

TOWING TERMS

Nine towing terms that every horse trailer owner should know — without the dealer jargon.

GVWR

Gross Vehicle Weight Rating

The **maximum allowed loaded weight** for your tow vehicle. Includes trailer tongue weight, passengers, and the truck itself.

GCVWR

Gross Combined Vehicle Weight Rating

The **maximum allowed loaded weight** of your tow vehicle and trailer combination together.

GAWR

Gross Axle Weight Rating

The **maximum weight** your tow vehicle's axles are able to carry.

TONGUE WEIGHT

Vertical force on the hitch

The weight of your trailer if you physically lifted the front where it connects to your truck. **This is what causes most accidents.**

CURB WEIGHT

Truck's empty operating weight

Empty weight of the truck with a **full tank, no people, no cargo.** The starting point for all towing math.

DRY WEIGHT

Trailer's empty weight

Weight of the trailer with **nothing in it.** Misleading on its own — once you add horses, tack, water, hay, you're often 1,500–3,000 lbs over.

WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION HITCH

WDH

Spring-bar hitch system that **redistributes tongue weight** across all axles. Often required to hit your truck's max tow rating.

PAYLOAD CAPACITY

What your truck can carry

How much weight your truck can carry in the bed, cab, and on the hitch. **Different from tow rating.** Found on the door jamb sticker.

TOW RATING

Maximum Tow Capacity

The max weight your truck is rated to pull. **Almost always optimistic** — assumes 150-lb driver, no passengers, no cargo. Cross-check against payload and GCVWR.

REMEMBER

"Your truck's ability to PULL is almost never the problem. It's the ability to CARRY the tongue weight that causes accidents."