

2011 GUIDE TO DINGHY TOWING



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Tow & Go

If you enjoy the thrill of exploring the open road in your motorhome, you've probably found a few instances where bigger is not always better. That's where towing a dinghy behind your coach becomes advantageous. Want to know more? The 2011 Guide to Dinghy Towing provides a selection of informative articles and a listing of new vehicles ready-made to enhance your RVing lifestyle.

Granted, no manufacturer has yet to engineer a plug-and-play setup directly from the factory, but it's never been simpler to equip both dinghy and motorhome for road duty.

For starters, as highlighted in "Things to Know Before You Tow" (page 6), the hard hookup between motorhome and dinghy has become an easy one-person operation: self-aligning tow bars make cinching up a breeze; with some tow-bar designs, even routing cables and wiring through hollow arms, the connection is more than easy, it's eye-pleasing. Plus, manufacturers are offering an array of accessories to help keep it that way: An RV underskirt, fitted beneath the equipment, will safeguard the dinghy vehicle and towing hardware from debris. For more ironclad protection, nearly indestructible rock guards are available that quickly attach to the tow bar and shield the dinghy from road debris.

Yet another device to aid in safe dinghy transport, supplemental braking systems have likewise evolved. Portable systems can be installed in just minutes, and even permanent installations remain

unobtrusive. Dinghy brakes may not be mandatory in some states but anytime you add a few tons of weight to the back of your motorhome, you need a way to slow it down without taxing the brakes on your coach.

And make no mistake, contemporary motorhomes can accommodate a lot of dinghy weight. While many new chassis are rated to handle at least 4,000 pounds of dinghy weight, certain luxury coaches today carry gross combined weight ratings (GCWR) of 60,000 pounds or more — with up to 25 percent of that dedicated to towing.

The focus of our annual dinghy towing guide is the dinghies themselves. Manufacturers are becoming increasingly sensitive to the needs of the motorhome community, and the "2011 Dinghy Roundup" (beginning on page 12) lists more than 100 vehicles that have been manufacturer-certified for four-wheels-down towing. The list includes many of the newest vehicles — including six hybrids. For all-terrain fun, there are plenty of 4WD vehicles to choose from. While some vehicles are easy to tow, others require that very specific procedures be followed before and during towing to prevent damage. This year we've included expanded information on the manufacturer guidelines required for flat towing, though you'll still need to check the owner's manual for more detailed procedures.

As motorhomes continue to grow in size and stature, life on the road has never been more comfortable. A dinghy adds to that enjoyment. ♦

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2011 GUIDE TO DINGHY TOWING

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Linking up with the
proper equipment



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manufacturer-approved flat-
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28 TOWING ACCESSORIES

Prepping your dinghy for
safe travel





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Things To Know Before You Tow

The right equipment adds safety, simplicity and convenience

Traveling with a dinghy vehicle is almost a given with today's larger motorhomes.

Although the trend to bigger coaches has injected camping with more creature comforts than a luxury hotel room, it's not without its drawbacks. Even rigs with a 60-degree wheel cut will encounter some difficulty negotiating narrow roads in smaller towns during sightseeing tours — and it's just not fun trying to park a 40-footer at local markets when picking up perishables.

A dinghy simplifies such tasks, and eliminates the need to break camp and stow everything each time you need (or want) to venture away from the campground. Additionally, the dinghy can stow gear securely when motorhome storage is filled (within weight restrictions), and there is

the security of having a spare set of wheels in the event of an emergency.

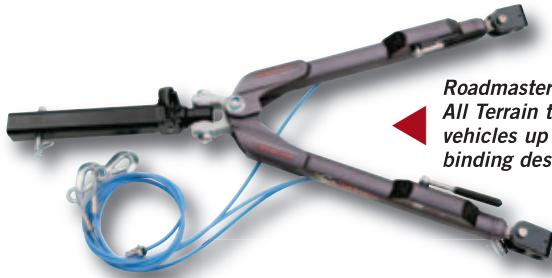
It's not without consequences; towing a dinghy will affect the acceleration, fuel economy and braking of any motorhome, to some degree. However, proper selection of a dinghy and towing equipment will enable you to safely and conveniently enjoy the benefits of auxiliary transportation.

Flat Towing

The first and most essential step in selecting a dinghy vehicle is to make sure it is approved by its manufacturer for flat towing (see "2011 Dinghy Roundup," page 12). While you do have other options — many passenger cars or light trucks can safely be used as a dinghy, provided a

While driving your dinghy, this type of tow bar remains on the coach, tucked out of harm's way.





Roadmaster's all-aluminum Sterling All Terrain tow bar is rated to handle vehicles up to 6,000 pounds. Non-binding design facilitates hookup.

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



Aventa LX from Blue Ox uses a ball-in-socket design, which allows the arms to swivel 360 degrees for quick hookup. The tow bar is rated to tow vehicles up to 10,000 pounds.

towing accessory (such as a transmission lube pump) is available for that specific model as an aftermarket add-on, or towing on a dolly or trailer is planned — these vehicles have been certified for four-wheels-down towing without affecting their warranties. However, **buyers should always first confirm flat-towability by consulting the vehicle's owner's manual before the purchase is finalized.**

When selecting a dinghy, first find out the maximum towing limit of your motorhome and then determine which vehicles fall within that limit. 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 be upgraded. Keep in mind, however, that an upgraded hitch receiver cannot increase the specified towing limit set by the chassis manufacturer.

An economical four-passenger compact car can double as a family's second car when not traveling, but even a larger SUV or sport truck can be towed, providing its weight is within the towing limit of your chassis.



Drop receivers keep tow bars level.

Most flat-towed dinghies track so well that many motorhome drivers don't even know it's there.

Front-wheel-drive (FWD) vehicles with manual transmissions and most compact 4WD vehicles with manual transfer cases 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 the expense of towing equipment is minimal, and readying for towing usually involves fewer steps.

But some vehicles do require special procedures, such as starting the engine every 200 miles to circulate transmission fluid. Note that this cannot simply be circumvented by overfilling the transmission before towing, because the problem isn't caused by lack of sufficient fluid but rather by lack of oil circulation. Such practices, although inconvenient, are designed to prevent drivetrain damage and must be incorporated into the towing routine.

Another vehicle-specific consideration is that towing some dinghies with the ignition switch in a position that allows the steering column to remain unlocked also leaves power applied to various electrical circuits. Over the course of a full day of towing, this can lead to significant battery drain. While strategies for dealing with this vary considerably by model, most fixes involve temporarily unplugging one or more fuses from the vehicle's fuse box before towing. A more involved alternative is to connect the offending circuit through an owner-added switch, allowing these circuits to be made tow-ready by the mere flip of a switch.

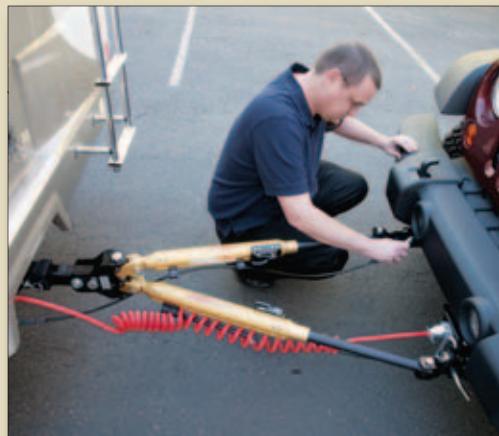
The Motorhome/Dinghy Link



Baseplate installation does not require welding or specialized tools, but can be involved. If you have any reservations, have a professional do it.



To hook up using a telescoping tow bar, the dinghy vehicle only needs to be near the center and mid-length of the bar.



Connecting tow-bar arms to the baseplate requires the use of pins and clips. Then secure the safety cables and plug in the electrical umbilical cord.



Once the pins are in, the motorhome is driven ahead slowly (or the dinghy is backed up) to lock the arms in position.

An essential ingredient in 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 you intend to pull and, when applicable, designed for the specific application.

Hitch Receivers

Check the rating of your hitch receiver to ensure that it is rated for the heaviest load you intend to pull. If a receiver is already installed on your coach,

the weight limits and class should be visible on it.

However, the riding height of a motorhome rarely matches up with that of the chosen dinghy, oftentimes necessitating the use of an adjustable-height drop receiver to allow the tow bar to ride level. Receivers should be bolted (not welded) in place, using at least Grade 5 bolts and lock washers, locking nuts and thread-locking sealer.

Tow Bars

Tow bars are available in two basic styles: A-frame or self-aligning. A-frame tow bars (offered as "solid" or "folding"), while the most economical,

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 than the solid design. 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 is a one-person operation. Highly adaptable, self-aligning tow bars fit a broad range of vehicles by attaching to model-specific baseplates: Class III (5,000-LB) or Class IV (10,000-LB) models are available. Contact tow-bar manufacturers to find out if baseplates are offered for the dinghy you plan to tow.

Baseplates

Baseplates are perhaps the most critical variable in this link. While tow bars and, obviously, hitch receivers are intended for mass fitment, different brands, models and years of dinghy vehicles require different baseplates and installation procedures, so proper selection and installation are essential.

Installing a baseplate typically entails very specific procedures. On some vehicles the bumper covering (fascia) must be temporarily removed. Some minor drilling may be required and the bumper covering and/or grille may also require some 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 either trimming or permanent removal. Such requirements 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.

Remember, too, that 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 should 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 not drag when slack.

Before You Tow

- Make sure your equipment is rated for the dinghy's weight and that you are not exceeding your motorhome's gross combination weight rating (GCWR).
- Confirm hitch height is correct.
- Confirm all hitch bolts and tow-bar and baseplate fasteners are securely tightened.
- Confirm all hitch and wiring connections are engaged and secure; all safety chains or cables are attached; and all locking pins are properly installed.
- Connect brake system and breakaway device.
- Check motorhome and dinghy for proper function of taillights, brakelights and turn signals.
- Check tire pressure of all tires on motorhome and dinghy — including spare tires.
- Make sure the dinghy is set up for towing: steering unlocked; hand brake off; gear selector in the position specified by manufacturer; ignition in proper position; lube-pump switch, driveshaft coupler, 4WD transfer case and hubs (if applicable) in proper position.

As You Go

- Observe the speed limit for towing in each state or province you traverse.
- Maintain 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 particular attention to traffic merging onto the freeway, and be prepared to take evasive action to avoid "daydreamers."
- 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. Dollies tend to jackknife quickly. It's better to disconnect the dinghy and drive to a safe place to reconnect.
- Avoid having to make tight turns; they put a lot of pressure on tow bars.
- Towing in deep sand or gravel may cause the dinghy's front wheels to turn to one side. If this happens, you must manually recenter them before continuing.
- Walk around the coach and dinghy to inspect all connections, check tire pressure (or use a monitoring system like the nVision TPMS from Hopkins) and look for signs of trouble every time you stop.

Other Towing Equipment

Should you choose (or already own) a vehicle that is not flat-towable as produced, there are retrofit kits for many models. One retrofitter, Remco Manufacturing (www.remco-towing.com) estimates 80 percent of passenger vehicles can be modified to serve as dinghies with its line of retrofit products.

For rear-wheel-drive (RWD) and some 4WD applications, couplers enable the driveshaft to be easily disconnected from the transmission or differential by a cable or lever mounted near the driver's seat. These kits run about \$750 and can be installed in about three hours.

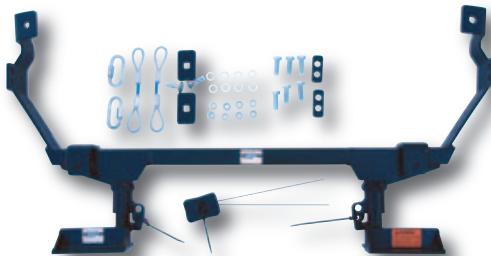
A transmission-lube pump can be mounted and plumbed into some automatic transmissions to keep fluid circulating while the vehicle is in tow.

Other FWD vehicles can be adapted using a Remco axle-lock disengagement device. Check with your dealer to make sure a specific modification does not affect the dinghy's warranty.

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

Trailers track better than dollies, but they take up even more precious space in camp. Also, the weight of the trailer drastically cuts into the total weight that can be pulled behind a motorhome, thereby making this method a distant third choice.

There are a number of other accessories for dinghy towing. Some, like dinghy braking devices, should be considered mandatory, while others (such as rock guards and RV underskirts) protect against road debris. These components are addressed in "Towing Accessories" (page 28), along with dinghy wiring and lighting. ◆



Baseplate kits are designed for specific models, and come complete with all mounting hardware.



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



Lube pumps allow towing of some automatic transmission-equipped vehicles not manufacturer-approved for flat towing.

2011 Guide to Dinghy Towing Sponsors

Produced by the editors of MotorHome for the publication's March issue, the 2011 *Guide to Dinghy Towing* was developed with assistance from the following manufacturers:

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2011 DINGHY ROUNDUP



Ford Fiesta

PHOTO: RICH COX PHOTOGRAPHY

Several all-new models and significant revisions to existing lines highlight this year's choices

BY CHRIS HEMER



Chevrolet Cruze



Ford F-150

There's little doubt that 2010 was a rebuilding year for the automotive industry, as domestic and foreign manufacturers paused to reconsider their product lines and think outside the box on products, pricing and fuel economy. As a result, many of the models, even brands you once knew (such as Mercury) are no longer with us, but there are still several all-new cars making the list this year, as well as several significantly revised models.

As in previous years, the vehicles listed in this guide must be **approved by the manufacturer** for dinghy towing. That means the manufacturer is familiar with the practice of dinghy towing, and has confirmed that its vehicle can be flat towed in this manner without causing damage to the drivetrain or otherwise voiding the warranty. Second, the vehicle must be towable without requiring significant mechanical modification (such as disconnecting the driveshaft). Lastly, the vehicle must be towable at a speed of at least 55 MPH for no fewer than 200 miles before some sort

of prescribed startup procedure is required to circulate fluid through the transmission.

We have made every effort to check, and double-check, with each manufacturer to make sure our listings are correct and current. However, bear in mind that much of the information we receive is preliminary, and can change after press time. Therefore, **it is the buyer's responsibility to check with the dealer to be certain that the vehicle under consideration is dinghy towable prior to purchase.** Ask to see a copy of the owner's manual; somewhere in the index, there should be a notation for "recreational," "four-down" or "flat" towing. This will not only tell you if the vehicle is, in fact, towable, but also what specific procedures are required to prevent damage to the transmission, drive system, etc.

If the owner's manual states that the vehicle is not towable, or skips the subject entirely, there are kits and products available to make towing a "non-towable" vehicle possible. However, there is the possibility that the act of flat towing, and/or the

installation of a towing product on a nonapproved vehicle, can void the vehicle's warranty, so it's best to deal with a reputable aftermarket provider — such as Remco — that can guide you accordingly.

We know that there will be some vehicles that are not listed in this guide that can be towed with success, despite the manufacturer's claims to the contrary. How can that be? Usually, it's because the manufacturer has not officially verified that the vehicle in question is towable or because it does not want to deal with any potential warranty claims that may arise as a result of dinghy towing. But that does not necessarily mean that the vehicle can't be safely dinghy towed. When in doubt, it's probably best to stick with the vehicles that are officially approved.

That said, let's review what's new for the 2011 model year.



Ford Explorer

Chevrolet Cruze

The long-awaited replacement for the Cobalt, the all-new Chevrolet Cruze makes its debut this year, and promises the spaciousness and amenities of a midsize car with the fuel economy of a compact. Making the latter possible is a choice of two fuel-sipping engines: a normally aspirated 1.8-L four cylinder and a 1.4-L Ecotec turbocharged four cylinder, the latter of which delivers up to 28 MPG city/42 MPG highway in the Cruze Eco model. Standard safety features include 10 air bags, StabiliTrak electronic stability control, traction control, anti-lock brakes and OnStar with a six-month subscription including turn-by-turn navigation and Automatic Crash Response. Standard amenities include air conditioning, power windows and power door locks with remote keyless entry. The Cruze is available in five trim levels (LS, LT, 2LT, Eco, LTZ) and offers an available RS appearance package on the LT and LTZ models. Perhaps best of all for motorhome owners is that the Cruze is towable with either automatic or manual transmission.

Ford Explorer

The vehicle that helped define the term SUV, the Explorer, is finally all new for 2011. Handsome styling is combined with reduced weight, improved driving dynamics and increased off-road capability, not to mention a new, standard 3.5-L V-6 with Twin Independent Variable Camshaft Timing (Ti-VCT) and a six-speed automatic transmission. Ti-VCT allows individually optimized camshaft timing of valve opening and closing vents to improve mechanical efficiency while delivering increased power and reducing part-throttle emissions, according to Ford. Ford projects that the new engine, combined with the new transmission, will deliver more than 20 percent better fuel economy than the previous Explorer V-6 model, all while laying down 290 HP and 255 LB-FT of torque. V-6 models are available with an intelligent 4WD that includes driver-selectable terrain management. Settings include normal, mud, sand and snow. For those who consider fuel economy a top priority, the Explorer is also available with a turbocharged and intercooled 2.0-L EcoBoost engine that employs direct injection as well as Ti-VCT to deliver a projected 237 HP and 250 LB-FT of torque.

Ford F-150

America's best-selling truck, the venerable Ford F-150, has undergone the most extensive powertrain overhaul in its 62-year history. Consisting of an all-new 3.7-L V-6 (302-HP), 5.0-L and 6.2-L V-8's (360-HP and 411-HP, respectively) and an interesting turbocharged 3.5-L V-6 EcoBoost option (365-HP and 420 LB-FT of torque), Ford claims the engines offer best-in-class power and fuel economy. Each engine will be mated to an equally new six-speed automatic transmission with an available SelectShift feature that allows the driver to manually select a desired gear, and "progressive range select," which allows the driver to lock out the available gears while in drive. Only 4WD models equipped with a manual-shift transfer case are flat-towable.

Ford Fiesta

Another anticipated small-car arrival is the all-new Ford Fiesta. With styling that resembles its larger sibling, the Focus, the Fiesta is available in four- and five-door body styles and is powered by a 1.6-L in-line four cylinder that delivers up to 29 MPG city and 38 MPG highway. Although both the five-speed manual and six-speed automatic trans-



Hyundai Genesis Coupe 2.0T



Jeep Grand Cherokee

mission models are towable, the automatic transmission version requires very specific preparation prior to towing, which includes disconnecting the negative battery cable (see the following chart for more details). The Fiesta's automatic transmission — dubbed the PowerShift — claims to combine the responsiveness of a manual transmission with the convenience of a traditional automatic, and yields better fuel economy than either. Instead of the familiar torque converter, the PowerShift utilizes twin internal dry clutches, for lighter weight and reduced friction. Already a best-seller in Europe and Asia, the Fiesta offers standard features such as push-button start, tilt/telescoping steering wheel, automatic climate control and seven air bags (including a driver's-side knee air bag). The Fiesta is offered in a rainbow of cheerful hues, including Yellow Blaze, Red Candy, Lime Squeeze, Bright Magenta and Blue Flame.

Hyundai Genesis Coupe

The Hyundai Genesis Coupe has garnered much attention in the automotive media both for its good looks and impressive performance, and this year the 2.0T model with five-speed manual transmission makes the list. A turbocharged and intercooled 2.0-L four-cylinder churns out 210 HP while maintaining a respectable 21 MPG city and 30 MPG highway. The 2.0T is available in base, 2.0T Premium and 2.0 R-Spec trim levels, enabling buyers to choose features based on luxury or sporting themes.

Jeep Grand Cherokee

The Jeep Grand Cherokee is all new for 2011 and is packed with features that make it more capable both on and off road. For example, the 4WD Grand Cherokee Overland model features a new Jeep Selec-Terrain system with five terrain settings and a Quadra-Lift air suspension system with five height settings for a lift range of 4.1 inches. The Grand Cherokee also offers more than 45 safety and security features including electronic stability control, side-curtain and seat-

mounted side air bags and active head restraints. Optional safety features include a Blind Spot Monitoring/Rear Cross Path detection system, adaptive cruise control and forward collision monitoring. Of course, the new Grand Cherokee is also offered with a variety of convenience and entertainment features, such as Bluetooth hands-free calling and streaming audio, Uconnect Web, FLO TV and Sirius Backseat TV.

Nissan Juke

If you want something truly different, perhaps the Nissan Juke "sport cross" is what you've been looking for. Edgy styling cues inspired by motorcycles and rally cars are complemented by a standard 1.6-L Direct Injection Gasoline (DIG) turbocharged engine that develops a spirited 188 HP. Although available with all-wheel drive and a Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT), only the SV and SL models with front-wheel drive and standard six-speed manual transmission are towable. EPA fuel economy ratings of 24 MPG city, 31 MPG highway make for economical travel, and standard features include a Bluetooth hands-free phone system with steering wheel controls, six-speaker audio system with iPod interface, power windows/locks, remote keyless entry and air conditioning.

Suzuki Kizashi

Suzuki's Grand Vitara has long been a favorite of RVers, and this year the company has approved another model for dinghy towing: the Suzuki Kizashi. Armed with a 185-HP 2.4-L four cylinder, the Kizashi can be towed when fitted with the six-speed manual transmission and front-wheel drive. Well-equipped in base S model form, the Kizashi comes standard with push-button start, dual zone climate control, stability control and eight air bags. The Sport GTS model adds alloy wheels, moon roof, fog lights and a 425-watt Rockford Fosgate audio system. ♦

**This guide addresses only 2011 vehicles.
Guides for earlier model years are available
online at www.motorhomemagazine.com.**

2011 DINGHY ROUNDUP

MAKE/ MODEL	BASE CURB WEIGHT	SPEED/ DISTANCE LIMITS	TOWABLE WITH MANUAL TRANS.	TOWABLE WITH AUTO TRANS.	MILEAGE CITY/ HWY.	APPROX. RETAIL PRICE	SPECIAL PROCEDURES (SEE OWNER'S MANUAL FOR DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS)
BUICK							
Enclave FWD, AWD	4,780- 4,985	65 MPH/None	N/A	Yes	17/24 16/22	\$35,615- \$44,095	Run engine at the beginning of each day and at each fuel stop for 5 minutes. Remove 15-amp ECM fuse and 50-amp BATT1 fuse while towing.
LaCrosse FWD	3,829	65 MPH/None	N/A	Yes	19/30	\$26,995- \$33,765	Run engine at the beginning of each day and at each fuel stop for 5 minutes.
LaCrosse AWD	4,196	65 MPH/None	N/A	Yes	17/27	\$33,070	Run engine at the beginning of each day and at each fuel stop for 5 minutes.
Regal 2.4-L CXL	3,600	65 MPH/None	N/A	Yes	19/30	\$26,245	Run engine at the beginning of each day and at each fuel stop for 5 minutes.
CADILLAC							
Escalade Hybrid 4WD	6,120	None	N/A	Yes	20/23	\$76,390- \$88,140	
SRX 3.0-L V-6	4,224	65 MPH/None	N/A	Yes	18/25	\$33,830- \$44,895	Run engine at the beginning of each day and at each fuel stop for 5 minutes. Remove BCM 1, BCM 2 and BCM 3 fuses.
SRX 3.0-L V-6 AWD	4,387	65 MPH/None	N/A	Yes	17/23	\$40,755- \$48,540	Run engine at the beginning of each day and at each fuel stop for 5 minutes. Remove BCM 1, BCM 2 and BCM 3 fuses.
CHEVROLET							
Avalanche 4WD	5,942	None	N/A	Yes	15/21	\$39,160- \$49,310	Requires optional Active, 2-Speed Transfer Case.
Colorado 4WD	3,584	None	Yes	Yes	17/23	\$20,550- \$28,135	
Cruze	3,102	65 MPH/None	Yes	Yes	24/36	\$16,275- \$21,975	Run engine at the beginning of each day and at each fuel stop for 5 minutes. Remove fuse 22 while towing.
Equinox	3,786	65 MPH/None	N/A	Yes	22/32	\$22,745- \$28,320	Run engine at the beginning of each day and at each fuel stop for 5 minutes. Remove fuse 32 while towing.
Equinox AWD	3,929	65 MPH/None	N/A	Yes	20/29	\$24,495- \$30,070	Run engine at the beginning of each day and at each fuel stop for 5 minutes. Remove fuse 32 while towing.
HHR	3,155	65 MPH/None	Yes	Yes	22/30	\$18,720- \$21,420	Remove fuse 8 from Floor Console Fuse Block while towing.
Malibu	3,415	65 MPH/None	N/A	Yes	22/30	\$21,975- \$27,015	Run engine at the beginning of each day and at each fuel stop for 5 minutes. Remove IGN SENSOR fuse while towing.
Silverado 1500 4WD	4,892	None	N/A	Yes	14/18	\$24,090- \$41,775	

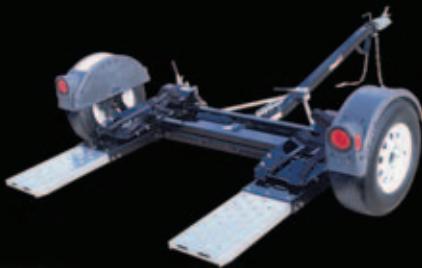
2011 DINGHY ROUNDUP

MAKE/ MODEL	BASE CURB WEIGHT	SPEED/ DISTANCE LIMITS	TOWABLE WITH MANUAL TRANS.	TOWABLE WITH AUTO TRANS.	MILEAGE CITY/ HWY.	APPROX. RETAIL PRICE	SPECIAL PROCEDURES (SEE OWNER'S MANUAL FOR DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS)
Silverado 1500 4WD Hybrid	5,882	None	N/A	Yes	21/22	\$41,490-\$47,820	
Suburban 4WD	5,921	None	N/A	Yes	15/21	\$43,770-\$56,170	Requires optional Active, 2-Speed Transfer Case.
Tahoe 4WD	5,814	None	N/A	Yes	15/21	\$41,630-\$54,160	Requires optional Active, 2-Speed Transfer Case.
Tahoe 4WD Hybrid	5,891	None	N/A	Yes	20/23	\$53,540	
Traverse	4,720	65 MPH/None	N/A	Yes	17/24	\$29,224-\$37,975	Run engine at the beginning of each day and at each fuel stop for 5 minutes. Remove 15-amp ECM fuse and 50-amp BATT1 fuse while towing.
Traverse AWD	4,925	65 MPH/None	N/A	Yes	16/23	\$31,224-\$39,975	Run engine at the beginning of each day and at each fuel stop for 5 minutes. Remove 15-amp ECM fuse and 50-amp BATT1 fuse while towing.
DODGE							
Caliber	2,940	None	Yes	No	23/29	\$16,880-\$20,085	
Dakota 4WD	4,407	None	N/A	Yes	14/19	\$27,005-\$33,180	Press NEUTRAL button on transfer case for 4 seconds, start engine, shift into REVERSE, release brake pedal for 5 seconds, shift into DRIVE, release brake pedal for 5 seconds, shut engine off, shift into PARK and disconnect negative battery cable.
Ram 1500 4WD	4,893	None	N/A	Yes	13/18	\$25,065-\$41,585	
Ram 2500 4WD	5,997	None	Yes	Yes	13/19	\$30,520-\$43,965	For models with manual shift transfer case, shut engine off, press brake pedal, shift transmission into NEUTRAL, shift transfer case lever to NEUTRAL, start engine, shift transmission into REVERSE, release brake pedal for 5 seconds, shift transmission into DRIVE, release brake pedal for 5 seconds, turn engine off, shift transmission to PARK.
Ram 3500 4WD	7,152	None	Yes	Yes	Not Rated	\$38,220-\$51,465	For models with manual shift transfer case, shut engine off, press brake pedal, shift transmission into NEUTRAL, shift transfer case lever to NEUTRAL, start engine, shift transmission into REVERSE, release brake pedal for 5 seconds, shift transmission into DRIVE, release brake pedal for 5 seconds, turn engine off, shift transmission to PARK.
FORD							
Edge FWD, AWD	4,082	65 MPH/None	N/A	Yes	19/27	\$27,220-\$38,070	Run engine at the beginning of each day and at each fuel stop for 5 minutes.

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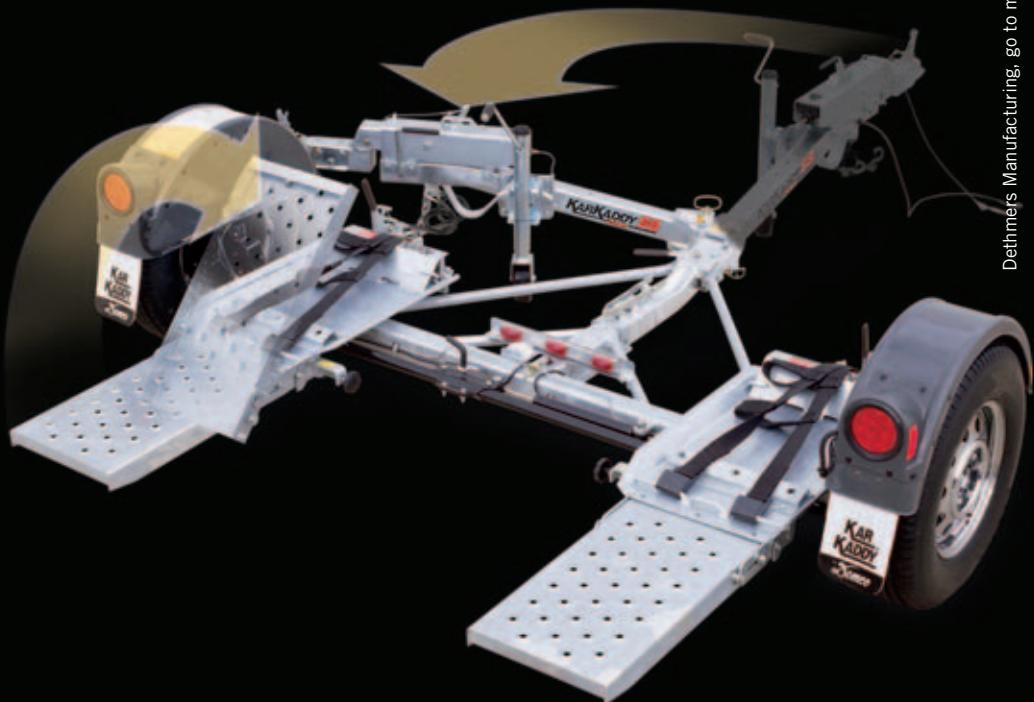
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2011 DINGHY ROUNDUP

MAKE/ MODEL	BASE CURB WEIGHT	SPEED/ DISTANCE LIMITS	TOWABLE WITH MANUAL TRANS.	TOWABLE WITH AUTO TRANS.	MILEAGE CITY/ HWY.	APPROX. RETAIL PRICE	SPECIAL PROCEDURES (SEE OWNER'S MANUAL FOR DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS)
Escape I-4	3,231	70 MPH/None	Yes	Yes (a)	23/28	\$21,060-\$25,730	(a) Maximum speed with automatic transmission is 65 MPH. For automatic transmission, run engine at the beginning of each day for 5 minutes (shift into DRIVE, then REVERSE and NEUTRAL) and then every 6 hours. Transmission fluid level should be checked by authorized Ford dealer.
Escape V-6	3,388	65 MPH/None	N/A	Yes	19/25	\$25,050-\$28,480	Run engine at the beginning of each day for 5 minutes (shift into DRIVE, then REVERSE and NEUTRAL) and then every 6 hours. Transmission fluid level should be checked by authorized dealer.
Escape Hybrid	3,652-3,811	75 MPH/None	N/A	Yes	30/27	\$29,865-\$34,125	
Explorer FWD, 4WD	4,509- 4,695	65 MPH/None	N/A	Yes	17/23	\$28,190-\$37,190	Run engine at the beginning of each day for 5 minutes (shift into DRIVE, then REVERSE and NEUTRAL) and then every 6 hours.
F-150 4WD	4,925	None	N/A	Yes	16/21	\$23,390-\$48,970	Only 4WD models equipped with manual-shift transfer case are towable. Shift manual transfer case into NEUTRAL. 2WD and 4WD vehicles equipped with an electronic-shift transfer case are not flat towable.
F-250/F-350/ F-450 Super Duty 4WD	6,985	None	N/A	Yes	Not Rated	\$30,995-\$62,375	Only 4WD models with manual-shift transfer case (not Electronic Shift-On-the-Fly or 2WD vehicles) are towable. Shift manual transfer case into NEUTRAL, set hub locks to free.
Fiesta	2,578	70 MPH/None	Yes	Yes	29/38	\$13,320-\$18,190	For models with automatic transmission, but no push-button start: release parking brake; turn ignition to II position; press brake pedal, then move gearshift to NEUTRAL; turn ignition key to OFF position; disconnect negative cable from battery. After towing, start engine within 15 minutes of reconnecting battery cable. For models with automatic transmission and push-button start: release parking brake; activate ignition by pressing START/STOP button; press brake pedal, then move gearshift to NEUTRAL; deactivate ignition by pressing START/STOP button; disconnect negative cable from battery. After towing, start engine within 15 minutes of reconnecting battery cable.

2011 DINGHY ROUNDUP

MAKE/ MODEL	BASE CURB WEIGHT	SPEED/ DISTANCE LIMITS	TOWABLE WITH MANUAL TRANS.	TOWABLE WITH AUTO TRANS.	MILEAGE CITY/ HWY.	APPROX. RETAIL PRICE	SPECIAL PROCEDURES (SEE OWNER'S MANUAL FOR DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS)
Flex FWD/AWD	4,471-4,784	65 MPH/None	N/A	Yes	17/24	\$29,075-\$45,185	Run engine at the beginning of each day and at each fuel stop for 5 minutes.
Focus	2,623	None	Yes	No	25/35	\$16,640-\$19,670	
Fusion (2.5-L I-4/ 3.0-L V-6)	3,285-3,638	70 MPH/None	Yes	Yes (b)	22/29	\$19,695-\$28,505	(b) Maximum speed with automatic transmission is 65 MPH. For automatic transmission, run engine at the beginning of each day for 5 minutes (shift into DRIVE, then REVERSE and NEUTRAL) and then every 6 hours. Vehicles with an automatic transmission should have transmission fluid level checked by authorized dealer.
Fusion Hybrid	3,720	75 MPH/None	N/A	Yes	41/36	\$28,100	
Ranger 2WD	3,030	55 MPH/None	Yes	No	22/27	\$17,935-\$26,025	
Ranger 4WD	3,668	55 MPH/None	Yes (c)	Yes (d)	22/27	\$17,935-\$26,025	(c) For manual transmission models, put 4WD switch in 2WD mode. Electronic Shift-On-the-Fly rotary control in 2-high position. (d) 4WD vehicles with automatic transmission and electronic shift transfer case require neutral tow kit accessory — contact a Ford dealer. Do not tow without the neutral tow kit.
Taurus	4,015-4,224	65 MPH/None	N/A	Yes	18/28	\$25,170-\$37,770	Run engine at the beginning of each day and at each fuel stop for 5 minutes.
GMC							
Acadia FWD/AWD	4,720-4,925	65 MPH/None	N/A	Yes	17/24 16/23	\$31,840-\$45,220	Run engine at the beginning of each day and at each fuel stop for 5 minutes. Remove 15-amp ECM fuse and 50-amp BATT1 fuse while towing.
Canyon 4WD	3,684	None	Yes	Yes	17/23	\$20,490-\$29,835	
Sierra 1500 4WD	4,877	None	N/A	Yes	14/18	\$24,090-\$42,275	
Sierra 1500 4WD Hybrid	5,781	None	N/A	Yes	20/23	\$41,860-\$48,190	
Terrain FWD/AWD	3,798	65 MPH/None	N/A	Yes	22/32 20/29	\$24,250-\$31,400	Run engine at the beginning of each day and at each fuel stop for 5 minutes. Remove fuse 32 while towing. After towing, let engine idle for more than 3 minutes before driving the vehicle.
Yukon 4WD	5,560	None	N/A	Yes	14/19	\$42,595-\$46,905	Only 4WD models equipped with a two-speed automatic transfer case are towable.

2011 DINGHY ROUNDUP

MAKE/ MODEL	BASE CURB WEIGHT	SPEED/ DISTANCE LIMITS	TOWABLE WITH MANUAL TRANS.	TOWABLE WITH AUTO TRANS.	MILEAGE CITY/ HWY.	APPROX. RETAIL PRICE	SPECIAL PROCEDURES (SEE OWNER'S MANUAL FOR DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS)
Yukon 4WD Hybrid	5,874	None	N/A	Yes	20/23	\$54,010-\$61,360	
Yukon XL 4WD	5,836	None	N/A	Yes	14/19	\$44,845-\$50,745	Only 4WD models equipped with a two-speed automatic transfer case are towable.
HONDA							
CR-V	3,386	65 MPH/None	N/A	Yes	21/28	\$21,695-\$28,645	Run engine at the beginning of each day, press brake pedal and move shifter through all positions, shift into DRIVE and hold for 5 seconds, then to NEUTRAL and let engine run for 3 minutes. Repeat at least every 8 hours thereafter. When towing for long periods, remove 7.5-A accessory radio fuse.
CR-V 4WD	3,503	65 MPH/None	N/A	Yes	21/27	\$22,945-\$29,895	Run engine at the beginning of each day, press brake pedal and move shifter through all positions, shift into DRIVE and hold for 5 seconds, then to NEUTRAL and let engine run for 3 minutes. Repeat at least every 8 hours thereafter. When towing for long periods, remove 7.5-A accessory radio fuse.
Fit	2,489- 2,575	65 MPH/None	Yes	Yes (e)	28/35	\$15,100-\$19,240	(e) On automatic transmission models, run engine at the beginning of each day, press brake pedal and move shifter through all positions, shift into DRIVE and hold for 5 seconds, then to NEUTRAL and let engine run for 3 minutes. Repeat at least every 8 hours thereafter. When towing for long periods, remove 30-A radio fuse.
HYUNDAI							
Accent	2,365	None	Yes	No	28/34	\$9,985-\$13,695	
Elantra Blue	2,661	None	Yes	No	29/40	\$14,830	
Elantra Touring	2,937	None	Yes	No	23/31	\$15,995-\$19,495	
Genesis Coupe 2.0T	3,294	None	Yes	No	21/30	\$22,250	
Santa Fe GLS 2WD	3,725	None	Yes	No	20/28	\$21,695-\$30,545	
Sonata GLS 2WD	3,161	None	Yes	No	24/35	\$19,195	
Tucson GL 2WD	3,197	None	Yes	No	22/31	\$21,845	
INFINITI							
G37 Sport 6MT Convertible	4,103	70 MPH/ 500 miles	Yes	No	16/24	\$48,950	Idle engine in NEUTRAL for 2 minutes every 500 miles.
G37 Sport 6MT Coupe	3,710	70 MPH/ 500 miles	Yes	No	18/25	\$42,400	Idle engine in NEUTRAL for 2 minutes every 500 miles.
G37 Sport 6MT Sedan	3,701	70 MPH/ 500 miles	Yes	No	18/25	\$39,450	Idle engine in NEUTRAL for 2 minutes every 500 miles.

2011 DINGHY ROUNDUP



Honda Fit

MAKE/ MODEL	BASE CURB WEIGHT	SPEED/ DISTANCE LIMITS	TOWABLE WITH MANUAL TRANS.	TOWABLE WITH AUTO TRANS.	MILEAGE CITY/ HWY.	APPROX. RETAIL PRICE	SPECIAL PROCEDURES (SEE OWNER'S MANUAL FOR DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS)
JEEP							
Compass	3,074	None	Yes	No	21/25	\$19,350-\$24,015	
Compass 4WD	3,222	None	Yes	No	21/24	\$21,100-\$25,765	
Grand Cherokee 4WD	4,850	None	N/A	Yes	13/19	\$30,215-\$41,910	Only 4WD vehicles equipped with Quadra-Trac II or Quadra-Drive II systems are towable. Turn ignition switch to ON/RUN position, but don't start engine. Press and hold brake pedal, shift into NEUTRAL. Press and hold recessed transfer case NEUTRAL button for 4 seconds, until light behind NEUTRAL symbol starts to blink, indicating shift in progress. Light will stop blinking when the shift to NEUTRAL is complete. Start engine. Shift into REVERSE. Release brake pedal for 5 seconds. Turn engine off and leave ignition switch in unlocked OFF position. Firmly apply parking brake. Shift transmission into PARK. Hook up the vehicle to the tow bar. Release parking brake. Disconnect negative battery cable and secure it away from the negative battery post.
Liberty 4WD	4,290	None	N/A	Yes	15/21	\$23,250-\$28,250	With engine off and ignition switch in ON position, press brake pedal, shift transmission into NEUTRAL, press recessed transfer case NEUTRAL button for 4 seconds, start engine, shift transmission into REVERSE, release brake pedal for 5 seconds, turn engine off and leave ignition switch in unlocked OFF position, apply parking brake, shift transmission into PARK, hook up the vehicle to the tow bar, release parking brake, disconnect negative battery cable and secure it away from the negative battery post.

2011 DINGHY ROUNDUP



Kia Sportage

MAKE/ MODEL	BASE CURB WEIGHT	SPEED/ DISTANCE LIMITS	TOWABLE WITH MANUAL TRANS.	TOWABLE WITH AUTO TRANS.	MILEAGE CITY/ HWY.	APPROX. RETAIL PRICE	SPECIAL PROCEDURES (SEE OWNER'S MANUAL FOR DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS)
Patriot	3,111	None	Yes	No	23/28	\$15,995-\$22,195	
Wrangler 4WD, Unlimited 4WD	3,760- 4,075	None	Yes	Yes	15/19	\$22,045-\$32,745	With engine off, press brake pedal, shift automatic transmission into NEUTRAL or press clutch pedal on manual transmission, shift transfer case lever into NEUTRAL, start engine, shift transmission into REVERSE, release brake pedal (and clutch pedal on manual transmission) for 5 seconds, shift automatic transmission in DRIVE or manual transmission in first gear. Release brake pedal (and clutch pedal on manual transmission) for 5 seconds, turn engine off and leave ignition switch in the unlocked OFF position, apply parking brake, shift transmission into PARK or place manual transmission in gear (NOT in NEUTRAL), hook up the vehicle to the tow bar, release parking brake, disconnect negative battery cable and secure it away from the negative battery post.
KIA							
Forte 2WD	2,729	None	Yes	No	25/34	\$14,995-\$16,995	
Optima 2.4-L I-4	3,206	None	Yes	No	24/35	\$18,995	
Rio/Rio 5	2,365-2,438	None	Yes	No	28/34	\$12,295-\$15,095	
Sorento 2WD	3,605	60 MPH/None	Yes	No	20/27	\$20,995-\$33,895	
Soul	2,560	None	Yes	No	26/31	\$13,300	
Sportage 2WD	3,157	None	Yes	No	21/29	\$18,295-\$24,795	
LEXUS							
IS 250 RWD	3,455	None	Yes	No	19/27	\$32,145-\$39,890	



Baseplate shown on a 2010 Jeep Compass

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- Keeping the weight that is placed on your suspension to a minimum, it spreads the towing force equally without undue stress.



1



2



3

Locate the removable tab receiver and place the removable tab in as far as it will go.

Begin turning the removable tab in a counter-clockwise position to safely lock the tab.

After you hear the removable tab "click" you're ready to tow!



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Nissan Juke FWD

MAKE/ MODEL	BASE CURB WEIGHT	SPEED/ DISTANCE LIMITS	TOWABLE WITH MANUAL TRANS.	TOWABLE WITH AUTO TRANS.	MILEAGE CITY/ HWY.	APPROX. RETAIL PRICE	SPECIAL PROCEDURES (SEE OWNER'S MANUAL FOR DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS)
LINCOLN							
MKS, MKS AWD	4,127- 4,276	65 MPH/None	N/A	Yes	17/24	\$41,270- \$48,160	Run engine at the beginning of each day and at each fuel stop for 5 minutes.
MKT, MKT AWD	4,637- 4,809	65 MPH/None	N/A	Yes	17/23	\$44,200- \$49,200	Run engine at the beginning of each day and at each fuel stop for 5 minutes.
MKX, MKX AWD	4,251- 4,429	65 MPH/None	N/A	Yes	19/26	\$39,145- \$40,995	Run engine at the beginning of each day and at each fuel stop for 5 minutes.
MAZDA							
Tribute	3,272- 3,337	70 MPH/None	Yes	Yes (f)	22/28	\$20,840- \$27,600	(f) Maximum speed with automatic transmission is 65 MPH. Run engine at the beginning of each day for 5 minutes (shift into DRIVE, then REVERSE and NEUTRAL) and then every 6 hours. Vehicles equipped with an automatic transmission should have the transmission fluid level checked by an authorized dealer.
Tribute 4WD	3,483	65 MPH/None	N/A	Yes	19/25	\$24,635- \$29,350	Run engine at the beginning of each day for 5 minutes (shift into DRIVE, then REVERSE and NEUTRAL) and then every 6 hours. Transmission fluid levels should be checked by an authorized dealer.
NISSAN							
370Z Coupe	3,232	70 MPH/ 500 miles	Yes	No	18/26	\$30,610- \$39,990	Idle engine in NEUTRAL for 2 minutes every 500 miles.
370Z Roadster	3,426	70 MPH/ 500 miles	Yes	No	18/25	\$37,520- \$43,890	Idle engine in NEUTRAL for 2 minutes every 500 miles.
Altima Coupe	3,080	None/ 500 miles	Yes	No	23/31	\$22,940- \$27,770	Idle engine in NEUTRAL for 2 minutes every 500 miles.
Cube	2,768	60 MPH/ 500 miles	Yes	No	25/30	\$13,990- \$20,120	Idle engine in NEUTRAL for 2 minutes every 500 miles. Models with Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT) are not flat towable.
Frontier King/ Crew Cab 2WD I-4	3,685	None/ 500 miles	Yes	No	19/23	\$17,750- \$20,930	Idle engine in NEUTRAL for 2 minutes every 500 miles.
Frontier King/ Crew Cab 2WD V-6	4,152	None/ 500 miles	Yes	No	16/20	\$21,520- \$26,170	Idle engine in NEUTRAL for 2 minutes every 500 miles.

2011 DINGHY ROUNDUP



Scion xB

MAKE/ MODEL	BASE CURB WEIGHT	SPEED/ DISTANCE LIMITS	TOWABLE WITH MANUAL TRANS.	TOWABLE WITH AUTO TRANS.	MILEAGE CITY/ HWY.	APPROX. RETAIL PRICE	SPECIAL PROCEDURES (SEE OWNER'S MANUAL FOR DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS)
Frontier King/ Crew Cab 4WD V-6	4,294	None/ 500 miles	Yes	No	15/19	\$21,520-\$28,430	Place transfer case in the 2H range. Idle engine in NEUTRAL for 2 minutes every 500 miles.
Juke FWD	2,923	70 MPH/ 500 miles	Yes	No	24/31	\$20,260-\$22,550	Idle engine in NEUTRAL for 2 minutes every 500 miles. Models with Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT) are not flat towable.
Sentra 2.0	2,873	None/ 500 miles	Yes	No	24/31	\$15,520	Idle engine in neutral for 2 minutes every 500 miles.
Versa 1.8S hatchback, 1.6 sedan	2,516	None/ 500 miles	Yes	No	26/34	\$9,990-\$16,900	Idle engine in NEUTRAL for 2 minutes every 500 miles. Models with Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT) are not flat towable.
Xterra S, PRO-4X	4,343	None/ 500 miles	Yes	No	16/20	\$23,850-\$30,100	On 4WD models, place transfer case in the 2H range. Idle engine in NEUTRAL for 2 minutes every 500 miles.
SCION							
tC	2,932	None	Yes	No	20/27	\$17,670	
xB	3,020	None	Yes	No	22/28	\$16,420	
xD	2,625	None	Yes	No	27/33	\$15,045	
SMART USA							
smart fortwo	1,800	55 MPH/None	Yes	N/A	33/41	\$11,990-\$16,990	Make sure ignition is on, engage parking brake, de- press brake pedal and keep it pressed, move gear selector lever to NEUTRAL, release brake pedal. With gear selector in NEUTRAL the key can't be turned fully to starter switch position 0, so turn the key in the starter switch as far left as it will go when switching off the ignition. Switch off ignition, leave the key in the starter switch, wait about 30 sec- onds until the multifunction display is completely blank, turn the battery off using a Smart-dealer installed battery switch. Release the parking brake.
SUBARU							
Forester 2.5X, 2.5X Premium	3,250	None	Yes	No	21/27	\$20,495-\$29,995	

2011 DINGHY ROUNDUP



smart fortwo coupe



Suzuki Kizashi FWD

MAKE/ MODEL	BASE CURB WEIGHT	SPEED/ DISTANCE LIMITS	TOWABLE WITH MANUAL TRANS.	TOWABLE WITH AUTO TRANS.	MILEAGE CITY/ HWY.	APPROX. RETAIL PRICE	SPECIAL PROCEDURES (SEE OWNER'S MANUAL FOR DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS)
Impreza	3,075	None	Yes	No	20/27	\$17,495-\$19,995	
Impreza WRX, STI	3,208	None	Yes	N/A	19/25	\$24,995-\$37,345	STI model requires driver's control center differential (DCCD) be set in manual mode and DCCD control dial be set to the farthest rearward position.
Legacy 2.5i, 2.5i Premium, 2.5GT Limited	3,270	None	Yes	No	19/27	\$19,995-\$31,995	Models with Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT) are not flat towable.
Outback 2.5i, 2.5i Premium	3,386	None	Yes	No	19/27	\$23,195-\$24,495	Models with Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT) are not flat towable.
SUZUKI							
Grand Vitara Limited 4WD	3,627	55 MPH/ 200 miles	N/A	Yes	19/23	\$23,199	Only 4WD Grand Vitara models fitted with Full-time Four-Mode 4WD system with transfer switch are flat towable. See owner's manual for specific instructions.
Kizashi FWD	3,241	55 MPH/ 200 miles	Yes	No	21/31	\$18,999-\$24,699	
SX4 Crossover AWD	2,866	55 MPH/ 200 miles	Yes	No	22/30	\$16,999-\$18,149	
SX4 Sedan FWD	2,734	55 MPH/ 200 miles	Yes	No	23/33	\$13,499-\$16,379	
SX4 SportBack FWD	2,734	55 MPH/ 200 miles	Yes	No	22/30	\$16,499-\$16,999	
TOYOTA							
Camry	3,263	None	Yes	No	22/33	\$21,175-\$23,140	After towing, run engine in idle for at least 3 minutes before driving.
Corolla	2,767	None	Yes	No	28/35	\$15,600-\$18,300	After towing, run engine in idle for at least 3 minutes before driving.
Matrix 1.8-L	2,844	None	Yes	No	26/32	\$18,545	After towing, run engine in idle for at least 3 minutes before driving.
Matrix 2.4-L	2,976	None	Yes	No	21/28	\$21,415	After towing, run engine in idle for at least 3 minutes before driving.
Yaris	2,311	None	Yes	No	29/36	\$12,855-\$13,955	After towing, run engine in idle for at least 3 minutes before driving.



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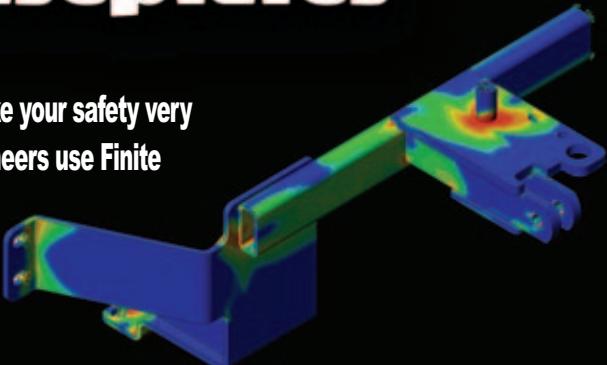
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Patent# 6302947, 6512694, 6764952 & Patent Pending

TOWING ACCESSORIES

The research has been done, the financing arranged, the papers signed ... and that new dinghy vehicle is now sitting in your driveway. You've shopped carefully to pick a model that's certified by its manufacturer for flat towing, you've checked the vehicle's weight to confirm that it's within your motorhome's safe towing capabilities and you've ordered it with any requisite factory options to make it towable with all wheels rolling.

Now what?

As any seasoned motorhome owner will tell you, there are a lot of steps involved in getting a new vehicle to the point where it can be towed safely. Unfortunately, no automaker offers a plug-and-play solution that makes its products ready for safe dinghy towing right from the factory. Thus, it's up to you (and perhaps a knowledgeable towing equipment dealer) to get the job done right.

Dinghy Wiring

One of the most important aspects of dinghy prep involves connecting the wiring between the two vehicles. Tail, brake and turn signals on the back of the dinghy are required in all 50 states and all Canadian provinces, so this isn't a step that you can overlook. (Neither side clearance nor backup lights are required, and are rarely used.)

The most common source of dinghy wiring confusion centers on differences in the way the turn-signal lights are wired on various cars and motorhomes. Some models are wired to supply turn-signal power to the same bulbs that are used for the brakelights (commonly referred to as a 4-wire system), while others use separate amber bulbs for the rear turn signals (a 5-wire system). Note that 4- and 5-wire systems are used on both motorhomes and cars, so any one of four solutions may be needed for any particular application.



Plug receptacles added to the dinghy and coach allow easy hookup of an electrical connector for taillights, turn signals and the supplemental braking system.

Adapters are readily available to electronically match the wiring systems of the dinghy and motorhome.

The traditional method of wiring a dinghy vehicle involves the use of steering diodes, which function as one-way gates to the flow of electricity, allowing power from either the motorhome or vehicle to be supplied to the rear bulbs. Because no electricity can flow backward through a diode, it also prevents power from the motorhome from being inadvertently introduced to any other circuits in the dinghy vehicle.

Many late-model vehicles are equipped with on-board diagnostics that continuously check for proper operation of turn-signal and brakelight bulbs. Unfortunately, the introduction of aftermarket steering diodes into the vehicle's wiring can "fool" this diagnostic function, typically causing it to give false warnings about burned-out bulbs.

For this reason, it is becoming more common to modify each of the vehicle's tail-lamp assemblies to accept a separate bulb. This bulb is then connected directly to the motorhome, eliminating any connections to the vehicle's existing wiring harness. This modification usually involves drilling a large hole in the tail-lamp reflector. Fortunately, special snap-in sockets are available that make this job somewhat easier. Since the new socket takes up considerable space behind the lamp assembly, care must be taken in selecting a location for the new hole that avoids socket interference with any other objects behind it.

Note that most states allow the turn signals



One-way diodes, left, prevent electrical feedback when using the dinghy's lighting circuit. As an alternative, you can install an extra pair of lamps on your dinghy independent of its electrical system, below.



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Accessory kits such as this one from Demco include everything needed for a safe hookup, including wiring kits, pins, locks, receptacles — and a cover to keep the tow bar protected from the elements.



Adding large rubber flaps at the rear of a motorhome, such as these from Blue Ox, will minimize towed-vehicle damage from debris, dirt and grime kicked up by coach tires.

to be either red or amber in color, but only permit the brakelights to be red. Thus, on automobiles equipped with amber turn signals, the new socket is typically installed behind the red brake-lamp lens.

In situations where modifications to the dinghy's original wiring either aren't desirable or practical, a set of removable towing lights often provides a workable solution. Most of these products are affixed with magnets, although some models can be equipped with suction cups or hook-and-loop fasteners (ideal for use on plastic or fiberglass surfaces). A cable is then snaked across the vehicle to the connector at the motorhome hitch receiver.

In some cases, the cable is semipermanently routed inside or underneath the vehicle, allowing the lights to be quickly removed and stowed inside the trunk. Several companies offer wireless, removable towing lights, thereby eliminating the need for this cable altogether.

Although many motorhomes come with a factory-installed 4- or 5-pin connector, there are situations where a different connector is necessary. Some unapproved dinghies equipped with

an automatic transmission must also be equipped with an electric lube pump, which requires a connector pin for 12-volt DC power (and ideally, a separate connector pin for ground, in order to avoid drawing excessive current through the existing one). Also, some auxiliary braking systems require connections to the motorhome, further increasing the connector-pin count.

Ideally, the industry-standard connection scheme should be observed when installing this new connector, so that it can also be used when towing boats, ATVs, horse trailers, etc.

Unfortunately, since no industrywide standard exists for wire color codes used in automobiles, another hurdle in dinghy wiring involves identifying the proper wires for the stop, turn and



The Kargard shield, from Blue Ox, attaches to the tow bar and adds yet another level of dinghy protection, guarding against potential damage from road debris.

tail lamps (as well as a suitable ground connection). If you've had the foresight to purchase a service manual for your particular vehicle, this can sometimes be accomplished by visual inspection of the wire harness. More often than not, it involves connecting a test light to each suspected wire in order to match it with the corresponding bulb. Note that on 4-wire systems, the same wire may be "hot" when either the brake or one of the turn signals is operated.

When splicing diodes or other connections into the vehicle's wiring harness, it is important to use top-quality connectors or splices. In order to prevent any chance of corrosion, all connections should be waterproof. Heat-shrink tubing works very well for this purpose, as does self-vulcanizing plastic tape.

Hopkins nVision Tire Pressure Monitoring System keeps an eye on motorhome and dinghy tire air pressure. The wireless system can be easily transferred between vehicles and used in the dinghy without the motorhome.



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Dinghy Braking Systems



Roadmaster Even Brake full-time proportional braking system uses a wireless monitor to communicate with the braking device in the dinghy. It features self-diagnostics and a low-battery warning.



Blue Ox's Patriot proportional portable braking system has an LED display and one setup button. The unit is controlled by an in-coach wireless module. The Patriot has a built-in battery and utilizes an electric cylinder to activate the braking arm.



BrakeBuddy's Vantage Select offers full or proportional braking. The self-contained housing is lightweight, fully adjustable and features advanced terrain sensing that prevents false activation. A boost model is designed for vehicles equipped with full-time electric brakes (including hybrids).

Adequate dinghy braking is an important consideration, because builders tend to push the weight of their motorhomes right to the edge of the chassis manufacturer's ratings — and the addition of up to several tons of extra rolling weight can be enough to put the combined vehicle pair's braking performance into unsafe territory.

Furthermore, some chassis manufacturers specify that towed loads in excess of 1,500 pounds should have independent brakes and safety breakaway systems.

Although a diverse range of dinghy braking systems is available, all aim to perform essentially the same task: to apply the dinghy's brakes in tandem with those on the motorhome.

One approach uses electronic signals generated in the motorhome to activate the dinghy-vehicle brakes. The motorhome components of the system measure deceleration and send a signal to a power unit connected to the dinghy-vehicle brake pedal. As the electronic signal varies with motorhome deceleration, the amount of brake-pedal pull varies in concert for variable braking.

The system includes a vacuum pump in the dinghy vehicle that maintains full power-brake performance. An actuation lever on the control unit in the motorhome allows the motorhome driver to apply brakes manually, if desired.

Other products include those that utilize a self-contained power pack that temporarily attaches to the dinghy's brake pedal. This package usually

contains an air compressor, air cylinder and control circuitry. Most models have a built-in inertia sensor in the dinghy that automatically applies the brakes without any direct signals from the motorhome; in some cases, a radio link or control wire is used to receive braking signals from the motorhome.

Other systems use a removable air cylinder to push the pedal, with motive power for the cylinder usually supplied by the motorhome's existing air compressor (if air brakes are present) or an add-on electric compressor. A signal from the motorhome's brakelights is often used to control operation of the cylinder, although inertia-sensing control boxes are sometimes used instead. One variation of this scheme uses an electric linear actuator in lieu of an air cylinder, thereby dispensing with the need for a compressed air supply.

Finally, a few systems use the movement in a special hitch drawbar as the motive power to operate the dinghy brakes. As the motorhome decelerates, the dinghy forces the drawbar to move forward, and the dinghy's inertia is used to operate a flexible cable connected to the brake pedal or to move a master brake cylinder that pressurizes the dinghy's brake lines.

Self-contained systems — like those from Blue Ox, BrakeBuddy and Roadmaster — generally have a significant edge in ease of installation. The use of a supplemental braking system represents a wise investment in ultimate dinghy towing safety. ♦



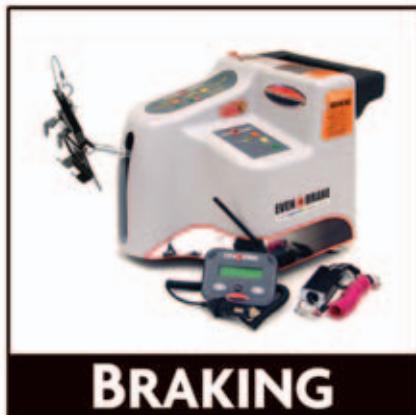
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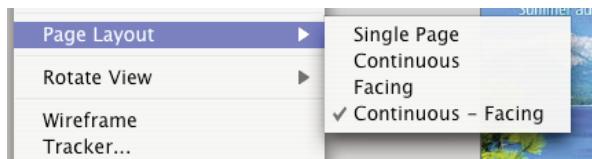
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