

— 2019 GOOD SAM —

GUIDE TO



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FREEDOM AWAITS

A motorhome is the ultimate symbol of RVing freedom. With a motorhome, you can explore the country in comfort, always just a few steps away from a homemade meal and your own bed. But, when visiting popular tourist attractions or navigating narrow campgrounds and congested roadways, you've probably found that convenience comes at a price: limited mobility. That's where towing a vehicle behind a motorhome becomes advantageous. And although vehicle manufacturers have yet to engineer a one-and-done setup directly from the factory, it's never been easier to equip a dinghy and motorhome for road duty. The 2019 Guide to Dinghy Towing provides a selection of informative articles and a listing of new vehicles designed to enhance the motorhome lifestyle.

As highlighted in "The Right Stuff" (page 6), connecting a motorhome and a dinghy vehicle can be a surprisingly smooth operation. Self-aligning tow bars make hooking up a breeze, and some models are even designed to have the cables and wires routed through the hollow arms for an easy, tangle-free installation. And manufacturers continue to offer accessories to help keep it that way. For example, an undershirt, fitted beneath the towing equipment, will safeguard the dinghy and hardware from debris. And for more protection, rock guards are available that quickly attach to the tow bar and shield the dinghy from road debris.

Another (and even more important) device that aids in safe dinghy towing is a supplemental

braking system. Portable systems can be installed in minutes, and permanent installations remain unobtrusive. Dinghy brakes are mandatory in most states and Canadian provinces; besides, when extra weight is added, there must be a way to slow the mass down without overtaxing the brakes on the motorhome.

Today's motorhomes can accommodate a lot of dinghy weight. While many new chassis have tow ratings of at least 4,000 pounds, certain luxury coaches have gross combination weight ratings (gcwr) of 60,000 pounds or more — with up to 25 percent (15,000 pounds) of that available for towing. To find out what's available to slow down a dinghy vehicle, check out "Stopping Power," beginning on page 30.

But you're most likely reading this annual guide to find out if a particular vehicle is approved for dinghy towing. Our 2019 listings begin on page 18 and include vehicles that have specifically been approved by the manufacturer for recreational towing four-wheels-down. The listings include a variety of the newest vehicles — from luxurious to economical. While some vehicles are easy to tow, others require that very specific and lengthy procedures be followed before and during towing to prevent damage. We've included expanded information on the manufacturer guidelines required for flat towing, but you'll still need to check the owner's manual for more detailed procedures.

As motorhomes continue to evolve, life on the road can lead to more freedom than ever. A dinghy vehicle only adds to that feeling. 

**ALWAYS CHECK
THE OWNER'S
MANUAL FOR
MORE DETAILED
PROCEDURES.**

This guide addresses only 2019 vehicles. Guides for earlier model years are available at www.motorhome.com.



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Everything you need to tow like a pro, from the motorhome/dinghy connection to flat-towing alternatives

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Publisher Ann Emerson
Editor-in-Chief Eileen Hubbard
Managing Editor Kristopher Bunker
Technical Editor Chris Dougherty
Contributing Editor Chris Hemer
Art Director Rick Damien
Publisher Emeritus Bob Livingston

Editorial/Business Office
2750 Park View Court, Suite 240
Oxnard, CA 93036
Email info@motorhomemagazine.com

Advertising
VP/National Sales Terry Thompson 847-229-6759

Advertising Representatives

Lou Cicirelli, 954-297-9234, lou.cicirelli@goodsam.com
Scott Oakes, 847-229-6758, scott.oakes@goodsam.com
Sue Seidlitz, 530-268-3005, sue.seidlitz@goodsam.com
Kim Whitaker, 919-412-6325, kim.whitaker@goodsam.com

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THE RIGHT STUFF

Selecting the proper equipment is the key to successful dinghy towing

Owning one of today's larger motorhomes has made towing a dinghy vehicle more of a necessity than ever. Bigger rigs can indeed lead to more creature comforts and amenities, but these larger floorplans are not without their drawbacks. Even motorhomes with a 60-degree wheel cut will encounter some difficulty negotiating narrow roads or smaller towns during sightseeing tours, and that's not even mentioning attempting to park a larger motorhome at a local shopping center.

A dinghy vehicle simplifies such tasks, and eliminates the need to completely break camp when it's time to venture away from the campsite. Additionally, a dinghy can stow gear securely when motorhome storage is filled (within weight limitations), and can provide the added benefit of having an extra set of wheels in the event of an emergency. But there is a trade-off; towing a dinghy will affect the acceleration, fuel economy and braking of any motorhome, to some degree. However, proper selection of a dinghy and towing

equipment will enable you to enjoy the safety and convenience of auxiliary transportation.

Approved for Flat Towing?

The first step in selecting a dinghy vehicle is to make sure it is approved by its manufacturer for flat towing (listings begin on page 18). While many nonapproved passenger cars or light trucks can be used as a dinghy — provided the appropriate towing accessory (such as a transmission lube pump) is used for that specific model as an aftermarket modification, or towing on a dolly or trailer is planned — the listed approved vehicles have been certified for towing four wheels down without affecting their warranties. Owner's manuals contain this information and can usually be found online. Look in the owner's manual index under "Towing — Dinghy Towing," "Towing — Flat Towing," "Recreational Towing" or "Towing Behind a Motorhome."

When selecting a dinghy, note the maximum towing limit of the motorhome and then deter-

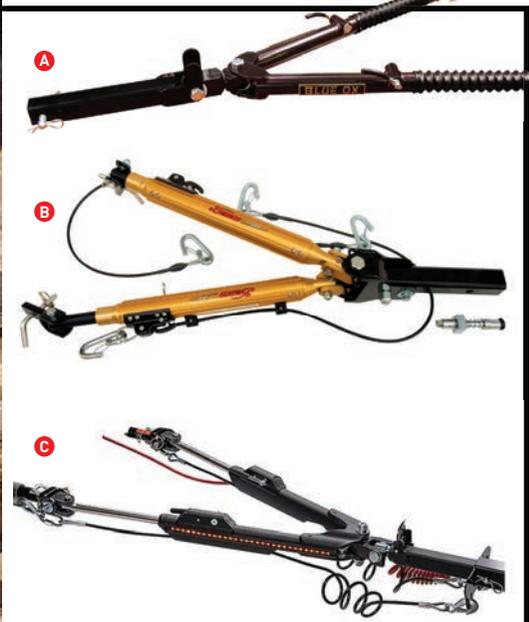


mine which vehicles fall within that specification. Towing limits aren't the only factor to consider, but they help to eliminate many choices based on weight alone. The weight rating of the motorhome's hitch receiver is another concern, although most are adequate, and receivers can often be upgraded. Keep in mind, however, that an upgraded

MANUFACTURERS RESERVE THE RIGHT TO MAKE ENGINEERING CHANGES, SO YOU SHOULD ALWAYS FIRST CONFIRM FLAT-TOWABILITY BY CONSULTING THE VEHICLE'S OWNER'S MANUAL BEFORE PURCHASE.



A drop receiver may be necessary to help keep the tow bar level. ➔



[A] Blue Ox Ascent is made of lightweight aluminum, has non-binding latches and weighs only 31 pounds — but offers a 7,500-pound rating and includes a 3-year warranty.

[B] Dominator aluminum tow bar from Demco has a rating up to 7,500 pounds. Easy trigger release and self-supporting arms provide convenient connection to baseplate.

[C] Roadmaster's Nighthawk is the first tow bar with LED lights embedded into the arms for easier visibility. Rated for 8,000 pounds, it features a nonbinding mechanism that limits effort needed to disconnect, regardless of terrain.

hitch receiver cannot increase the specified weight limit set by the chassis manufacturer.

Most flat-towed dinghies track so well that many motorhome drivers don't even know they are there. Front-wheel-drive (FWD) vehicles with manual transmissions and compact 4WD vehicles 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 they're easier to drive, and the setup for towing is usually just as simple as a manual transmission.

But some vehicles do require special procedures, such as starting the engine every 200 miles to circulate transmission fluid. Note that this cannot be circumvented by overfilling the transmission before towing because the problem isn't caused by lack of sufficient fluid, but rather by a lack of oil circulation. Such practices, although incon-

▶ THE RIGHT STUFF

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

Another vehicle-specific consideration is that towing some dinghies requires the ignition switch to be in a position that allows the steering column to remain unlocked and power to be applied to various electrical circuits. Over the course of a full day of towing, this can lead to significant battery discharge.

While strategies for dealing with this vary by model, most fixes involve temporarily pulling one or more fuses while towing. Another alternative is to connect the offending circuit through an owner-added switch or by installing Roadmaster's FuseMaster switch, allowing these circuits to be made tow-ready quickly and conveniently. A charge line from the motorhome can also often be a viable alternative.



FuseMaster kit eliminates the need to pull a fuse before towing the dinghy vehicle, then reinserting after disconnecting. Simply flipping a switch accomplishes the same task.

2019 GUIDE TO DINGHY TOWING SPONSORS

Produced by the editors of *MotorHome* for the publication's April issue, the *2019 Guide to Dinghy Towing* was developed with support from the following companies:

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⊖ While driving the dinghy, this type of tow bar remains on the motorhome. ⊕ Once the tow bar is pinned in the hitch receiver, ensure the electric connections and safety cables are secure.

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GET CONNECTED

One critical element of safe dinghy towing involves a solid, properly designed and installed mechanical linkage between the motorhome and the towed vehicle. Hitch receivers, tow bars and baseplates must all be in good working order, rated for the weight of the dinghy vehicle and designed for the specific application.

Hitch Receivers

Check the rating of the hitch receiver to ensure that it is suited for the heaviest load you intend to tow. If a receiver is already installed on your motorhome, the weight limits and class should be visible on it.

However, the ride height of a motorhome rarely matches with that of the chosen dinghy, often necessitating the use of a drop receiver to allow the tow bar to ride level. These are available in 2- to 10-inch variations. Receivers should be bolted (not welded) in place, using the receiver manufacturer's hardware kit, and installed per its instructions.

Tow Bars

Tow bars are available in two basic styles: A-frame or self-aligning. A-frame tow bars (offered in solid and folding configurations) are the most economical, and 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 of vehicles. 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.

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 use — and hitching can be a one-person operation. Highly adaptable, self-aligning tow bars fit a wide range of vehicles by attaching to model-specific baseplates: Class III (5,000-pound) or Class IV (10,000-pound) models are available. Contact the tow-bar manufacturers for baseplate applications.

Baseplates

The baseplate is perhaps the most critical component. While tow bars and hitch receivers are intended for mass fitment, dinghy ve-

❖ ROAD RULES

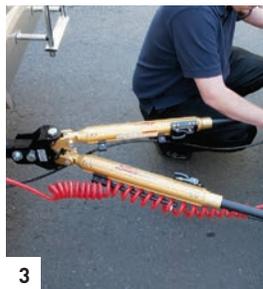
- Observe the speed limit for towing in each state or province.
- Maintain an adequate stopping distance from the vehicle in front of you. A minimum five-second interval is recommended.
- Avoid towing in snowy or icy conditions.
- Pay attention to traffic merging onto the highway, and be prepared to take evasive action whenever necessary.
- 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. And, dollies tend to jackknife quickly. It's better to disconnect the dinghy and drive to a safe place to reconnect.
- Avoid making tight turns, which can exert a lot of pressure on the tow bar.
- Towing in deep sand or gravel may cause the dinghy's front wheels to turn to one side. If this happens, you must manually re-center them before continuing.
- Walk around the motorhome and dinghy to inspect all connections, wiring and safety cables, and check tire pressure (or employ a TPMS) every time you stop.



1



2



3

DINGHY-TOWING CHECKLIST

hicles require the use of a specific baseplate based on brand, model and year, making the proper installation procedure and hardware selection essential.

Installing a baseplate on some vehicles requires the bumper covering (fascia) to be removed temporarily. Some minor drilling may be required and the bumper covering and/or grille may also require trimming.

On some vehicles, the baseplate-installation process can be even more intricate. For example, the air dam may need to be trimmed, or the factory-installed belly pan may require trimming or permanent removal. Such procedures 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.

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 must 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 should not drag when slack.

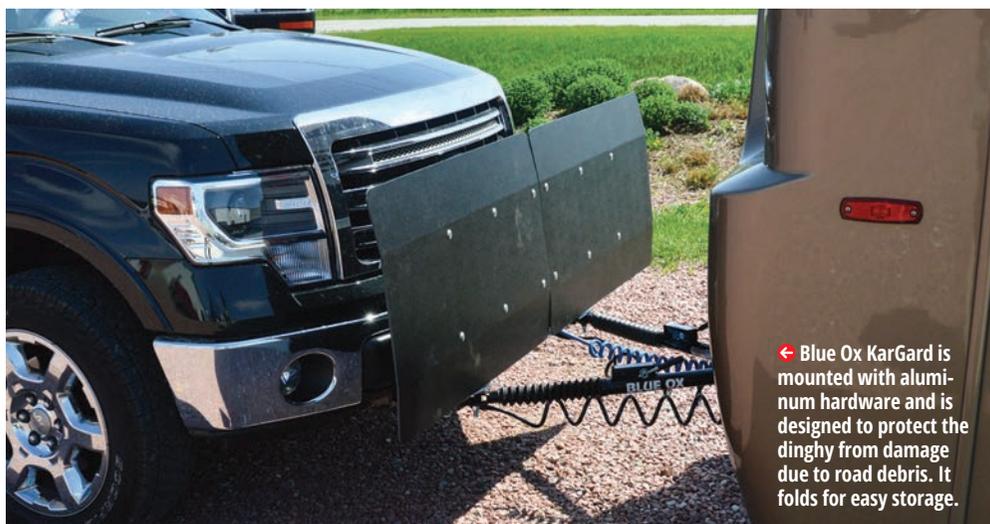
Modern baseplates are secured to the frame of the dinghy vehicle. While some installations are more complicated, the end result is usually a clean appearance.

- ✓ Make sure the equipment is rated for the dinghy's weight, and that the combo doesn't exceed the motorhome's gross combination weight rating (gcwr).
- ✓ Confirm the hitch height is correct.
- ✓ Make sure all hitch bolts, tow-bar and baseplate fasteners are securely tightened.
- ✓ Confirm all hitch and wiring connections are engaged and secure, that all safety chains or cables are attached and that all locking pins are properly installed.
- ✓ Connect the auxiliary brake system and the breakaway device.
- ✓ Check motorhome and dinghy for proper function of taillights, brakelights and turn signals.
- ✓ Check tire pressure on motorhome and dinghy (including the spare tires).
- ✓ Make sure the dinghy is set up for towing as required by the manufacturer, including: steering unlocked; emergency brake off; gear selector in proper position; ignition in proper position; lube-pump switch, driveshaft coupler, 4WD transfer case and hubs (if applicable) in proper positions.
- ✓ Ensure the appropriate fuses are pulled or the battery disconnected, if applicable.



4

[1] Baseplate installation doesn't require welding or specialized tools, but can be rather involved. If you have any reservations, hire a professional. [2] To hook up a telescoping tow bar, the dinghy vehicle only needs to be near the center and midlength of the bar. [3] Connecting tow-bar arms to the baseplate requires the use of pins and clips. Next, secure the safety cables and plug in the electrical umbilical cord. [4] Once the pins are in, the motorhome is driven ahead slowly (or the dinghy is backed up) to lock the arms in place.



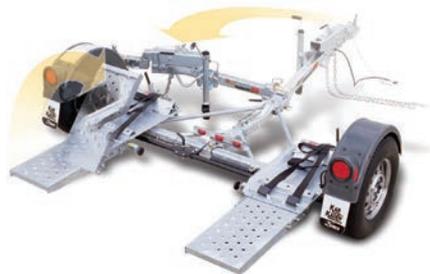
◀ Blue Ox KarGard is mounted with aluminum hardware and is designed to protect the dinghy from damage due to road debris. It folds for easy storage.

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT

If you already own (or choose to purchase) a vehicle that is not approved by the manufacturer to be flat-towable, there are modification kits available. Many passenger vehicles can safely serve as dinghies using retrofit products that are on the market.

For rear-wheel-drive (RWD) and some four-wheel-drive (4WD) applications, couplers from Superior Driveline Drive Shaft Coupling (www.remcodsc.com) enable the driveshaft to be easily disconnected from the transmission or differential using a cable or lever mounted near the driver's seat. Kits start at about \$600 and can be installed in a few hours.

A transmission-lube pump sold by Remco Industries (www.remcotowing.com) can be mounted and plumbed into some automatic



▶ Kar Kaddy SS tow dolly from Demco features a towed vehicle weight rating of 4,800 pounds. It folds to a compact 67 inches long for storage and includes a 3-year warranty.

transmissions to keep fluid circulating while the vehicle is being towed. Keep in mind that modifications to the vehicle may affect the warranty.

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

Trailers track better than dollies, but take up even more space in camp. And the weight of the trailer also cuts into the total weight that can be towed behind a motorhome.



[A] Baseplate kits are designed for specific models, and come complete with mounting hardware. [B] Lube pumps allow towing of some automatic transmission-equipped vehicles that aren't manufacturer-approved for flat towing.



There are other accessories for dinghy towing. Some, like dinghy braking devices (see "Stopping Power," page 30) and dinghy wiring and lighting ("Plug and Play," page 28) should be considered mandatory, while others — like rock guards and underskirts that offer protection for the dinghy vehicle — can be considered much-appreciated conveniences. **M**

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FIRST LOOK

Some old favorites and a few new faces make this year an exciting one for motorhome owners

There's no other way to say it: For the last couple of years, we've been subjected to a dinghy drought. The deliberate disappearance of manual transmissions, combined with the popularity of the continuously variable transmission (CVT) had thinned the herd to worrisome levels. Yet, like hair bands from the '80s, some of our favorite brands are making their triumphant return for 2019 — and new models, each with their own brand of recreational relevance, are entering (or re-entering) the fray.

For those of you who are new to dinghy towing, or RVing in general, perhaps a brief refresher course is in order. Dinghy towing is the practice of towing a vehicle behind a motorhome with all four wheels on the ground, so that it can be used as the primary vehicle once a destination has been reached. Not all vehicles are approved by the manufacturer for dinghy towing, however, as damage to the transmission and/or transfer case can occur. This is the most important consideration when shopping for a new dinghy, as towing a vehicle that isn't officially approved means that the manufacturer can deny warranty repairs if (or when) something goes wrong. That's why it's always important to procure a copy of the owner's manual and confirm towability. Depending on the manufacturer, this information may be found in the index under "towing," "recreational towing," "dinghy towing," "flat towing" and even "emergency towing." Thankfully, most owner manuals are available online — simply enter the make, model and year in your search engine of choice, followed by "owner's manual" and you can usually download it for free.

The owner's manual will also tell you what exactly is involved in preparing the vehicle for dinghy towing — such as disconnecting the negative battery cable, removing certain fuses, etc. How much work you're willing to do is up to you, but for our purposes, if a vehicle isn't approved for dinghy towing by the manufacturer, can't be towed at least 55 mph and/or has a distance limit of less than 200 miles before some maintenance procedure is required (starting/running the engine, etc.), then it doesn't make our list.

Ford

This year's guide includes the 2019 Explorer, but as we were putting the listings to bed, Ford announced an all-new 2020 Explorer. Though it's too early to list pertinent details like base weight and pricing, Ford officials tell us that it will be towable four-down. Redesigned from the ground up, the new Explorer promises lighter and stronger construction, the broadest model lineup ever, and a new 3.0-liter EcoBoost V-6 engine option projected to produce 365 hp and 380 lb-ft of torque using 93-octane gas. For more aggressive off-road adventures, an all-new Terrain Management System with up to seven selectable drive modes (Normal, Trail, Deep Snow/Sand, Slippery, Sport, Tow/Haul and Eco) is also available. In all, Ford reports that the 2020 Explorer comes packed with more than a dozen new standard features for only \$400 more over the previous model. These include a power liftgate, 2.3-liter EcoBoost engine with all-new 10-speed transmission, 8-inch digital touch screen with SYNC 3, FordPass Connect Wi-Fi service for up to 10 devices and more.

The mid-sized Ford Ranger pickup is back for 2019 and is new from the ground up with a high-strength steel frame, a 270-hp 2.3-liter EcoBoost four-cylinder engine and the only 10-speed automatic transmission in the segment. Offered in entry-level XL, mid-level XLT and high-level Lariat



◀ Ford Explorer Platinum

trim levels, the Ranger is also available with the FX4 Off-Road package for those who like out-of-the-way places. FX4 packs hardware like protective skid plates, upgraded tires and off-road suspension, plus technologies like a Terrain Management System and Trail Control to make challenging conditions less challenging. Standard/available technology includes an 8-inch touch screen for available SYNC 3, or a single/dual LCD productivity screen with real-time vehicle, navigation and audio information. Standard safety features are numerous and include Pre-Collision Assist with Automatic Emergency Braking. An available Lane-Keeping System includes lane-departure warning, reverse sensing and class-exclusive Blind Spot Information System with trailer coverage. Adaptive Cruise Control is also available.



General Motors

Chevy's handsome Traverse SUV was completely redesigned last year, but the owner's manual indicated that it wasn't towable in 2WD or 4WD versions, so it didn't make our 2018 dinghy guide. Though the 2019 model offers the same drivetrain choices (standard 3.6-liter V-6 or 2.0-liter turbocharged four cylinder and nine-speed transmission), this year the owner's manual confirms approval of the Traverse for towing in FWD or AWD iterations, and provides clear instructions for the procedure. Though this may seem confusing, it's an issue that occurs from time to time with new models and/or drivetrains, as the engineering team might not have had a chance to test a vehicle for dinghy towing, and therefore does not approve the practice in order to be on the safe side. We should note, however, that this doesn't mean the 2018 model is towable now; again, consider the owner's manual the final word.

That all being said, the Traverse echoes the bold design language of Chevy's full-size SUVs, and is available in L, LS, LT (Cloth and Leather), RS, Premier and luxurious High Country trim levels to suit a wide range of needs and budget. AWD is available on LS, LT and Premier, and standard on the High Country. With seating for up to eight, Traverse offers a split-folding second-

row seat or captain's chairs for added versatility, with the curbside seat capable of tipping up and sliding forward with a child seat in place. Standard features on all models include keyless open and start, tri-zone climate control, MyLink radio system (7-inch on L, LS and LT Cloth; 8-inch on higher trim levels) with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto capability and OnStar 4G LTE Wi-Fi hotspot. Available features include heated leather-trimmed seats, wireless device charging, adaptive cruise control, power lift gate and other niceties.

Honda

Depending on how long you've been perusing our annual dinghy towing guide, you may or may not be familiar with our somewhat unconventional relationship with Honda. For years, Honda would not officially confirm that any of its vehicles were towable, but unofficially suggested that all manual-transmission equipped models were. Without concrete approval in writing, however, we couldn't list any Hondas except for the CR-V (no longer towable), which prompted numerous letters from readers scolding us for not listing a Honda vehicle that they "had been towing for years without any problems," or words to that effect. Last year we ran into some confusion as to whether or not the Fit was manufacturer approved for flat towing: the owner's guide (which is not intended to be a substitute for the owner's manual) stated that the Fit was towable, but the owner's manual (which has since been revised) stated that it was not towable, therefore we left it out of our dinghy guide. This year, however, the Fit joins our list, along with the manual transmission-equipped Accord Sport, and Civic Sport Coupe and Hatchback.

The Fit is a fun, sporty choice available in LX, Sport, EX and EX-L trim levels, although the EX-L is excluded for our purposes because it only comes with a continuously variable transmission. All models are powered by a spunky 130-hp 1.5-liter four cylinder, but our choice would be the Sport model, as it features more aggressive styling with front, side and rear underbody spoilers, 16-inch black alloy wheels and fog lights. Inside, the Fit Sport distinguishes itself with a black interior, black seats with unique cross-hatched





◀ Jeep Gladiator

fabric/orange stitching and leather-wrapped steering wheel/shift knob. Standard features on all Fit models include rearview camera, tailgate spoiler, auto on-off headlights, LED brakelights, Bluetooth HandsFreeLink and a center storage console with armrest.

All-new just last year, Accord models come standard with Honda Sensing, a suite of safety features that includes Collision Mitigation Braking System, Road Departure Mitigation System, Adaptive Cruise Control, Lane Keeping Assist System and Traffic Sign Recognition. The Sport model is the only one equipped with a manual transmission, and is therefore the only one approved for flat towing. It comes with a choice of the 1.5-liter or a 252-hp 2.0-liter turbocharged engine, and standard features that include dual-zone climate control, push-button start, multi-angle rearview camera, auto high-beam headlights and Bluetooth Hands-FreeLink audio. The Sport model offers additional features such as Apple CarPlay/Android Auto integration, 12-way power driver's seat, 19-inch alloy wheels, LED fog lights, leather-wrapped steering wheel, 180-watt audio system with eight speakers, rear spoiler and chrome exhaust tips.

Refreshed for the 2019 model year, the Honda Civic coupe features subtle styling updates as well as a standard 158-hp 2.0-liter four-cylinder engine, six-speed manual transmission and the aforementioned Honda Sensing suite. The base LX model includes a 160-watt audio system with four speakers, auto high-beam headlights and 5-inch color LCD screen, while the new Sport model adds Apple CarPlay/Android Auto integration, leather-wrapped steering wheel and exterior details like fog lights, 18-inch wheels, decklid spoiler, chrome exhaust tip and other details. For maximum driving fun, go with the Si model, which includes a 205-hp 1.5-liter turbocharged and intercooled four cylinder, six-speed manual transmission, limited slip differential, 450-watt audio system,

one-touch moonroof, rear wing spoiler and other model-specific features.

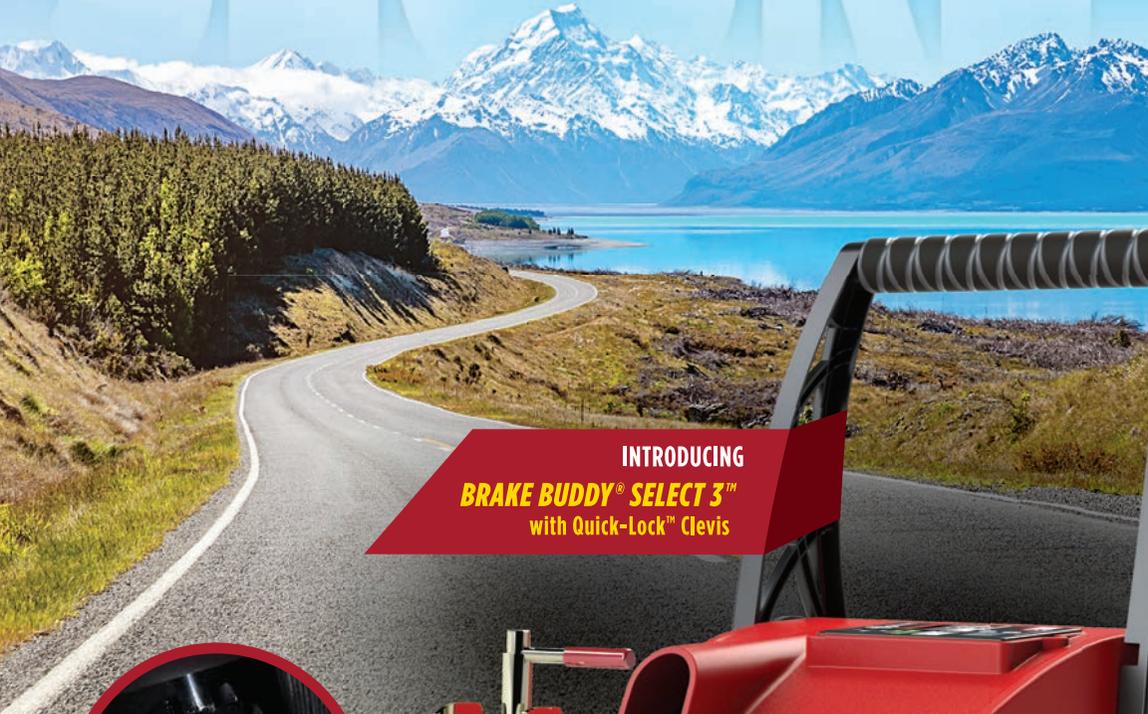
Jeep

A perennial favorite among RVers, the Jeep Wrangler has been towable with a manual or automatic transmission for as long as we can recall. So, we were pretty pumped when we learned of an all-new pickup version of the Wrangler called the Gladiator. Due the second quarter of this year as a 2020 model, Jeep officials have confirmed that the Gladiator will be towable with either a manual or automatic transmission, using the same procedures as the Wrangler.

As you might expect, Jeep pulled out all the stops to make sure the Gladiator was the most off-road capable mid-size truck ever, but also to give it features that make it uniquely Jeep. With that in mind, the Gladiator boasts up to 7,650 pounds of towing capacity and up to 1,600 pounds of payload, and a choice of either a standard 285-hp 3.6-liter Pentastar V-6 or a 3.0-liter EcoDiesel engine (late availability) that churns out 260 hp along with 442 lb-ft of torque. Legendary off-road capability is made possible by Command-Trac or Rock-Trac 4x4 systems, third generation Dana 44 axles, Tru-Lock electronic front and rear axle lockers, Trac Lok limited-slip differential, sway bar disconnect and 33-inch off-road tires. Available in Sport, Sport S, Overland and Rubicon trim levels, Gladiator will feature a fold-down windshield and dozens of different door, top and windshield combinations, according to Jeep.

Inside, Gladiator offers a fourth-generation Uconnect system with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto capability, and a choice of 7.0- or 8.4-inch touch screens. Cloth or leather contoured seats offer bolster and lumbar adjustability, while the rear seats can be folded flat to access storage and provide a load floor for larger items. There's much more to talk about, but you get the idea. The Gladiator is in a class of its own.

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MAKE/ MODEL	BASE CURB WEIGHT LBS.	SPEED/ DISTANCE LIMITS	TOWABLE W/ MANUAL TRANS.	TOWABLE W/ AUTO TRANS.	MILEAGE CITY/ HWY.	APPROX. RETAIL PRICE RANGE	SPECIAL PROCEDURES (SEE OWNER'S MANUAL FOR DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS)
BUICK							
Envision FWD/AWD	3,755	None	N/A	Yes	22/29-21/27	\$36,995-\$45,955	Prevent battery from draining by removing fuses 29 and 32 (BCM) from instrument panel fuse block.
CADILLAC							
Escalade 4WD (all)	5,856	None	N/A	Yes	14/21	\$79,490-\$98,590	Only flat tow 4WD vehicles with 2-speed transfer case with an N position and 4WD Low setting. Apply parking brake, start engine. For Electric Parking Brakes (EPB), the EPB can't be applied; chock tires. Shift transfer case to N. Ensure vehicle is in N by shifting to R, then to D. With transmission in D, turn engine off. Disconnect negative cable at battery; secure nut and bolt. Cover negative battery post with non-conductive material. Shift transmission to P. Move steering wheel to ensure steering column is unlocked. With foot on brake pedal, release parking brake. If equipped with Keyless Access, keep RKE transmitter outside of vehicle, manually lock doors. Access vehicle as if RKE transmitter battery is dead and use key in door lock. See owner's manual for disconnecting dinghy.
CHEVROLET							
Colorado 4WD	4,476	None	No	Yes	17/24	\$32,795-\$43,995	Only flat tow 4WD vehicles with an N and 4WD Low setting. Apply parking brake, start engine. Shift transfer case to N. Ensure vehicle is in N by shifting to R, then to D. With engine off, leave key in ACC to prevent steering column from locking. Disconnect negative cable at battery; secure nut and bolt. Cover negative battery post with non-conductive material. Move steering wheel to ensure steering column is unlocked. With foot on brake pedal, release parking brake. See owner's manual for disconnecting dinghy.
Equinox FWD (1.5L and 2.0L gas, and 1.6L diesel engines) and AWD (2.0L gas and 1.6L diesel engines)	3,274/ 3,682	65 mph/None	N/A	Yes	26/32-28/38	\$27,095-\$36,295	Start vehicle. If AWD, engage AWD system. Confirm it's on. Shift transmission to N, put into Service Mode by pressing ENGINE START/STOP once without applying brake pedal. Chime will ring continuously for 30 minutes. Leave transmission in N. Turn off accessories not needed. Battery must be charged while towing. Run vehicle at the beginning of each day and at each fuel stop for about 5 minutes. See owner's manual for disconnecting dinghy.
Malibu Premier with 2.0L engine	3,223	65 mph/None	N/A	Yes	22/32	\$32,695	Only models with a 2.0L engine are flat towable. Start vehicle. Shift transmission to N, turn vehicle off, leave transmission in N. Disconnect negative cable at battery. Run vehicle at the beginning of each day and at each fuel stop for about 5 minutes.

MAKE/ MODEL	BASE CURB WEIGHT LBS.	SPEED/ DISTANCE LIMITS	TOWABLE W/ MANUAL TRANS.	TOWABLE W/ AUTO TRANS.	MILEAGE CITY/ HWY.	APPROX. RETAIL PRICE RANGE	SPECIAL PROCEDURES (SEE OWNER'S MANUAL FOR DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS)
Silverado 1500 4WD	4,686	None	N/A	Yes	16/22	\$40,995-\$58,095	Only flat tow 4WD vehicles with 2-speed transfer case with an N position and 4WD Low setting. Apply parking brake, start engine. Shift transfer case to N. Ensure vehicle is in N by shifting to R, then to D. Turn engine off. Disconnect negative cable at battery; secure nut and bolt. Cover negative battery post with non-conductive material. Shift transmission to P. Move steering wheel to ensure steering column is unlocked. With foot on brake pedal, release parking brake. Keep key in ACC to prevent steering column from locking. See owner's manual for disconnecting dinghy.
Silverado 2500 HD 4WD	6,065	None	N/A	Yes	N/A	\$41,795-\$60,495	Only flat tow 4WD vehicles with 2-speed transfer case with an N position and 4WD Low setting. Apply parking brake, start engine. Shift transfer case to N. Ensure vehicle is in N by shifting to R, then to D. Turn engine off. Disconnect negative cable at battery; secure nut and bolt. Cover negative battery post with non-conductive material. Shift transmission to P. Move steering wheel to ensure steering column is unlocked. With foot on brake pedal, release parking brake. Keep key in ACC to prevent steering column from locking. See owner's manual for disconnecting dinghy.
Silverado 3500 HD 4WD	6,423	None	N/A	Yes	N/A	\$45,395-\$61,595	Only flat tow 4WD vehicles with 2-speed transfer case with an N position and 4WD Low setting. Apply parking brake, start engine. Shift transfer case to N. Ensure vehicle is in N by shifting to R, then to D. Turn engine off. Disconnect negative cable at battery; secure nut and bolt. Cover negative battery post with non-conductive material. Shift transmission to P. Move steering wheel to ensure steering column is unlocked. With foot on brake, release parking brake. Keep key in ACC to prevent steering column from locking. See owner's manual for disconnecting dinghy.
Sonic	2,794	65 mph/None	Yes	Yes	28/37	\$16,170-\$22,195	Run engine at the beginning of each day and at each fuel stop for about 5 minutes. Shift an auto transmission to P or a manual transmission into 1 (First) gear, turn ignition off. Set parking brake. To prevent battery from draining, remove DLIS fuse from instrument panel fuse block. On Keyless Access vehicles, to prevent battery draining, remove BCM1 and BCM2 fuses from instrument panel fuse block, and fuse 7 from engine compartment fuse block. Turn ignition to ACC. Shift transmission to N, release parking brake. Reinstall fuses once destination has been reached.
Spark	2,246	70 mph/None	Yes	No	29/38	\$14,095-\$17,495	Apply parking brake. Shift into N. Disconnect negative cable at battery and cover negative battery post with non-conductive material. Release parking brake. See owner's manual for disconnecting dinghy.

MAKE/ MODEL	BASE CURB WEIGHT LBS.	SPEED/ DISTANCE LIMITS	TOWABLE W/ MANUAL TRANS.	TOWABLE W/ AUTO TRANS.	MILEAGE CITY/ HWY.	APPROX. RETAIL PRICE RANGE	SPECIAL PROCEDURES (SEE OWNER'S MANUAL FOR DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS)
Suburban 4WD	5,808	None	N/A	Yes	14/21	\$55,095-\$69,795	Only flat tow 4WD vehicles with 2-speed transfer case with N position and 4WD Low setting. Apply parking brake, start engine. Shift transfer case to N. Ensure vehicle is in N by shifting to R, then D. With transmission in D, turn ignition to ACC. If equipped with Keyless Access, turn engine off. Disconnect negative cable at battery; secure nut and bolt. Cover negative battery post with non-conductive material. Shift transmission to P. Move steering wheel to ensure steering column is unlocked. Release parking brake. Keep ignition key in ACC to prevent steering column from locking. If equipped with Keyless Access, keep RKE transmitter outside of vehicle; manually lock doors. Access vehicle as if RKE transmitter battery is dead, use key in door lock. See owner's manual for disconnecting dinghy.
Tahoe 4WD	5,602	None	N/A	Yes	15/21	\$52,295-\$71,020	Only flat tow 4WD vehicles with 2-speed transfer case with N position and 4WD Low setting. Apply parking brake, start engine. Shift transfer case to N. Ensure vehicle is in N by shifting to R, then to D. With transmission in D, turn ignition to ACC. If equipped with Keyless Access, turn engine off. Disconnect negative cable at battery; secure nut and bolt. Cover negative battery post with non-conductive material. Shift transmission to P. Move steering wheel to ensure steering column is unlocked. Release parking brake. Keep ignition key in ACC to prevent steering column from locking. If equipped with Keyless Access, keep RKE transmitter outside of vehicle, manually lock doors. Access vehicle as if RKE transmitter battery is dead, use key in door lock. See owner's manual for disconnecting dinghy.
Traverse	4,362	65 mph/None	N/A	Yes	18/27	\$31,125-\$54,395	Run engine at the beginning of each day and at each fuel stop for about 5 minutes. Shift transmission to P; turn ignition off. Set parking brake. Put ignition in ACC. Shift transmission to N. To prevent battery from draining, remove fuses F3, the DC DC transformer 1 fuse and F59, the Engine Control Module (ECM) battery fuse, from engine compartment fuse block. Release parking brake. Reinstall fuses once destination has been reached.
DODGE							
Durango R/T AWD	4,814	None	N/A	Yes	18/25	\$32,595-\$62,995	Only AWD models with 2-speed transfer case are flat towable. Transmission must be in P; transfer case must be in N (see owner's manual for detailed instructions).
FIAT							
500	2,366	65 mph/None	Yes	No	31/38	\$16,995-\$22,995	Transmission must be in N.
FORD							
Edge ST 2.7-L	N/A	65 mph/None	N/A	Yes	19/26	\$42,355	Only tow vehicle in forward direction. See Manual Park Release procedure.
Expedition/ Expedition MAX 4WD	5,623/ 5,794	None	N/A	Yes	17/22-16/21	\$55,685-\$80,495	Only flat tow 4X4 LOW-equipped 4WD vehicles by placing transfer case in N and engaging four-wheel-down towing feature. See owner's manual.

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MAKE/ MODEL	BASE CURB WEIGHT LBS.	SPEED/ DISTANCE LIMITS	TOWABLE W/ MANUAL TRANS.	TOWABLE W/ AUTO TRANS.	MILEAGE CITY/ HWY.	APPROX. RETAIL PRICE RANGE	SPECIAL PROCEDURES (SEE OWNER'S MANUAL FOR DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS)
Explorer 3.5L/3.5L EcoBoost (2.3-L is not towable)	4,443	65 mph/None	N/A	Yes	17/24-16/22	\$32,365-\$54,165	If vehicle has a steering wheel lock, ensure ignition is in ACC or ON position. Release parking brake. For vehicles with keyless start: press brake pedal, then press keyless start button. Press brake pedal and shift into N. Switch off by pressing keyless start button once. Disconnect negative (black) cable from battery. Use key to lock and unlock doors when battery cable is disconnected. Start engine within 15 minutes of reconnecting battery cable. For vehicles with ignition key: press brake pedal, then turn ignition key until vehicle starts. Press brake pedal and shift into N. Switch off vehicle by turning ignition key past ACC position: the key position is between ACC and OFF positions. Disconnect negative cable from battery. Start engine within 15 minutes of reconnecting battery cable. For all models: start engine and allow to run 5 minutes at the beginning of each day and every 6 hours thereafter. With engine running and foot on brake, shift into D, then R, before shifting back into N.
F-150 4WD	4,343	None	N/A	Yes	17/22	\$33,045-\$60,140	Only flat tow a 4WD vehicle by placing transfer case in N and engaging four-wheel-down towing feature. Don't disconnect battery during flat towing. It prevents transfer case from shifting properly and may cause vehicle to roll, even if transmission is in P. If vehicle has a steering wheel lock, ensure ignition is in ACC or ON position when being towed. See owner's manual for detailed instructions. For instructions on flat towing an F-150 Raptor, refer to the Raptor supplement guide.
F-250/F-350/ F-450/Super Duty 4WD	6,106	None	N/A	Yes	N/A	\$36,940-\$86,505	Place transfer case and transmission in N position and engage four-wheel-down towing feature. Don't disconnect battery during flat towing. It prevents transfer case from shifting properly and may cause vehicle to roll, even if transmission is in P. If vehicle has a steering wheel lock, ensure ignition is in ACC or ON position when being towed. See owner's manual for detailed instructions.
Fiesta (all except ST)	2,571	70 mph/None	Yes	Yes	27/35	\$14,260-\$15,490	For manual transmission: Release parking brake. Place vehicle in N. For automatic transmission with ignition switch: Release parking brake, switch ignition to ON (II) position. Press brake pedal, move gearshift to N position. Wait for message indicating transmission is ready, then switch ignition off, release brake pedal. Disconnect negative (black) cable from battery. Anti-theft system is disabled until battery cable is reconnected. Start engine within 15 minutes of reconnecting battery cable. For automatic transmission with

MAKE/ MODEL	BASE CURB WEIGHT LBS.	SPEED/ DISTANCE LIMITS	TOWABLE W/ MANUAL TRANS.	TOWABLE W/ AUTO TRANS.	MILEAGE CITY/ HWY.	APPROX. RETAIL PRICE RANGE	SPECIAL PROCEDURES (SEE OWNER'S MANUAL FOR DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS)
							keyless starting: Release parking brake, switch ignition on by pressing keyless start button, but don't apply brake pedal. Press brake pedal, then move gearshift to N. Release brake pedal. Wait for message indicating transmission is ready, then switch ignition off by pressing keyless start button. Disconnect negative (black) cable from battery. Anti-theft system is disabled until battery cable is reconnected. Start engine within 15 minutes of reconnecting battery cable.
Flex	4,439	65 mph/None	N/A	Yes	16/23	\$30,575-\$39,235	For vehicles with ignition key: Press brake pedal and turn ignition key until vehicle starts. Press brake pedal, shift into N. Turn vehicle off by turning ignition key past ACC position. Disconnect negative (black) cable from battery. Anti-theft system is disabled until battery cable is reconnected. Start engine within 15 minutes of reconnecting battery cable. For vehicles with keyless start: Press brake pedal, then press keyless start button until vehicle starts. Press brake pedal and shift into N. Turn vehicle off by pressing keyless start button once. Disconnect negative battery cable. Use door key to lock/unlock doors when battery cable is disconnected. After towing, start engine within 15 minutes of reconnecting battery cable. Start engine and allow to run 5 minutes at the beginning of each day and every 6 hours thereafter. With engine running and foot on brake, shift into D, then into R before shifting back into N.
Fusion V-6 Sport 2.7L EcoBoost	3,472	65 mph/None	N/A	Yes	17/26	\$40,015	Only V-6 Sport model with 2.7L EcoBoost engine is flat towable. Release parking brake. Place in Stay-in-Neutral mode. Start engine and allow it to run 5 minutes at the beginning of each day and every 6 hours thereafter. With engine running and foot on the brake, shift into D, then into R before shifting back into N. Before continuing to tow, re-enable Stay-in-Neutral mode.
Fusion Hybrid	3,668	70 mph/None	N/A	Yes	43/41	\$27,555-\$34,485	Start engine and allow it to run 1 minute at the beginning of each day and every 6 hours thereafter.
Fusion Hybrid Energi	3,994	70 mph/None	N/A	Yes	104/91 (mpge)	\$34,595	Start engine and allow it to run 1 minute at the beginning of each day and every 6 hours thereafter.
Ranger 4WD	4,354	None	N/A	Yes	21/26	\$28,460-\$36,210	Only 4WD models are flat towable. Place transfer case and transmission in N position and engage four-wheel-down towing feature. Don't disconnect battery during towing. It prevents the transfer case from shifting properly and may cause vehicle to roll, even if transmission is in P. See owner's manual for detailed instructions.
Taurus 3.5L/3.5L EcoBoost	3,917	65 mph/None	N/A	Yes	16/24	\$42,975	Release parking brake, shift into N. Run engine 5 minutes at the beginning of each day and every 6 hours thereafter. With engine running and foot on brake, shift into D, then into R before shifting back into N.

MAKE/ MODEL	BASE CURB WEIGHT LBS.	SPEED/ DISTANCE LIMITS	TOWABLE W/ MANUAL TRANS.	TOWABLE W/ AUTO TRANS.	MILEAGE CITY/ HWY.	APPROX. RETAIL PRICE RANGE	SPECIAL PROCEDURES (SEE OWNER'S MANUAL FOR DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS)
GMC							
Acadia/Acadia Denali (3.6L V-6)	3,956	65 mph/None	N/A	Yes	18/25	\$43,095-\$46,695	Run engine at the beginning of each day and at each fuel stop for 5 minutes. Remove shift lever boot. Use small tool to press and hold manual release button. Put vehicle in N. Be sure transmission fluid is at proper level before towing. See owner's manual.
Canyon/Canyon Denali 4WD	3,956	None	N/A	Yes	17/24	\$32,195-\$45,295	Only flat tow 4WD vehicles with an N and a 4WD Low setting. Apply parking brake, start engine. Shift transfer case to N. Check vehicle is in N by shifting transmission to R, then to D. Shift transmission into D. With engine off, leave key in ACC to prevent steering column from locking. Disconnect negative cable at battery; secure nut and bolt. Cover negative battery post with nonconductive material. Move steering wheel to ensure steering column is unlocked. With foot on brake pedal, release parking brake. Keep ignition key in ACC to prevent steering column from locking. See owner's manual for disconnecting dinghy.
Sierra Limited 1500 and Sierra/ Sierra Denali 2500, 3500 4WD	4,738	None	N/A	Yes	15/21	\$38,295-\$61,990	Only flat tow 4WD vehicles with an N and a 4WD Low setting. Apply parking brake, start engine. Shift transfer case to N. Check vehicle is in N by shifting transmission to R, then to D. Shift transmission into D. Turn engine off. Disconnect negative cable at battery; secure nut and bolt. Cover negative battery post with nonconductive material. Shift transmission to P. Move steering wheel to ensure steering column is unlocked. With foot on brake pedal, release parking brake. Keep ignition key in ACC to prevent steering column from locking. See owner's manual for disconnecting dinghy.
Yukon/Yukon XL/ Denali 4WD	5,626	None	N/A	Yes	15/21	\$53,895-\$73,795	Only flat tow 4WD vehicles with an N and a 4WD Low setting. Apply parking brake, start engine. Shift transfer case to N. Check vehicle is in N by shifting transmission to R, then to D. Shift transmission into D. Turn engine off. Disconnect negative cable at battery; secure nut and bolt. Cover negative battery post with nonconductive material. Shift transmission to P. Move steering wheel to ensure steering column is unlocked. With foot on brake pedal, release parking brake. Keep ignition key in ACC to prevent steering column from locking. If equipped with Keyless Access, keep RKE transmitter outside vehicle and manually lock doors. Access vehicle as if RKE transmitter battery is dead by using key in door lock. See owner's manual for disconnecting dinghy.
HONDA							
Accord Sport	3,155	65 mph/None	Yes	No	26/35	\$26,180-\$30,710	Shift into N, release parking brake. Set power mode to ACC. Ensure steering wheel doesn't lock. Turn off all electric devices. Don't use any accessory power sockets. This can prevent the battery from running down. If towing more than 8 hours per day, see owner's manual for specific instructions.



Towed Vehicle Baseplates

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Baseplate Tabs In



Baseplate Tabs Out

Removable Tabs on Most Models



To install tab:
Insert and
twist to lock.



To remove tab:
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and remove.

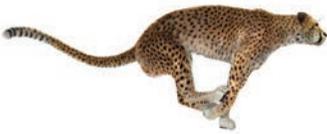


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MAKE/ MODEL	BASE CURB WEIGHT LBS.	SPEED/ DISTANCE LIMITS	TOWABLE W/ MANUAL TRANS.	TOWABLE W/ AUTO TRANS.	MILEAGE CITY/ HWY.	APPROX. RETAIL PRICE RANGE	SPECIAL PROCEDURES (SEE OWNER'S MANUAL FOR DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS)
Civic Coupe and Hatchback Sport	2,762	None	Yes	No	25/36	\$19,450-\$21,150	Shift into N, release parking brake. Set power mode to ACC. Make sure steering wheel doesn't lock. Turn off all electric devices. Don't use any accessory power sockets. This can prevent the battery from running down.
Fit LX, Sport and EX	2,522	65 mph/None	Yes	No	29/36	\$16,190-\$18,160	Shift into N, release parking brake. Set power mode to ACC. Make sure steering wheel doesn't lock. Turn off all electric devices. Don't use any accessory power sockets. This can prevent the battery from running down. If towing more than 8 hours per day, see owner's manual for specific instructions.
JEEP							
Cherokee 4WD	3,875	None	N/A	Yes	21/29	\$26,740-\$36,890	Only 4WD models with 2-speed Power Transfer Unit can be towed. Power Transfer Unit must be in N and transmission must be in P for towing. Shifts in and out of N can take place with selector switch in any mode position. See owner's manual for detailed instructions.
Gladiator	4,650	None	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A	Automatic transmission in P. Manual transmission in gear (not N). Transfer case in N. See owner's manual for detailed instructions.
Grand Cherokee 4WD	4,625	None	N/A	Yes	18/25	\$33,995-\$55,535	Only 4WD models equipped with Quadra-Trac II or Quadra-Drive II are towable. Transfer case must be in N and transmission must be in P for towing. See owner's manual for detailed instructions.
Wrangler	4,010	None	Yes	Yes	23/25	\$28,045-\$52,795	Automatic transmission in P. Manual transmission in gear (not N). Transfer case in N. See owner's manual for detailed instructions.
LINCOLN							
MKT 3.5L or 3.7L	4,702	65 mph/None	N/A	Yes	15/21	\$49,500-\$52,500	Release parking brake, shift into N. Run engine 5 minutes at the beginning of each day and every 6 hours thereafter. With engine on and foot on brake, shift into D, then into R before shifting back to N. Start vehicle by pressing brake pedal, then pressing keyless start button. Press brake pedal, shift into N. Switch vehicle off by pressing keyless start button once. Disconnect negative (black) cable from battery. Use key to lock/unlock doors when battery cable is disconnected. Anti-theft system doesn't work until battery cable is reconnected. Start engine within 15 minutes of reconnecting battery cable.
MKZ Reserve II Twin-Turbocharged 3.0L	4,023	65 mph/None	N/A	Yes	18/27	\$48,240-\$51,240	Only models with 3.0L engine are towable. Release parking brake. Place in Stay-in-Neutral mode. Run engine a few minutes at the beginning of each day, and every 6 hours or fewer. With engine running and foot on brake, shift into D, then into R before shifting back to N. Before continuing to tow, re-enable Stay-in-Neutral mode. If vehicle has steering wheel lock ensure ignition is in ACC or ON position.

MAKE/ MODEL	BASE CURB WEIGHT LBS.	SPEED/ DISTANCE LIMITS	TOWABLE W/ MANUAL TRANS.	TOWABLE W/ AUTO TRANS.	MILEAGE CITY/ HWY.	APPROX. RETAIL PRICE RANGE	SPECIAL PROCEDURES (SEE OWNER'S MANUAL FOR DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS)
MKZ Hybrid	3,871	65 mph/None	N/A	Yes	42/39	\$36,490-\$45,490	Release parking brake. Place in Stay-in-Neutral mode. Run engine a few minutes at the beginning of each day, and every 6 hours or fewer. With engine running and foot on brake, shift into D, then into R before shifting back to N. Before continuing to tow, re-enable Stay-in-Neutral mode.
Nautilus 2.7-L	4,387	65 mph/None	N/A	Yes	21/26	\$47,360	Only tow vehicle in forward direction. See Manual Park Release procedure.
Navigator/ Navigator L 4WD	5,855	None	N/A	Yes	16/23	\$75,995-\$99,690	Requires Heavy-Duty Trailer Tow Package with 2-speed transfer case. Put in Neutral Tow by placing transfer case in N and engaging four-wheel-down-towing feature. See owner's manual for detailed instructions.
NISSAN							
370Z Coupe	3,333	70 mph/500 miles	Yes	No	17/26	\$29,990-\$45,690	Manual transmission in N. After 500 miles, start/idle engine with transmission in N for 2 minutes.
Frontier	3,785	60 mph/500 miles	Yes	No	19/23	\$18,990-\$33,140	Manual transmission in N. For 4WD, tow with transfer case in 2 HI position. After 500 miles, start/idle engine with transmission in N for 2 minutes.
Sentra NISMO	3,022	None/500 miles	Yes	No	25/31	\$25,840	Manual transmission in N. After 500 miles, start/idle engine with transmission in N for 2 minutes.
Sentra S	2,851	None/500 miles	Yes	No	27/35	\$17,790	Manual transmission in N. After 500 miles, start/idle engine with transmission in N for 2 minutes.
Versa Sedan S	2,395	None/500 miles	Yes	No	27/36	\$12,360	Manual transmission in N. After 500 miles, start/idle engine with transmission in N for 2 minutes.
RAM							
1500 4WD	4,989	None	N/A	Yes	19/24	\$35,295-\$58,490	Only 4WD models are flat towable. Transmission in P; transfer case shifted into N (see owner's manual for detailed instructions).
2500 4WD	6,321	None	Yes	Yes	N/A	\$33,490-\$67,940	Only 4WD models are flat towable. Transmission in P; transfer case shifted into N (see owner's manual for detailed instructions).
3500 4WD	6,370	None	Yes	Yes	N/A	\$34,590-\$74,425	Only 4WD models are flat towable. Transmission in P; transfer case shifted into N (see owner's manual for detailed instructions).
TOYOTA							
Corolla SE 6MT	2,860	None	Yes	No	27/35	\$21,865	Shift to N. Engine switch to ACC (without smart key system) or ACCESSORY mode (with smart key system). Audio system and powered devices off. Release parking brake. After towing, start engine and idle at least 3 minutes before driving. M



Ⓜ Dinghy-vehicle prep often involves pulling automotive fuses before towing.

PLUG AND PLAY

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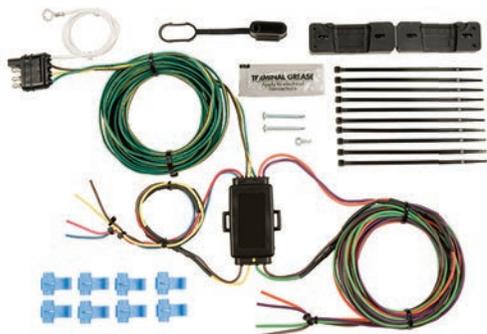
If you've ever towed a trailer, or are familiar with the process, you know that one of the most crucial aspects of preparation is connecting the 4- or 7-pin power cable to the tow vehicle, and making sure that the brakelights and turn signals work correctly. It's commonly called a "safety check," and for good reason — if drivers behind your trailer can't see the brakelights or turn signals, an accident can easily result.

The same is true when towing a dinghy vehicle behind your motorhome — except preparing a car to be towed for the first time isn't quite as easy as a trailer. Consider that trailers were meant to be towed from the outset, so they already have the power connection and requisite wiring in place to make it a literal plug-and-play proposition.

To set up a vehicle for towing, it must be

equipped with a wiring system that will allow it to be plugged into the motorhome. This is important not only for the brakelights and turn signals to function correctly, but in many cases, the dinghy battery must be charged to handle any power drains or to operate an auxiliary braking system. As you'll note while perusing this dinghy guide, most vehicles require that the ignition key be turned to the "Accessory" position so that the steering wheel will remain unlocked when towing. The trouble is, this turns the vehicle's electrical system on, eventually discharging the battery. For this reason, some vehicle owner's manuals instruct the user to pull specific fuses or to disconnect the negative battery cable before towing, which can be time-consuming and inconvenient. So, a "charge line" from the motorhome's power connection to the dinghy vehicle may also be required to keep the dinghy's battery charged

Ⓜ Wiring harness kits, like this one from Blue Ox, allow you to connect to the towed vehicle's wiring harness quickly and easily.





➔ One-way diodes, such as this one from Roadmaster, prevent electrical “backflow” from the motorhome when the dinghy vehicle is connected. ➔ Some universal wiring kits, like this one from Demco, incorporate diodes as well as all necessary hardware and wiring needed for connecting to the dinghy vehicle.



in much the same way a tow vehicle powers the trailer’s electrical system. Charge line kits are available from a number of companies; enter “dinghy charge line kit” into a search engine, and you’ll be met with a variety of solutions.

Years ago, you either had to be an electrical engineer to successfully/reliably wire a dinghy vehicle, or know a good mechanic who understood what you were trying to achieve. In either case, it was a big job that often required some guesswork, a dash of trial and error, a few swear words and plenty of patience. Thankfully, dinghy towing is such a common practice today that there are ready-made kits (many of them application-specific) that enable an electrical connection to the motorhome in just a few hours. The most common solutions are a prefabricated wiring harness using one-way diodes that splices into the dinghy vehicle’s taillights, or a “bulb-and-socket” system, which bypasses the dinghy’s electrical system altogether by incorporating independent bulbs and sockets mounted inside the vehicle’s taillight assemblies. One-way diodes look like an oversized metal memory card and prevent electrical “backflow” from the motorhome’s electrical system to the dinghy, which can cause damage. Companies like Blue Ox, Demco, Hopkins Towing Solutions and Roadmaster offer viable solutions, and when in doubt, can provide valuable information for a specific vehicle.

A bulb-and-socket system can be used in lieu of hardwiring in the diodes, which can be more extensive, depending on the dinghy vehicle and access to the electrical system. For example, some vehicles are equipped with

➔ Battery-disconnect systems save you the trouble of manually disconnecting the negative battery cable on vehicles where this step is required before towing.

onboard diagnostic systems that continuously check for proper turn-signal and brake operation, and can be confused by the addition of aftermarket diodes. Others incorporate variable voltage systems, whereby power for the brake and turn signals run through the same wire at different voltages. This type of system saves the vehicle manufacturer time and money, but creates a number of headaches for dinghy wiring.

Bulb-and-socket systems typically require that a large hole be drilled into the dinghy vehicle’s taillight reflector to accommodate the separate bulb — but unfortunately, many new vehicle taillight assemblies are crowded already, making an additional bulb difficult or impossible to add. In these instances, your best (perhaps only) option is an auxiliary light system that attaches temporarily to the vehicle, similar to what towing companies use when towing a disabled car. Most of these products are affixed with magnets, although some models can be equipped with suction cups (ideal for use on plastic or fiberglass surfaces). A cable is then snaked across the vehicle to the power receptacle near the motorhome’s hitch receiver. Wireless kits are also available, which make setting up the lights for towing a simple process.

In any case, there is a solution that will make it possible to tow your dinghy vehicle lawfully and safely. **M**





STOPPING POWER

A dinghy braking system is essential for a smooth —and safe — towing experience

The ability to flat-tow a vehicle behind a motorhome is a great convenience. Most owners select a dinghy vehicle that is lightweight, but all vehicles can reduce the braking capability of a motorhome when towing, especially during emergency stops. To compensate for the extra weight, an auxiliary braking system for a dinghy vehicle is essential; understanding how a braking system works will make it easier to select the right system.

How Dinghy Towing Works

Towing a dinghy vehicle is a lot like towing a trailer, with some notable exceptions. First, it is connected to the motorhome via a tow bar rather than a fixed A-frame. Also, it is being towed with all four wheels on the ground, which means the front wheels must be able to steer as the vehicle is being towed. Unless there is a method for activating the dinghy's brakes during a stop, the motorhome must provide the stopping power for not only its mass, but for the dinghy vehicle as well. Additionally, in the event of a tow bar or baseplate failure — which could cause the car to break away — provisions within the braking device will help bring the dinghy to a stop.



Towing Laws

In most states, anything towed behind another motor vehicle must have brakes. Some states have varying weight restrictions, which dictate the need for auxiliary braking and/or the maximum distance needed to stop the combination. Considering that RVers often travel from state to state, it essentially becomes a legal requirement to have a dinghy braking system at all times.

Dinghy Braking Systems

There are many braking systems on the market, and choosing which one is best for you will take some research. Dinghy braking systems fall into two main categories: built-in and portable. Built-in systems generally consist of hidden components. They connect to the motorhome's brake system, either through a direct tap into the air brakes or via a compressor module on a gas motorhome. Portable units are installed on the dinghy vehicle's driver's seat floor and clamp to the brake pedal. The ability to move the hardware easily to another dinghy vehicle makes this type of system very popular. Most dinghy brake systems have a breakaway switch and cable. Installation varies by system, and the hidden (or direct) systems are typically the most complicated to install. Following are the top auxiliary braking units on the market.



BLUE OX PATRIOT 3

Blue Ox's all-electric Patriot 3 is a portable, self-calibrating unit that installs on the driver's seat floor and attaches to the brake pedal. Once the wiring is installed, simply position the Patriot 3, plug it in, attach the pedal clamp and turn it on. The new model checks brake pressure during setup, and also monitors the pressure while towing. The 15-pound, self-contained unit provides inertia-based braking when the motorhome's brakes are applied. The unit comes with a two-way RF in-cab controller with extended range and a breakaway switch. As an option, a seat stiffener is available, which gives the device a firmer surface to push against for more positive braking. The Patriot 3 is compatible with hybrid or other vehicles with continuous power-assist brakes. Control and adjustment of the system, along with error codes, should there be a problem with the system, can all be accessed via the RF controller. The new Patriot 3 should be available by the time you read this. MSRP: \$1,595.

Blue Ox | 800-228-9289, www.blueox.com

DEMCO/SMI AIR FORCE ONE

A permanently installed supplemental braking system needs to protect the air supply of the towing vehicle, according to SMI. The Air Force One system accomplishes this using a series of check valves and a small air tank mounted under the motorhome. The dinghy side of the system consists of a control unit that is mounted under the hood, a brake-pedal arm air actuator and a cable for anchoring to the firewall. Installation involves installing the actuator with anchor, the main unit housing the vacuum pump and reserve air tank for the breakaway system, an LED brake activation light and the motorhome connection on the front grille. The cable and wire are routed through the firewall to the main unit and to the battery. The LED brake activation light is mounted anywhere it can be seen from the motorhome's backup camera, usually on the rearview mirror of the towed car. Alternatively, the company offers a 900-MHz wireless monitor (MSRP \$249.95), which can be installed in place of the LED; a transmitter and the wireless receiver mounts

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Custom Chrome Wheels

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Hydraulic Surge Disc Brake System

- Provides safe, controlled stopping

Auto Steer

- Steerable axle allows for tighter turns

Folding Tongue

- Tongue folds back for easy storage

Tilt-bed Frame

- Provides fast, easy loading. Positive locking mechanism on tilt-bed; does not require a separate loose pin

Folding Ramps

- Ramps fold up to allow for comfortable fit in almost any RV park or garage

DEMCO
KAR KADDY™ SS

Before



Unfolded Kar Kaddy™ SS length is 133"

Many RV park lots are not deep enough to accommodate your motorhome and tow dolly.

After



Folded Kar Kaddy™ SS length is 67"

By using only half the space, you can fit both the motorhome and tow dolly comfortably in almost any RV lot. Or you can store your tow dolly in front of your car in your garage at home.

on the motorhome dash and plugs into a 12-volt DC receptacle. On the motorhome side of the system, valves are spliced into the brake system's air lines, the motorhome air assembly unit with air tank is installed underneath the rig and an air line goes to the rear bumper area of the motorhome and is attached to an air fitting that will supply the dinghy. Expect installation time from 5-8 hours, depending on the vehicle. The Air Force One requires no setup for towing, aside from connecting the air line when hooking up the dinghy vehicle to the motorhome. MSRP: \$1,385.



STAY-IN-PLAY DUO

Similar to the Air Force One, the Stay-In-Play Duo uses a small actuator attached to the brake pedal arm, and a main unit mounted under the hood. The system provides proportional dinghy braking, activated by the inertia of the vehicle and the brakelight signal from the motorhome. The main unit creates air pressure for braking, as well as vacuum to power the dinghy brakes. The kit comes with everything needed to install the system. Installation includes the main unit that is mounted under the hood, the control unit that mounts under the dash (where it can be reached for adjustment and for powering-on the system), a brake pedal actuator and an LED brake activation indicator light, which is mounted in view of the motorhome's backup camera. Alternately, the LED can be replaced by the optional wireless remote (MSRP \$249.95). Overall installation should take around 4 hours, depending on the vehicle. MSRP: \$1,219.

TECH TIP: PRIOR TO DEPARTURE, MAKE SURE TO DOUBLE-CHECK ALL DINGHY CONNECTIONS, AND ENSURE THAT THE BRAKE SYSTEM IS OPERATING PROPERLY.



DELTA FORCE

The Delta Force is the first and only dual-signal portable braking system on the market, according to Demco. Dual-signal capability requires two inputs for activation; braking proportion is provided by an inertia switch and the brakelight signal from the motorhome. The system is designed to substantially reduce the number of false brake activations. The Delta Force is a compact unit, with an intuitive control panel on the top with five vehicle profile selections. A boost button will increase the selected profile by 15 percent should the user need extra braking. The actuator is attached to the main unit with a ball and socket, allowing it to be folded against the housing for storage. The Delta Force is attached to the firewall via a tether and clip, which results in more consistent braking, according to the company. When not in use, the tether tucks under a floor mat. Installation of the system includes tapping into the brakelight harness from the motorhome connection, installing a breakaway switch, and the tether and mount under the dashboard. The system comes with a wireless CoachLink unit, which monitors brake activity and has visual and audible alarms in the event of a malfunction or breakaway. The Delta Force and the CoachLink units are powered via a 12-volt DC receptacle. MSRP: \$1,329.

Demco/SMI | 800-543-3626, www.demco-products.com



➔ BrakeBuddy Classic II is a user-friendly system that folds for easy, compact storage.



HOPKINS MANUFACTURING CORP.

BRAKEBUDDY CLASSIC II

The BrakeBuddy Classic II is a compact, fully self-contained system. Other than the breakaway and alert system, there is no other permanent installation required. Initial installation takes 15-30 minutes, and setup time runs 3-5 minutes, according to the company. The 11-pound Classic II is a fully automatic system that performs self-testing and adjustment at the push of a button. Installation is pretty basic with the Classic II. Once the breakaway is installed, the unit's bracket is unfolded and placed on the driver's floor against the seat, and a Quick-Connect clevis is attached to the brake pedal. The housing is powered using a Quick-Connect Easy Pull connector, and the Auto-Start button is pressed, beginning the self-test sequence, and relieving the vacuum from the towed vehicle's brake booster. The Classic II works on all vehicles, including hybrids, according to the company, and includes a dinghy battery charger. An included alert system gives the motorhome driver instant notification of a braking event and an audible warning of a dinghy vehicle breakaway. MSRP: \$1,149.

➔ A step up from the BrakeBuddy Classic II, the Select II adds dual braking and a wireless remote that provides control from inside the motorhome.

BRAKEBUDDY SELECT II

The BrakeBuddy Select II functions like the Classic II with a couple differences. First, it features dual braking mode, offering either proportional or full braking. Second, a wireless remote allows on-the-fly control and selection of the braking level from inside the motorhome. When the Select II is in full braking mode, it provides maximum stopping power at the dinghy, and mimics the braking rate of the motorhome when in the proportional mode. This allows the driver to select the optimal braking level for the driving conditions. Installation is basically the same as the Classic II, and the unit works on all vehicles, according to the company — and includes a dinghy battery charger. The Select II is also smaller and lighter than its predecessor, making it easier to store and set up. MSRP: \$1,499. Hopkins also recently introduced the BrakeBuddy Select 3, which features a universal clevis designed to tighten securely to dinghy brake pedals of any size or shape.



BRAKEBUDDY STEALTH

The BrakeBuddy Stealth is a permanently installed system that offers additional features for those who also tow a trailer or are looking for a simple dinghy vehicle hookup.

Consisting of a main control box the size of a large loaf of bread, the unit can be installed somewhere in the passenger compartment or trunk, with a cable and wiring that runs to the front of the dinghy vehicle. A pulley is installed on the firewall, which is used to route a cable to a bracket attached to the brake pedal. A break-away switch and a low-profile connector are mounted on the front of the dinghy. In the motorhome, a brake control is mounted under the driver's side of the dashboard. The Stealth controller will allow sensitivity adjustments as well as manual activation of the dinghy brake system. Additionally, with the push of a button, the remote functions as a trailer-brake controller, allowing a trailer with electric brakes to be towed by the motorhome without installing additional



components. Installation of the Stealth takes 3-4 hours depending on the vehicle, according to the company. Once the installation is done, connecting the dinghy to the motorhome is as easy as connecting the tow bar, the breakaway cable and the electrical cable. MSRP: \$1,099.

BrakeBuddy, Hopkins Manufacturing Corp. | 800-470-2287, www.brakebuddy.com

ROADMASTER INC.

BRAKEMASTER

The BrakeMaster is a proportional system that connects directly to the motorhome's air or hydraulic braking system, mimicking the brake force applied by the motorhome. In a motorhome with air brakes, the system uses a valve installed into the brake system to divert air to the towed car. An air hose is connected from the motorhome to the dinghy. The hose from a small air reservoir installed under the hood is routed to a brake actuator installed on the driver's seat floor, which is clamped to the brake pedal. The removable actuator has a quick-disconnect air line. A breakaway system is included.

The BrakeMaster can also be installed in motorhomes with hydraulic brakes, but the system is more expensive and requires additional hardware. A proportioning valve is installed in the motorhome's hydraulic brake system, and an air compressor and tank are installed in an exterior storage compartment. The hydraulic pressure in the proportioning valve opens the air valve, providing air to the dinghy brakes in proportion to motorhome braking. The dinghy side of the system follows the procedures for the air-brake-powered BrakeMaster. Installation of the system can be pretty complex, especially the



⬆ The BrakeMaster actuator is installed on the floor of the towed vehicle and connected to an air supply line connector under the driver's seat.

hydraulic brake version, so plan on at least 4-6 hours to get the job done. Connecting the dinghy to the motorhome once the system is installed is fairly straightforward. An air line (included with the BrakeMaster) is attached to a port on the motorhome and the front of the car. The actuator is then installed in the car once the brake vacuum has been bled off by depressing the brake pedal a few times. An LED wired to the brakelight or brake switch of the towed car illuminates on the dash of the motorhome when the dinghy brakes are applied. MSRP for motorhomes with air or air-over-hydraulic brakes (BrakeMaster 9160): \$825; MSRP for hydraulic brakes (BrakeMaster 9060): \$1,275.



EVEN BRAKE 9400

For those who prefer a portable system, Roadmaster's Even Brake 9400 provides proportional braking, matching the braking force of the motorhome. The unit features terrain-sensing logic, which detects grades and rough terrain and adjusts dinghy braking accordingly. The Even Brake 9400 is activated by an internal air compressor.

The initial installation of the Even Brake is simple, taking less than an hour, and setup of the unit for towing takes just a couple of minutes. The system includes a wireless monitor with LCD screen that provides continuous braking information. It also has a power save function, which will report on a low battery condition in the dinghy vehicle. If the dinghy car's battery drops below the threshold, the system will go into sleep mode, reserving enough power for emergency braking. MSRP: \$1,575.



ROADMASTER 9700

The 9700 is an affordable dinghy brake alternative that applies preset-pressure braking to the dinghy when the motorhome's brakes are applied, or can be set to activate only in the event of a breakaway. The system works on most vehicles with power brakes, and has three braking pressure presets, activating in concert with the motorhome's brakelights. Initial installation takes less than an hour, and setup for towing takes a couple of minutes. It automatically protects the towed vehicle's brakes by releasing brake pressure after an extended period of braking, reactivating the next time the motorhome's brakes are applied. MSRP: \$1,250.

INVISIBRAKE 8700

The InvisiBrake is a fully automatic, permanently installed device that provides progressive braking when the brakelights in the towed vehicle are activated. The main unit is quite small, and can usually be installed under the driver's seat. Unlike most other systems that work on a dead brake pedal, InvisiBrake powers the dinghy vehicle's braking system, allowing for the full braking capabilities. Dead batteries are also not an issue with this system, as it will trickle-charge the battery while towing. And, according to Roadmaster, the system is compatible with any vehicle using vacuum-

TECH TIP: THE VACUUM NEEDS TO BE BLED OFF ON HYDRAULIC BRAKE SYSTEMS BEFORE DINGHY TOWING. SOME SYSTEMS DO IT AUTOMATICALLY; CHECK THE MANUAL.

▶ STOPPING POWER

powered brakes, hybrids and vehicles with full-time power braking systems. The InvisiBrake also includes a two-stage motorhome monitor, which gives a visual and audible alarm in the event of a breakaway, and a visual reference of dinghy braking activity. The installation of the system is somewhat complex, given its hidden and hands-free nature. The main unit installs under the seat, and an air cylinder — which is about the size of a large cigar — is mounted nearby via a cable that runs under the carpet and through a pulley to a bracket on the brake pedal. There are two wiring harnesses to install, and a vacuum line (for vehicles with vacuum-power-assisted brakes), which is routed under the hood and spliced into the power booster's



ⓘ Permanently installed in the dinghy, Roadmaster's InvisiBrake is easy to connect each time the dinghy is towed, with no storage of a portable system required. The InvisiBrake also trickle charges the dinghy's battery.

vacuum line. Expect a 5-6-hour installation time for this system, depending on the vehicle. MSRP: \$1,125.

Roadmaster | 800-669-9690,
www.roadmasterinc.com

RV INNOVATIONS

RVIBRAKE3

The small footprint of the 10-pound RVibrake3 allows easy transport and storage when not in use. The proportional RVibrake3 uses audible voice prompts to guide the user through proper setup, which takes only 30 seconds. In addition to the voice prompts, the system comes with the company's Command Center Tablet and hub. A tablet with a 7-inch screen is mounted in the motorhome cockpit and communicates with the system via Wi-Fi through an included hub. The system also provides information for leveling the motorhome. The tablet communicates in real time indicating braking activity, and also provides confirmation that the setup

is correct and if the breakaway switch is activated. All the setup parameters are accessible through the tablet, as are system support and RV checklist apps. A Tire Patrol tire-pressure monitoring system can be added to keep tabs on the motorhome and dinghy vehicle tires.

RVibrake3 comes with everything needed to get going. Some vehicles may require additional hardware for installation, which is included at no additional cost. Accessories like 12-volt DC extension cords, battery disconnects and a case, are available. MSRP: \$1,225.

RV Innovations | 800-815-2159,
www.rvibrake.com 



ⓘ The proportional RVibrake3 uses audible voice prompts to aid in setup. The housing's sleek, compact form makes for easy storage and handling.



Questions
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