

Subject:

Oct 2021 Newsletter from Air Safe Hitches

October 2021

Newsletter

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Security Awareness Tip of The Day

Smart Home Devices *September 28, 2021*

Nowadays most of us have numerous devices in our homes connect to the Internet. From thermostats and gaming consoles to baby monitors, door locks or even your car. Ensure you change the default passwords on these devices and enable automatic updating.

Fake News *September 27, 2021*

Fake news is a false narrative that is published and promoted as if it were true. People (and organizations) create fake news to control and manipulate your thoughts and actions. Be skeptical of what you read on the Internet, use trusted sources that are vetted, check their motivations and funding.

Use Caution Opening Email Attachments *September 24, 2021*

A common method cyber criminals use to hack into people's computers is to send them emails with infected attachments. Cyber attackers will try to trick you into opening these attachments by making the email appear to come from someone or something you know or trust. Only open email attachments that you were expecting.

Ransomware *September 23, 2021*

Ransomware is a special type of malware. Once it infected your computer, it encrypts all of your files and demands you pay a ransom if you want your files back. Be suspicious of any emails trying to trick you into opening infected attachments or click on malicious links, common sense is your best defense. In addition, backups are often the only way you can recover from ransomware.

Stay Safe Out There: Personal Safety While RVing

Personal safety is always important, especially in these days of heightened security awareness. For those of us who travel by RV, it's imperative to always be aware of our surroundings in order to keep ourselves and our property as safe as possible. This starts with where you choose to park your rig at night.

- If you are staying at an RV park, be it private or public, be sure to take a look around and talk to staff and residents to get a feel for the level of security.
- If you are staying at a rest stop, parking lot, or other roadside area, be especially vigilant. Be sure to stay in a lit area away from wooded areas or other locations that might conceal the criminal element.
- Rest areas are generally safe if you nest yourself amongst the big-rigs. I used to be an over-the-road trucker in my youth, so I am used to the idling of diesel engines and refrigeration units, but you may not be. Although parking for the night in the company

of tractor-trailers keeps you pretty safe, it can also keep you awake if you are not used to it.

- Make sure you lock all doors and storage compartments and turn on your porch light. If you have “scare” lights on your rig, turn them on. “Scare” lights are the large round lights mounted high on the sidewall of most large motorhomes and fifth-wheels.
- Be aware of neighboring business and homes that may be able to assist you in an emergency.
- Always carry a cellular and/or satellite phone and try to stay in areas of strong coverage.
- Be cautious but not paranoid, and always perform the “gut check”. If you don’t feel right about staying in a particular place, go somewhere else.
- Even if you are not into gambling, casino parking lots are great places to camp for the night. They tend to have 24hr. security and are either free or very inexpensive. I have stayed in casino lots or RV parks and have found them to be clean, safe, and affordable. As an added bonus, they usually have great buffets and other eating choices.
- Staying overnight in mall parking lots is usually not permitted by law, so I don’t recommend this unless you want to get a knock on your rig door in the middle of the night from police or security.
- The obvious exception to this is WalMart. Overnight parking regulations are made by jurisdiction, so be sure to ask the store manager if it’s okay to stay the night. Look for other RVers doing the same and stay close to them.

Never leave your RV alone in an unsecured or unprotected area. RVing is a great way of life, but it can be ruined by theft, vandalism, or personal threats. Stay safe out there!

A Guide to Choosing to the Best Fifth Wheel Hitch

You know you need to tow something heavy. You know you need the right hitch to do so. If that’s all you know it’s okay. We’re here to help you figure the rest out! That’s why we’ve developed a few simple steps to take in order to choose the **best fifth wheel hitch** for your unique towing situation. It’s much easier than you may fear!

Steps to Choosing to the Best Fifth Wheel Hitch

#1 Consider towing capacity and weight

How big is the trailer you need to tow? Towing capacity is the maximum weight your truck or SUV is rated to tow. Gross trailer weight is the total weight of your 5th wheel trailer when it is loaded and hitched up to your truck. It is important to remember that your towing capacity is limited by the lowest-rated towing component. This is why we recommend purchasing a 5th wheel hitch that meets or exceeds your truck’s towing capacity. Take into consideration your future 5th Wheel trailer needs and maybe consider a larger GTW hitch and not have to change hitches because you bought a larger trailer.

#2 Measure truck bed length

You’re not done with math quite yet! You’ll need to measure your truck bed, because the length of the truck bed determines how much space or clearance your truck and trailer will have when hitched up. A long-bed pickup truck generally provides more clearance, while a short-bed truck provides less clearance. This determines which type of mounting platform your 5th wheel hitch will require, either standard rails or Underbed adapters for the different trucks. If you have a new trailer or a used one that was manufactured in the past few years you probably don’t need a slider hitch. The newer trailers are designed for short bed trucks. The trailers have extended kingpins and round front trailer corners.

#3 Determine if the truck bed has pucks

Does your truck have the 4 pucks holes and the center Gooseneck ball hole for connecting to the Underbed system? The problem with the factory towing prep packages is there isn’t one Underbed system that has a standard hole pattern. Ford was the first truck manufacturer to use this system and all Fords use the same pattern. Dodge was next to provide the Underbed System, but they use a wider footprint and the T’s (pins) that connect to the underbed system are different in the front and back. GMC/Chevy was the next to provide the Underbed system,

but they chose a different hole pattern than Ford or Dodge. The 2018-2019 models used a different hole pattern than the 2020-2022 hole pattern. This leaves you with a problem if you have the hitch with the built-in adapter and you change trucks.

#4 Choose permanent 5th wheel rails

If your truck is not equipped with a puck system, you will need to stick to the traditional method for installing a 5th wheel hitch. This means you will use 5th wheel base rails. Don't be concerned; this is simple to do as well. Most 5th Wheel Hitches mount on standard base rails. There are some that require vendor specific rails.

#5 Select your style of 5th wheel hitch

You are now confident with the type of mounting platform needed for your pickup truck. All that is left to do is browse our selection of 5th wheel hitches based on weight capacity and features. You're finished!

Order the Best [Fifth Wheel Hitch](#) from AirSafe Hitches

Now that you know what to buy, all that is left to do is to order it. Shopping our website makes it incredibly simple and convenient to get the exact hitch you're looking for. With a few clicks of the mouse, your order will be complete. Soon, it will arrive fully assembled and ready to mount in your truck. All that is left to do is install it on your truck and you're ready to tow. It couldn't be any more convenient!

What are the Different Trailer Hitch Classes?

If you're interested in getting a hitch for your vehicle because you're ready to do some heavy hauling, you need the right class hitch. Are you familiar with what you'll need? Don't worry! We have a handy breakdown to help!

Class I Hitch

Class I hitches are typically rated up to a maximum of 200 tongue weight and 2,000 pounds towing. Hitches in this entry-level class traditionally come in a 1 ¼" receiver. Most vehicles in this hitch class include compact cars, sedans, and smaller crossovers. Class I hitches are perfect for smaller accessories or towing small trailers.

Examples: jet ski, bike rack, cargo trays, small tent camper

Class II Hitch

These hitches are similar to Class I, but have the ability to handle more weight. They can handle around 350 pounds tongue weight and a maximum of 3,500 pounds towing. Hitches in this class usually come in both 1 ¼" and 2" receiver sizes. Vehicles in this hitch class are usually sedans and SUVs.

Examples: small campers, two jet skis, small boats

Class III Hitch

Now you're stepping up into the big time! These hitches are what you normally see on small trucks and more capable SUVs. These hitches tend to be rated at around 500 or even 600 pounds tongue weight and up to a maximum of 5,000 pounds towing capacity. At this point, you can start using weight distribution to help even out the load you are towing, prevent sag around the tongue of the trailer, and be able to tow more weight. This will come in handy if you plan on hauling heavier trailers for the examples listed below.

Examples: medium sized campers, utility trailers, boats, heavier cargo trays

Class IV Hitch

If you have a large truck and a strong hitch, you are probably in Class IV. These hitches are typically rated around 800 up to 1,000 pounds tongue weight and a maximum of 10,000 pounds towing. That is some pretty serious towing power! This class is where you start getting into the heavier towing for large recreational cargo and even commercial work.

Examples: small travel trailers, utility trailers, large boats, toy haulers

Class V Hitch

This class is available for hitches is made for large SUVs, pickup trucks, and vans. These hitches are typically rated around 1,000 to 1,500 pounds tongue weight and 20,000 pounds towing capacity. They are available in 2" and 2.5" receivers. This is for when you are doing the heaviest towing. You may need weight distribution, sway control, and the [Receiver Air Hitch](#) to help make your towing experience more enjoyable. Yes, the right hitch can actually make it easier to drive down the road!

Class VI – VII Hitches

You've made it to the top! The highest class available for hitches is made for large SUVs, pickup trucks, and vans. These hitches are typically rated around 2,000 to 3,000 pounds tongue weight and 30,000 pounds towing capacity. They are available in 2", 2.5" and 3" receivers. This is for when you are doing the heaviest towing. You will need weight distribution, sway control, and the [Receiver Air Hitch](#) to help make your towing experience more enjoyable. Yes, the right hitch can actually make it easier to drive down the road!

Examples: large trailers, equipment haulers, multi-car trailers, large boats, horse and other animal trailers

Hopefully looking at this list tells you everything you need to know.

AirSafeHitches.com



Why Use an Air Hitch?

AirSafe is committed to giving you the safest and most comfortable ride possible. We offer the largest selection of air hitches in the industry, including 5th wheel hitches, gooseneck hitches, and receiver hitches for trailer hitches for trucks.

Our hitches utilize the most innovative engineering and design available on the market today. With a fully height adjustable design, AirSafe hitches are easy to use and don't cause any headaches.

Air Safe Hitches also delivers the ultimate in safety.

With only 10% trailer inertia, our hitches make your vehicles sway a lot less. By evenly distributing the weight between the trailer and the tow vehicle, you will have more ability to brake and steer safely.

AirSafe Hitches are the safest way to tow anything, and they provide the most comfort of any ride. If that isn't enough to convince you, these hitches are also affordable. With AirSafe Hitches, you get safety, comfort, and savings all in one.

[5th Wheel Hitches](#) - Omni-Directional 4 air bag vs competitor 2 air bag system. A four-air bag hitch is designed to allow the hitch head to move on the air bags in any direction based on articulation from the trailer itself. The result of such continuous motion results in a smooth ride and decrease chucking and surging forces from the trailer on the truck. In addition to the movement from the trailer, the 4-airbag hitch support 100% of the pin weight, increasing the effectiveness of the air springs. This results in a smooth and controlled motion for the trailer on the truck.

[Receiver Hitches](#) – If you want a smoother ride and the ultimate in control, then you need the advantage provided by Air Safe Hitches with the Receiver Hitch by AirSafe™. With an Air Safe Receiver Hitch you will get a 90% smoother ride than with a traditional hitch, which can save

you money. Glide across the highways and roads avoiding the constant bouncing, which leads to a decrease in gas mileage and early wear and tear on your tires. Our Air Safe Receiver Hitches also reduce stress on your truck and trailer suspension and help eliminate breakages inside the trailer. Our design allows total air ride vs the Shocker Hitch with the hinged approach.

[Gooseneck Hitches](#) – Air Safe offers the industry’s largest selection of air hitches. Innovation and engineering insures you receive the safest and smoothest ride. “Enjoy the ride, arrive alive.” With AIRSAFE™ you stop the flow of shock flow between the tow vehicle to the trailer and greatly reduce the explosion of energy when these two forces meet. The patented AIRSAFE™ hitches are engineered so the connection to the trailer is separated from the connection to the tow vehicle by an industrial strength airbag. Air Safe Gooseneck Hitches by AIRSAFE™ are simply the best air product money can buy. They are engineered with you and your precious cargo in mind. Simply remove your existing gooseneck tube and coupler and replace it with the AIRSAFE™ system. Available in round and square necks.

[Click to check out the benefits of an air hitch vs a rigid hitch.](#)

Best Fall RV Camping

Sam Leash

For so many people, fall is the most magical time of the year. As summer ends, a bit of chill fills the air, leading to the myriad of foliage colors seen as the trees prepare for winter. Sweaters and flannels emerge, as well as all the seasonal flavors, such as warm cinnamon sugar, pumpkin spice, and salted caramel. Football games and bonfires become favorite weekend activities, and many folks enjoy trips to the pumpkin patch and apple picking.

As the foliage colors really start to peak, leaf peeping trips become more common. These trips involve driving to places where one can see the best colors on the trees for general enjoyment and photography opportunities. For RVers, fall RV camping trips are especially fun. Sleeping beneath colorful trees and spending time beside a warm bonfire is particularly special, and many want to experience this at least once during the season. Luckily, during the times of COVID-19, fall RV camping is especially safe, allowing travelers to sleep in their own bed, eat meals made from their own kitchen, and social distance while enjoying outdoor activities. This is much safer than traveling to hotels and eating out for every meal.

Fall in Northeast Out of all the places in the country, most people tend to think of New England when they think of fall. Something about the rolling hills, endless stretches of incredible color, and cool weather makes this region one of the very best to visit in the autumn months. It’s only natural that we begin our scenic tour of the US in its Northeastern-most corner, so hop in and cruise with us as we start our journey in the lovely state of Maine.

Maine Maine is gorgeous all year-round, and it is home to Acadia National Park, one of the top ten most popular national parks in the country. Each year, 3.5 million people visit this magical place to explore its dense forests, sandy beaches, striking lighthouses, and rocky coastlines. It is even more spectacular in the fall months, when the colors on the trees change from green to a myriad of warm hues. When traveling here in your RV, you will find no shortage of excellent camping options. There are a number of excellent campgrounds within the national park boundaries, and there are also some fantastic RV parks in the nearby town of Bar Harbor. Several campgrounds remain this year, but be sure to call and book ahead to ensure you have a space available. Plan to visit in early October to catch the season’s peak foliage colors.

New Hampshire If we head west just a bit, we’ll run into the White Mountains of New Hampshire, which are just ripe with opportunities for fall adventures. In the autumn months, the mountain slopes are covered in colorful foliage, making for quite an epic sight. In the national forest, there are tons of places to camp, in both RV parks and at boondocking sites. Between the boating, shopping, hiking, climbing, horseback riding, golfing, scenic train rides, and so much more, you’ll find plenty of fun things to do on your fall vacation to this stunning mountain range. Plan to visit in early to mid-October, when colors are at their brightest.

Vermont This pretty Vermont farm is open year round, with a farm stand and produce, a gift shop, and a restaurant available. However, Goodrich Maple Farm’s main product is authentic Vermont maple syrup, and this delicious product is especially pertinent in the autumn season. They sell maple syrup in jugs and in glass bottles, as well as by the case. In addition, they sell

candy, sugar, and cream, all created from maple syrup. This is a spectacular stop on your New England journey, so be sure to visit before heading on to Connecticut.

Connecticut If we head south, we'll reach the town of Woodstock, Connecticut. This charming city is full of rich, cultural history and plenty of fun fall adventures. These include scenic drives through rolling farmlands, farmers markets full of autumn's harvest, and even some spooky Halloween events. Since Connecticut boasts the longest-lasting foliage colors in New England, you are sure to find plenty of beauty all throughout late September and much of October. There are three well-maintained campgrounds within the city, but these tend to book early in anticipation for fall. Be sure to reserve your site ahead of time if you plan to enjoy a scenic October trip to Woodstock.

Massachusetts If you love the yearly apple harvest, then Massachusetts's Red Apple Farm is the perfect place for your fall enjoyment. This beautiful orchard and farm is open each year exclusively for the autumn season and is considered a local tourist destination. Here, Harvest Host members can park beside the lush orchards overnight, allowing even more opportunities to experience all the fun fall activities offered. Between the slow-cooked barbecue, fresh apple pies, cider donuts, apple dumplings, and cold and hot cider, there is plenty of seasonal food to try here on your visit. Be sure to bring some goods home with you to share with friends and family.

Rhode Island While it may be the smallest state in the country, Rhode Island packs quite a bit of beauty into its borders. It is home to one of the most scenic drives in the country, and this drive is even more breathtaking in the fall. The coastal drive along Highway 1A spans from Pawtucket to Watch Hill and is a mere ninety-two miles in length. Yet, despite its short distance, one could easily spend days touring this area if they stopped to explore all the landmarks. Along this drive, you'll find historic mansion, small coastal towns, thick forests, lovely beaches, and plenty of classic New England fall foliage. In the autumn months, this scenic drive is especially quiet, and you will find plenty of campgrounds to stop for the night in between daily driving. Plan to visit mid-October to experience the peak colors of the season.

New York Our first stop us the Adirondacks of New York, which many people consider to be one of the best places for fall foliage viewing in the entire country. At over six million acres in size, this is the largest protected area east of the Mississippi River. It is also the largest state park in the United States. Here, visitors can find over 3,000 lakes and ponds, 30,000 miles of waterways, and over 2,000 miles of well-maintained hiking trails, all tucked away in the gorgeous Catskills Mountains.

In the fall, the trees' leaves change to a variety of gorgeous hues, making this the ideal October spot to hike a trail, paddle a river, or take a scenic drive. When camping in your RV here, you will find no shortage of beautiful campgrounds and RV parks all throughout the area.

Pennsylvania If you're looking for fall colors in Pennsylvania, then Pine Creek Gorge is just the place for you. Dubbed the Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania, this stunning gorge offers sweeping views and scenic vistas along a forty-seven-mile stretch of continuous canyon. Because it is peppered in a variety of deciduous trees, fall-time visitors can expect to see a multitude of autumnal shades, including yellows, browns, oranges, red, and purples. If you're bringing your RV along for the journey, you can find several state parks and campgrounds available for overnight accommodations.

New Jersey Heading east of Pennsylvania, we'll enter the state of New Jersey. While you'll find lots of heavily-populated towns and cities here, there is still plenty of farmland and fall foliage to be enjoyed. In south central New Jersey, we can stop at the beautiful Unexpected Farm in the town of Newfield. This location is truly unexpected, as they have a farm stand with seasonal produce and offer fun events at different times of the year. In September, they feature fun sunflower-themed events, where kids can cut their own sunflowers and also enjoy face painting, music, and other fun events. In October, guests can visit the pumpkin patch and have their photos taken with "friendly witches" on the weekends. Be sure to stop here for some spooky seasonal fun!

Delaware Heading south brings us to Bridgeville, Delaware, where you'll find TS Smith and Sons Farm. This Harvest Hosts location features a slew of specialty products, including a variety of seasonal fruits and vegetables, fruit baskets, jams, butters, pickles, mixes, and bakery products. They also make excellent sandwiches for both breakfast and lunch, which many previous guests have greatly enjoyed. In the fall, they offer pumpkins and apple picking, with many varieties of apples to choose from. On the second full weekend in October, they host an annual "Apple Scrapple Festival," celebrating the area's two most prominent industries. Here, guests can enjoy farm wagon tours, live music, scrapple sandwiches, hot dogs, apple

donuts and of course apples, which sounds like an ideal fall weekend in the Northeast. Be sure to add this one to your list!

Maryland If you're looking for fall spirit in Maryland, then look no further than Faulkner Branch Cidery and Distillery in Federalsburg. This beautiful orchard doesn't even open until the second week of September, and when they do, they feature a variety of fresh and fermented fruits to choose from. Customers can pick their own apples or purchase apples in small batches or in bulk. Visitors can also sample and buy a variety of ciders and liquors. If you love ciders, then this Harvest Hosts location is certainly the perfect fall stop for you.

Avoiding Crime

Brent Peterson The morning had the crackling cool of early fall. As usual, my first instinct was to start a campfire, still my favorite way to cook breakfast while "roughin' it." True, we were staying in a four star campground, about as far away as rougin' it got, but eggs on a hot griddle is a tradition that I seldom part with. I surveyed the scene as I descended the steps of the motorhome, waving to neighbors, inhaling deep breaths of an autumn day. But just where had the firewood gone? It wasn't tucked underneath the vehicle where I had stored it for the night. A quick polling of the crew suggested no one had moved it or burned it up in some midnight ceremony I didn't know about. It was gone, and I immediately suspected foul play.

The snickering of the two little kids across the road was about all I needed to hear to know it was them, an inside job – inside the campground that is. Ah well, what are you gonna do? I'd done worse back in the day, and if the two boys didn't get such a perverse thrill out of their antics, I might have been peeved. Everyone onboard thought it was sort of cute, actually. I ponyed up the \$5 for another stack of timber and resumed breakfast duty – with one eye always on the terrible twosome across the street. My first – and hopefully last – run in with "crime" while RVing. We should all be so lucky.

Truth be told, RVing is a fairly safe way to travel. Campgrounds don't attract much of a notorious criminal element, and RVs usually don't rank high among the richest scores for thieves and ner-do-wells. However, the fastest way to become a statistic of a criminal act – from stolen firewood to something much worse – is to think it can't happen to you. So goes the first rule in avoiding crime: Accept that crime does indeed exist and that you are not immune.

Here's some ways to help keep you safe.

At the Campground

For the most part, campgrounds are safe. You're more likely to fall and skin a knee or stare down an angry chipmunk than run into trouble of a human kind. It's not so much that security is an integral part of most campground operations (although fenced-in perimeters, security gates, cameras and 24-hour security are fairly common), but rather RVers aren't likely to prey on one another – and criminal elements can find better and easier scores elsewhere. Frankly, it's tough for outsiders to sneak around rows and rows of parked RVs looking for loot. But again, it pays to be careful.

Get in the habit of locking your rig everytime you depart. I know, the place looks so quaint and charming nothing could happen, right? Why take chances – it takes but a matter of seconds to lock up and dissuade the family of kleptomaniacs next door from rummaging through your CD collection. This RV lockdown should include securing exterior storage compartments and windows as well. Close blinds and shades to make "casing the joint" a tougher task. Another perk? Shades keep the sun off the fabrics, which reduces fading. Take cooking items, chairs, and anything you want to be there upon your routine inside the RV or tow vehicle when you're off at the swimming hole. Set up a neighbor watch by getting to know the people next to you, who are more likely to look after someone they know than complete strangers.

Consider a few devices to protect your vehicle and valuables while you're away. Although it won't win you any friends when it goes off accidentally in the night, a vehicle alarm system is a useful defense when you're away. Motion-detecting lights, also known as "scare lights," should scatter would-be intruders (not to mention critters). Safes are fairly common options on higher-end RVs, serving as an ideal spot for jewelry and traveler's checks. If you're worried about RV theft, invest in a trailer hitch lock or more pricey Lojack-type recovery apparatus. Otherwise, a

hungry looking dog might do you just as good. Personally, I like to travel with a Louisville Slugger – just in case.

The choice of the RV park itself is also important. Question management about security. Do they have nightly patrols? Is the park well lit? How hard is it for non-guests to come and go? Opt for a visible campsite in the heart of the park if safety is utmost on your mind. Travel the grounds in pairs and stay in lighted areas. RV parks in urban settings may be more prone to crime than the Ma and Pa campground tucked away in the boonies. But don't let that be an excuse for letting your guard down.

Boondocking

You're always taking a risk when camping in parts unknown. Whether it's catching a few Zzzz's in a rest stop or camped in a forest grove, boondocking lacks the security and predictability of an established campground. Yes, we all have our reasons for doing it, so we'll shelf the discussion of whether or not this practice is a good idea. However, it does require a more zealous approach to safeguarding your well being.

If it's a quick power nap you seek, always favor busier locales, such as travel plazas, truck stops, or active parking lots. True, it may be harder to sleep in areas with greater commotion, but the traffic, bright lights, and steady activity reduces your chances of becoming a potential target. Pulling off to the side of the road, a vacated rest stop, or that cozy-looking enclave in the forest up your risks substantially.

Of course, you know you should always get permission when camping off the beaten path, whether it be a Wal-Mart parking lot or on a deserted beach. Beyond that, my recommendation is never open the door unless there's someone wearing a badge on the other side. Pull the shades, lock the rig up tight, and try to stay within earshot of civilization. Your faithful rottweiler certainly earns her keep on dark nights when you're far off the beaten path. Your trusty beagle? Well, not so much.

On the Go

Every city has its bad parts of town. Avoid these. Lose that wide-eyed touristy look and stay alert to your surroundings. Don't flash the cash or valuables, which only put a bullseye on your head for would-be thieves. Credit cards and traveler's checks are the way to go when on the road.

Vehicle trouble can lead to all sorts of problems. God has a wicked sense of humor for those who travel without roadside assistance or at least a good cell phone with a comprehensive service plan to boot. Get both if you don't have them. Remember the saying, "The best offense is a good defense?" Well, it works here too. The best way to circumvent a night stranded on the side of the road – leaving you and your family vulnerable - is to keep your RV in peak working condition, inspect it regularly, keep gas tanks full, and call for back-up (again, cell phone and roadside assistance) early and often. Stay inside until help arrives.

Travel long enough and you're bound to tangle with an irritable driver. They don't call it road rage because it's pleasant, and unfortunately these people do exist. The best response is not to get into this situation in the first place. Some folks feel that your tailgating, erratic maneuvers, and aggressive driving merits a response (or vice versa), which is how these things usually get started. Diffuse the situation by letting ornery drivers pass; don't respond and escalate matters. It's not worth it. If the problem persists, notify the police on your cell phone (you did get one, right?). Get the license plates and help remove this pest from the roadways.

The Homefront

You're off having a wonderful time. Your home, however, sits idle as a potential target. The old tips for protecting the homefront are still the best. Make the residence appear lived in by entrusting someone to pick up mail and the daily newspaper. Get them to feed your iguana while you're at it. Lights on timers will give the home a lived-in look. Leave the car in the driveway instead of the garage, which suggests a presence. Enlist the help of neighbors to keep an eye on things, and be sure to reward them with a souvenir from the trip. Pulling all the shades sends a message that the place is boarded up. I believe a better idea is to close the obvious ones, which prevents peering eyes. Lock all doors and windows, and don't forget about securing the family vehicle, garage, and shed. You might want to call the police and ask if they could pay special attention to your residence on their patrol. Don't expect a 24-hour security detail, but another set of eyes is always warranted.

Scared? Never leaving your house again? Going to only travel with a SWAT team from now

on? Nonsense. The RV life is pretty safe, assuming you don't tempt fate. It only takes a little extra time and a few extra brain cells to protect you and your valuables from harm, and I'm sure some of these things you're probably already used to doing anyway. Keep it up, and stay safe.

Choosing the Right Horse Trailer

Ready to hit the road with your horse? Choosing the right trailer and accessories is essential for smooth sailing. In this guide, we'll teach you about trailer construction, safety innovations and luxury living.

"While this article addresses the trailer concern you also need to be concerned with the connection to the truck that you use for towing.

What is the best Gooseneck Hitches for Horse Trailers

Air Safe Hitches and its patented Gooseneck Hitch by AirSafe™ will improve your ride by 90%. This Hitch will save you many repairs to your trailer down the road, repairs that would cost much more than the hitch. Animals riding in trailers has always been a dangerous situation. The horse has to stand spread almost spread eagle in the trailer when in motion to keep from falling. The bounce and jerk of the trailer also place undue stress on the horse's leg muscles and joints, making the horse stressed out, tired, and jumpy by the time the trailer stops, especially on long rides. The drive always seems to take a little longer too, because the driver has to stop and let the horses rest every four to six hours. Using an Air Ride Hitch will give you a smoother ride for you and your horses, other animals, and cargo. The hitch will reduce the repairs and maintenance on your truck and trailer, therefore, saving you time and money.

Maximum Bounce Protection

Every horse owner knows this problem exists. Our hitch reduces the tire bounce of the trailer so drastically, that the trailer and its contents are under less stress, thereby eliminating damage to the trailer, the tow vehicle and most especially the horses."

Ins and Outs

If you've ever had a horse that's hard to load or unload, you know what a difference some trailer features can make. And when you're thinking about a new trailer, loading and unloading with ease and safety may be a central consideration, in addition to the trailer's configuration and capacity. Taking a few minutes to consider the pros and cons of each can pay off in the long haul.

Step-Up. Traditional straight-load, step-up trailers can work well for loading, but may present challenges when unloading. Most require a horse to back out, and as he does, his hind legs can easily slip underneath a step-up trailer, especially if he scrambles backward on slick footing. And searching for the ground behind him while unloading can cause a horse to panic or develop a long-term phobia, especially from high-floored trailers. It's possible to add a ramp to some step-up trailers.

Loading Ramp. A ramp can make unloading easier, but slick, steep ramps can also cause a horse to slip and panic, so shop for one that's long enough to offer a low, gradual slope, has a sturdy, non-slip surface, and is easy to lift, assisted by springs.

At a Slant. In many slant-load trailers, horses can be turned around inside and led out head-first, easing some of those loading and unloading headaches. The slant-load design allows more horses to fit into a shorter trailer, and two-horse and three-horse slant-loads with dressing rooms are popular among recreational riders. However, if a horse in the front stall has a problem, the horse(s) behind him must be unloaded to reach him, unless there's a front- or side-load ramp, too.

Straight Shot. In a two-horse straight-load trailer, either horse can be unloaded without removing the other. Also, straight-load trailers can give a horse more stall length to extend his neck. Federal law limits trailer width to 102 inches (8 1/2 feet), so slant-loads can't provide as much stall length, a problem for large horses.

A Question of Comfort

Do horses travel more comfortably and safely in straight-load or slant-load trailers? Expert opinions vary. Several companies, including Sooner, Sundowner, Elite, Featherlite, Hart and

CM Trailers, offer both designs--although many customers reportedly prefer the slant-loads.

However, Tom and Neva Kittrell Scheve, authors of *The Complete Guide to Buying, Maintaining and Servicing a Horse Trailer*, and Chris Barr, president of Brenderup Real Trailers Inc., contend that a straight-load design is better for horses. "In addition to shorter stall space, a slant-load requires a horse to balance himself with his right front and left hind legs when accelerating or decelerating, causing fatigue, soreness, and even lameness over time," says Tom Scheve. "Straight stalls allow him to use both front and hind legs evenly."

Two or Three? Unless you're on the show circuit hauling multiple horses, you're probably looking for a two- or three-horse trailer. Choose carefully based on your needs and your tow vehicle's capacity. "There's a huge difference between a two-horse and a three-horse trailer," says Tom Scheve. "We believe that hauling three horses really necessitates a gooseneck-style trailer to better balance and handle the weight. A three-horse trailer is substantially longer, wider, and heavier--not counting the extra horse's 900 to 1,500 pounds--so you also need a larger, heavier, stronger tow vehicle."

Going Solo. One-horse trailers are also an option. Brenderup Real Trailers offers lightweight Euro-style single-horse trailers designed to be towed by vehicles that Americans don't typically think of as hauling vehicles, including passenger cars. Brenderup Vice President Simon Barr says, "It's so common to see a two-horse trailer with only one horse inside. For those who aren't concerned about extra space for a second horse they don't have, a one-horse trailer is ideal."

Creature Comforts

Modern trailers are generally much larger than their predecessors, offering light, roomy interiors at least 6 feet wide and more than 7 feet high compared to the old 5-foot-wide, 6-foot-tall trailers. But what goes into the design--from ease of use to safety--can make a big difference in day-to-day operation. A few details to consider:

Windows Within Reach. With such tall trailers, some door and window latches can be hard to reach. Sundowner has addressed the problem by moving handles from the top to the bottom of its drop-down head doors for quicker access to the horses inside.

Safer Latches. Smooth latches--such as the "slam latch" found in Exiss trailers--and handles that fold flush to the surface have improved access door and divider safety.

Secure Locks. Many door handles now have deadbolt locks, but they should never be used on horse doors while hauling horses. The need for keys can greatly slow rescue crews in an accident. However, deadbolts are great protection against theft on tack room and dressing room doors.

Safer, Larger Vents. Larger, better-positioned vents and larger windows with safety screens have improved ventilation.

Floor Space and Feedbags. Many trailer models have abandoned the traditional fixed manger. Though you can still find them in some new trailers, you may want to look for breakaway breast bars, which allow floor space for a horse to balance. Removable fabric or vinyl feed bags replace the often-dusty fixed mangers.

Inviting Interiors. Many modern straight-load trailers also have done away with fixed interior posts and dividers. With removable rear posts and dividers that swing to the side, trailers are safer and appear more open, encouraging reluctant loaders.

Safe and Smooth

Safety is a key concern for any horse owner, and new trailers offer features from smooth-as-silk suspension to technology that helps you keep an eye on your horses in transit.

Smooth Rider. Almost all trailers now use rubber torsion suspension, also known as "rubber ride" axles, for silky-smooth road performance and independent suspension at each wheel, a benefit in case of a flat tire. There have been some new developments in "air ride" suspension, but because of the expense and installation, it's generally only available on van-sized trailers for six to 12 horses.

Video-Monitoring Systems. This eyes-in-the-back-of-your-head technology can make trailering

safer and easier. A visual monitor allows the tow-vehicle driver to see the horses in the trailer, or to see the ball and coupler when hooking up. A good system will cost \$600 and up, but can be worth every penny if it helps avert disaster on the road.

Bright Ideas. Another innovation toward road safety is the new LED (light emitting diode) lights that are replacing bulb lights for trailer turn signals, brake lights and running lights. They're much brighter, last longer, burn cooler and use less power.

Balanced Loads. Today, you'll see sport utility vehicles used to haul horses, but their relatively light weight and short wheel bases make them more likely than heavy-duty pickup trucks to be unbalanced and overwhelmed by a horse trailer's weight. A weight distribution system (often mistakenly called "sway bars") helps spread and balance the load, which increases the vehicle's safe towing capacity and prevents its front end from floating. EquiSpirit Trailer Company installs weight distribution brackets as standard equipment on all trailer tongues to encourage use of weight distribution systems.

Luxury Living

If your budget allows, a little luxury can go a long way toward making life on the road more comfortable.

Walk-In Wonders. Check out the spacious walk-in tack and dressing rooms offered on many trailers. Floors are covered in sturdy, non-slip mats or durable, low-weave carpet, and safety-tipped bridle brackets and hooks are plentiful. Swivel-style blanket bars swing out for easy use and back against walls for storage. Saddle racks utilize the stacking system to keep the bulkiest items in a tidy vertical column, and often slide on their frames and are removable for easier cleaning.

Space You Can Live With. If year-round competition or an equine business takes you and your horses on the road, consider a trailer with living quarters. You can cook a meal, take a shower, kick back under an awning, watch a DVD, and get a good night's sleep without leaving the show grounds.

In-Slide-Out. Most living-quarter trailers now offer the option of "slide-outs." When the trailer is parked, these side-to-side wall extensions increase interior space without making the trailer longer. Sooner focuses on the premium and custom market, but sister company Exiss Trailers also offers slide-outs in the mid-range aluminum market.

Contact Us

Air Safe Hitches
264 Lincoln Ave
Island arkh, New York | 11558
Tel. 321-939-2132
Fax. 866-201-3391
airsafehitches.com

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