

RECREATIONAL vehicles come in all shapes and sizes from the smallest camper shell mounted on a pickup truck to the very largest and expensive self-contained motor home. While the variety of RV's is seemingly endless, certain common sense rules and laws are applicable to all vehicles.

PASSENGERS: In order to transport passengers within a camper they must have access to an exit door which may be opened from the inside and outside. (Vehicle Code Section 23129)

SIGNALING DEVICES: These devices must be installed in all vehicles carrying a camper and be capable of being activated from inside the camper to gain the attention of the driver. The signaling device is not required, if the passengers in the camper, have direct access to the cab of the motor vehicle. (Vehicle Code Section 28080 and 28081)

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS: These must be carried in all recreational vehicles equipped with cooking or heating stoves. (Vehicle Code Section 28060)

WARNING DEVICES: These consist of three approved type red emergency reflectors that must be carried in all trailer coaches and motor homes, and are to be set out during darkness if the vehicle is disabled on or within 10 feet of the roadway. Flares are not legal substitutes.



TOW DOLLIES: These must be coupled to the towing vehicle by means of an adequate safety chain or cable as well as the regular drawbar or other devices. (Vehicle Code Section 29003) The motor vehicle being transported upon the dolly must be secured to the dolly by two separate chains or cables to prevent shifting or separation of the towed vehicle or dolly.

OVERLOADING: This means that your camper exceeds the gross vehicle weight rating of the pickup truck chassis making it liable to easily overturn. Overloading is illegal. (Vehicle Code Section 24002)

MOTORCYCLES: If a two or three wheeler is carried on the front or the rear of another vehicle, it must be safely mounted and not obscure any lighting

devices or license plates. The motorcycle must not interfere with the driver's view to the front or sides and when it is carried upon a passenger car, it may not extend beyond the fenders to the left or more than six inches to the right. (Vehicle Code Section 35111)

If the cycle is to be towed, it must be licensed. In addition, the towing device must be securely mounted and of sufficient strength for the weight of the motorcycle. An adequate safety chain is also required. During darkness, the cycle must be equipped with a headlight, tail lamp, and license plate light. Even when carried in a trailer or pickup, all off-road cycles (and dune buggies) must display proper "off-road" registration or identification. (Vehicle Code Section 38020)

TRAILERS: For those who take to the open road with trailers (and fifth wheels), driving will be much safer and more relaxing when the proper precautions for towing are taken.

DESIGNATED LANES: For RV's, the designated lane must be the right hand lane at all times with the exception:

- When passing
- Preparing to make a turn
- Entering or leaving a highway
- On a highway with four or more lanes in each direction, in which case, you use the extreme two right lanes

FOLLOWING DISTANCE:

- Common sense dictates increased stopping distance when towing a trailer. On two-lane highways, the law requires you to stay at least 300 feet behind any truck or any vehicle towing trailer, except when preparing to pass slow moving vehicles. (Vehicle Code Section 21704)
- On two-lane highways, the law requires any slow moving vehicle, which is impeding the progress of five or more vehicles, to turn off the roadway at either a posted turnout or wherever a sufficient safe area exists. (Vehicle Code Section 21656)
- The law also prohibits a person from driving at such a slow speed as to block or impede normal or reasonable movement of traffic, unless the reduced speed is necessary for safe operation. (Vehicle Code Section 22400)

DRIVING AT NIGHT: Be aware that the added weight of a trailer often tilts the headlights of your car upward to glare in the eyes of oncoming drivers. This is illegal! Check the alignment of headlights after your trailer is attached and make any necessary adjustments.

DRIVING TIPS: The best days of travel are not weekends, unless it is absolutely necessary. Try to avoid traveling in your RV on Saturday and Sunday, these are the two most heavily congested traffic days around recreational areas. Driving weekdays are much more enjoyable and relaxing.

CARAVANS: Most RV caravans occur on two-lane roads, creating a nightmare for drivers of other vehicles. Other drivers can't see ahead, they have difficulty in passing, and as tempers flare, they take chances, or make driving mistakes, thus creating the perfect setting for a traffic collision which could involve YOU. You can contribute to safer roadways in California by discouraging caravans or establishing large spaces between the caravanning vehicles.

TOWING: Towing more than one vehicle with a passenger vehicle or pickup weighing less than 4000 pounds is illegal. The driver is also required to obtain a Class A (Commercial) license when towing more than one vehicle. (Vehicle Code Section 21715)

Vehicles that are towing are required by law not to travel more than 55 miles per hour of speed limit. (Vehicle Code Section 22406)

A TOWED VEHICLE: Must not be allowed to swerve or whip from side to side. (Vehicle Code Section 21711)

MILE POST MARKERS: Are very helpful and easy to understand. On even numbered highways the mileage always begins with 0.00 at the west end going upward as you travel east. On odd numbered highways the miles begin at the south and go upward when traveling north. The number at the top of the paddle indicates the highway/freeway being traveled. The letters abbreviated indicates the county.

REAR VIEW MIRRORS: When the trailer or the load affects the driver's view to the rear, the law requires two rear view mirrors, one on each side of the towing vehicle, to give the driver an unobstructed view of the highway at least 200 feet behind. (Vehicle Code Section 26709)

TRAILER HITCH AND SAFETY CHAIN: Every trailer hitch shall be properly and securely mounted and strong enough for the weight being towed. Remember, it is much safer to secure the hitch to your vehicle's frame rather than the bumper. There must also be a safety chain connecting both vehicles, strong enough to control the towed vehicle in case the hitch fails. (Vehicle Code Section 29004)

If at any time
you have
a question
regarding traffic laws,
do not hesitate
to contact your local
CHP office.

For directions, road, or
weather conditions, call
1-800-TELL-CHP.

REMEMBER – Maintenance done at home
is a breakdown prevented on the road!



Recreational Vehicles



TURN SIGNALS: The law lists specific types of trailers which must be equipped with turn signals. Remember, turn signals must be installed on all towed vehicles when the signals from the towing vehicle are obscured or obstructed. (Vehicle Code Sections 24950 and 24605)

