

# USE OF TRAILERS IN SCOUTING

(EXCERPTED FROM THE RISK ZONE "TRANSPORTING SCOUTS SAFELY" TRAINING)

## LEADING CAUSES OF ACCIDENTS

- ❑ Driver error
- ❑ Excessive speed
- ❑ Failure to allow for vehicle length when making turns
- ❑ Improper loading of the trailer
- ❑ Youth in the path or pinch areas when hitching and parking
- ❑ Lack of pre-trip planning for preferred routes and safe parking areas

## LOADING

- ❑ Put heaviest items over the axle.
- ❑ Load remaining items in front of and around them.
- ❑ Balance weight side to side.
- ❑ Secure loose items so the load won't shift.
- ❑ Never overload the trailer beyond posted GVW.

## HITCHING

- ❑ The hitch and hitch ball must be tight and secure.
- ❑ Always use safety chains and be sure they are secure.
- ❑ Make sure electrical connections and lights are working properly.
- ❑ Be sure the tow vehicle is capable of safely and properly towing the trailer. Review the manufacturer's plate on trailer that lists maximum tongue weight.
- ❑ Check that the hitch on both the vehicle and trailer are in good working order and are sized correctly.
- ❑ Calibrate brakes each time you prepare to pull the trailer. Settings may vary due to loading.

## TOWING

- ❑ Maintain a safe speed.
- ❑ Plan the route. Anticipate hills, downgrades, bad weather, areas subject to high crosswinds, etc.
- ❑ Anticipate stops and apply brakes firmly but gradually.
- ❑ With the added weight, braking distance is increased. Maintain longer distances between vehicles.
- ❑ Reduce speed on curves, wet roads, and downgrades.

## BACKING

- ❑ Use another person as a spotter when backing.
- ❑ Do not rely solely on the rearview mirrors. Turn your head and look at the trailer.
- ❑ The trailer will go right if you turn the wheels to the left. Keep the reverse action in mind when backing.
- ❑ Look occasionally to the front of the vehicle to prevent the vehicle from swinging out and striking something.
- ❑ Avoid "jackknifing" the trailer. Do not back the trailer any further than 90 degrees to the tow vehicle.

## SECURING FROM THEFT

- ❑ Use wheel shocks or boot clamps.
- ❑ Apply a tongue lock when unhitched.
- ❑ Secure all cargo doors with substantial padlocks.

## INSURANCE

### COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL LIABILITY INSURANCE:

- ❑ BSA provides general liability coverage for registered volunteer Scouters with respect to claims arising out of an official Scouting activity, with the *exception* that the coverage is excess over any insurance that may be available to the volunteer for loss arising from the ownership, maintenance, or use of a motor vehicle.
- ❑ This insurance is available only while the vehicle is in the actual use of a Scouting unit and being used for a Scouting purpose.
- ❑ In the event of a motor vehicle accident, the BSA insurance is excess beyond the driver's insurance.

### AUTOMOBILE LIABILITY INSURANCE:

- ❑ All vehicles **MUST** be covered by a liability insurance policy. The amount of this coverage must meet or exceed the insurance requirement of the state in which the vehicle is licensed. BSA recommends, however, that coverage limits for all drivers are at least \$100,000 combined single limit.
- ❑ In the case of rented vehicles, coverage limit requirements can be met by combining the limits of personal coverage carried by the driver with coverage carried by the owner of the rented vehicle.

### PROPERTY INSURANCE:

- ❑ BSA does not provide insurance coverage for property.
- ❑ In the state of Indiana, the driver's insurance provides coverage for the trailer and equipment or contents in the trailer.
- ❑ Drivers who will pull a trailer should review and determine if additional coverage is advised.

## OTHER INFORMATION

- ❑ Obey all traffic laws, including DOT laws regarding commercial motor vehicles / trailers / towing.
- ❑ Never allow passengers to ride in the trailer or in the back of pickups.
- ❑ The driver and all the passengers will use seatbelts.
- ❑ Be well rested and never drive when fatigued.
- ❑ Never pass on hills or curves.
- ❑ Stop frequently to check hitch, chains and cargo.
- ❑ If you have an emergency and must stop, park your vehicle and trailer in a safe place completely off the highway.
- ❑ Designate a "buddy" driver who will follow the trailer and make emergency or fuel stops when you do.

## CONCLUSION

- ❑ The driver is the only person who can decide to stop if conditions are unsafe, get enough rest before a trip, and put away distractions while driving.
- ❑ Every driver must make the decision to arrive safely, exercise discipline, and follow the rules!