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Safety Tips for Towing Your Car or Boat by Hiteshbhoi

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If you restore antique cars, ride dirt bikes or own a boat, it's important to know how to tow a vehicle properly. Driving while towing can be hazardous if you don't follow simple safety tips.

Suzuki, manufacturer of a variety of vehicles for outdoor enthusiasts, suggests the following guidelines for towing:

* Always use safety chains and follow the manufacturer's recommendation for attaching them. Safety chains are required and should be crossed under the tongue of the trailer so that the tongue will not drop to the road if it becomes separated from the hitch. Do not attach them to the bumper. Leave enough slack so you can turn, and make sure the safety chains do not drag on the ground.

* Be sure the brake lights, taillights and turn signals of the towed vehicle operate in sync with the vehicle being driven. This is a requirement in all 50 states. You can use brake/signal light accessory kits, which are strapped or magnetically connected to the rear of the vehicle being towed.

* Use the right tow vehicle. Before purchasing a tow vehicle, it's best to determine the maximum weight you might tow and then match that weight to a vehicle of your choice. For example, the 2006 Grand Vitara can tow up to 3,000 pounds.

* Practice steering before hitting the highway. Remember that when backing up, the trailer turns the opposite way you turn your wheel. Experts suggest placing your hand at the bottom of the steering wheel and moving it the way you want the trailer to go when in reverse. Make slow, easy steering adjustments.

* Anticipate stops and brake early.

* Make certain the load in the trailer is secured so that the load can't move or shift.

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