control circuitry. Most models have a built-in inertia sensor in the dinghy that automatically applies the brakes without any direct signals from the motorhome; in some cases, a radio link or control wire is used to receive braking signals from the motorhome.

Other systems use a removable air cylinder to push the pedal, with motive power for the cylinder usually supplied either by the motorhome's existing air compressor (if air brakes are present) or an add-on electric compressor. A signal from the motorhome's brakelights is often used to control operation of the cylinder, although inertia-sensing control boxes are sometimes used instead. One variation of this scheme uses an electric linear actuator in lieu of an air cylinder, thereby dispensing with the need for a compressed air supply.

Finally, a few systems use the movement in a special hitch drawbar as the motive power to operate the dinghy brakes. As the motorhome decelerates, the dinghy forces the drawbar to move forward, and the dinghy's inertia is used to operate a flexible cable connected to the brake pedal or to move a master brake cylinder that pressurizes the dinghy's brake lines.

Self-contained systems generally have a significant edge in ease of installation, but there's also something to be said for having an unobtrusive, permanently-installed system that never requires setup or disassembly. After all, most new dinghies will need to be fitted with a tow bar and baseplate, anyway, so the installation of a supplemental braking system at the same time does not represent much additional effort. *



ROADMASTER EVEN BRAKE SYSTEM



BLUE OX APOLLO BRAKING SYSTEM

-Towing

Pronunciation [toh-ing]

-Verb (used with object)
1. to pull or haul (a car, barge, trailer, etc.) by a rope, chain, or other device: The car was towed by the motor-home.

-Noun
2. an act or instance of towing.

3. something being towed.

4. something, as a boat or truck, that tows.
5. a rope, chain, metal bar, or other device for towing:
The trailer is secured to the car by a metal tow.

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INNOVATIVE STYLING NOW AVAILABLE IN A **GAS PUSHER.**