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Tips for Safe Travel with Horses: Part I

With the summer season of shows and trail riding upon us, many horse owners are hitting the road with their horses. The following tips for travel and trailer safety will help keep you and your horse safe on the road this season:

<u>**Trailer and Tow Vehicle Safety Checklist:**</u>

- Tow vehicle is up to date on maintenance
- All lights are working properly
- Trailer and tow vehicle brakes are working properly
- Tire pressure is within recommended range for conditions (including spare)
- Tires are not worn or damaged (including spare)
- Lug nuts are tight on all wheels (check periodically during long trips)
- Wheel bearings are clean and packed properly
- Trailer hitch is secure (and in good condition)
- Ball on tow vehicle is correct size for trailer hitch
- Safety chains are properly attached to vehicle
- Breakaway cable is correct length and attached
- Trailer floor and rivets are in good condition- no weak spots or damage
- Dividers are securely fastened
- Doors latch securely
- Ramp is in good working order
- All latches are in good working order
- Loose or rattling parts have been tightened or secured
- No sharp edges or loose wires inside trailer
- Trailer is loaded properly and within weight limits
- Windows and vents are working properly
- Check levelness of hitched trailer
- Registration and license plates are up to date and meet requirements
- Truck fluid levels are adequate (fuel, brake fluid, coolant, window cleaner, etc…)
- Rearview mirrors are properly positioned

<u>**Travel Preparation Check List:**</u>

- Jumper cables
- Spare fuses
- Spare tire (see above for tire safety check)
- Jack (properly greased and working)
- Trailer-aid drive up block
- Chock blocks
- Lug wrench or tire iron (correct type for trailer tires)
- Tire pressure gauge
- First Aid Kit (for horses and people)
- Fire extinguisher (easily accessible and pressurized)
- Emergency kit including flares, reflector triangles or cones
- Extra halter and lead ropes
- Tool kit: crowbar, hammer, screwdrivers, wrenches, pliers, duct tape
- Flashlight (batteries or charger)
- Cell phone; emergency and necessary phone numbers
- Proof of insurance , license & registration
- Water (that your horses are accustomed to- in adequate quantity)
- Feed/Hay (that your horses are accustomed to- in adequate quantity)
- Buckets (water and feed)
- Broom, shovel, manure forks, muck bucket
- Current proof of negative EIA test (Coggins) (dated within 12 months)
- Health Certificate (dated within 30 days) or Equine Passport*
- Travel Itinerary

*For interstate travel and competition a health certificate is usually required. The Equine Passport (Inter-state travel permit) is good for 6 mo in the following states: AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, VA, WV). Every state has different requirements for inter-state horse transport. When transporting horses to other states you should check with the office of the state veterinarian in the state of your destination to ensure you are appropriately prepared. See http://www.tn.gov/agriculture/regulatory/equinepassport.shtml for more information on the Equine Passport in Tennessee.

Traveling Long Distances with Horses

When hauling horses long distances it is recommended to stop every three to four hours. This allows time for rest and provides an opportunity to check the horses. Horses do not need to be unloaded, but should be given 30 to 60 minutes to rest and allow time for urination, as some horses will not urinate when the trailer is moving. When stopped, make sure the trailer is open to help keep the horses cool and park in the shade if possible. Horses should not be hauled for more than 18 hours without being unloaded and given sufficient time to rest. Arriving a day before the show or event will allow your horses to be rested as fatigue will set in from traveling long distances. Your horse will perform at its best

if fully rested. It is advisable to invest in a motor plan for roadside assistance specifically for equestrians, such as US Rider http://www.usrider.org/.