

TOWABLES FOR 2002

A guide to 2002-model vehicles that manufacturers have indicated can be towed four wheels down without significant modifications.



HONDA CR-V



SUZUKI GRAND VITARA



HYUNDAI SONATA

Surveys indicate that nearly 90 percent of FMCA members tow vehicles behind their motorhomes when traveling. While some members use a trailer or a tow dolly, the majority — 90 percent of those towing — choose to flat tow; that is, the towed vehicle is connected to the motorhome with a tow bar and travels with all four wheels on the ground.

The following information is meant to be a guide to selecting a vehicle that is approved by its manufacturer for flat towing. The information was obtained from automobile manufacturers and owners manuals and pertains only to model-year 2002 vehicles (two 2003 Toyota models were included, because they will be in dealer showrooms early in 2002). The information may or may not be applicable to earlier or later models. While every attempt has been made to present accurate information, keep in mind that ongoing vehicle improvements and production-line changes could alter the information and render it out of date.

The 2002 model year is shaping up to be one of firsts and lasts. Starting with the lasts, General Motors has announced that this will be the last year for Oldsmobile. Ford Motor Company released its reorganization plan, which involves the elimination of more than 12,000 jobs and the closing of several manufacturing plants. Vehicles that will be discontinued due to the downsizing include the Lincoln Continental, the Ford Escort, and Mercury's Villager and Cougar models. For those interested in flat towing, only the cancellations of the Oldsmobile Alero and the Ford Escort are pertinent.

New on this year's towing list are two vehicles that have been featured in *FMC* magazine's "Towed Vehicle Driving Impressions" series: the Chevrolet TrailBlazer (December 2001, page 88) and the Jeep Liberty (January 2002, page 74). Other vehicles to appear on the list for the first time are the Chevrolet Avalanche; the Ford Escape; Mitsubishi's Lancer ES and Rally models; Nissan's Frontier King Cab 4x2 and 4x4 models; Subaru's Impreza 2.5 RS Sedan, Impreza 2.5 TS Sport Wagon, and Impreza WRX Sedan models; and the 2003 Toyota Matrix.

Readers may note that Lexus cars and SUVs have been removed from this year's list. There are many Toyota models, however, that can be flat towed.

Always remember to consult your towed vehicle's owners manual for specific guidelines regarding towing procedures, modifications, and safety issues. Before purchasing or towing any vehicle, find out from the dealer, manufacturer, and/or the owners manual how towing will affect the vehicle's warranty. And keep in mind that while a manufacturer may say a certain vehicle can be towed without significant modifications, what's insignificant to one person may be burdensome to another.

Before purchasing a towed vehicle, check the specific towing procedures for that vehicle, such as ignition lock position, accessories, spare tires, possible towing restrictions or limitations, and other items of concern. This information often is listed in the owners manual under a heading such as "Recreational Towing." You also might ask whether

any service bulletins have been released that relate to towing the vehicle behind a motorhome. Make sure the person with whom you are speaking realizes you are talking about *towing* the vehicle and not using it to *tow* a trailer. Also, in the owners manual, do not confuse recreational towing with emergency towing. Some vehicles can be towed four wheels down for emergency purposes only.

Before finalizing your towed vehicle purchase, weigh the vehicle if possible. The following list includes approximate curb weights that were supplied by the manufacturers; however, optional equipment and accessories can change the weight of the vehicle. It's also a good idea to weigh your motorhome (see "Understanding RV Weights," page 78, April 2000). Because of overloading issues, some motorhomes should not tow anything. In fact, certain motorhomes may need to have their loads lightened before being driven solo.

Before towing, consult your motorhome's owners manual for requirements and information regarding the use of an auxiliary braking system on the towed vehicle. Some chassis, motorhome, and automobile manufacturers recommend that supplemental brakes be used on any towed vehicle. Not all jurisdictions mandate supplemental brakes on towed vehicles, but the laws of physics always apply. Few drivers would consider towing a load of bricks on a trailer not equipped with brakes, but some people will tow a 3,000-pound vehicle without supplemental brakes. Of course, motorhome brakes can't tell the difference between 3,000 pounds of bricks and 3,000 pounds of vehicle. Drivers seldom complain that the brakes on a vehicle stop it too quickly. But most of us have witnessed the results of brakes that don't work quickly enough.

Safety is the most important issue motorhome owners face. That's why the initial installation of towing equipment should be done by knowledgeable, qualified, experienced personnel. After installation, it's imperative that all equipment be checked frequently and used only in the manner for which it was designed.

As with other mechanical gear, proper maintenance can increase the lifetime of towing equipment. Even so, equipment must be replaced over time to prevent a dangerous situation. Frequent inspections should alert you to when changes are required.

When hooking up your towed vehicle, don't let yourself be distracted. We've all heard stories of someone who had a weld break or who forgot to connect safety chains but was fortunate that nothing bad happened. Others were not so lucky, and they know the enormous personal and financial costs associated with a towing mishap. See "Hooking Up The Towed Vehicle," page 74, for more details.

Finally, remember that there is no single best way or best vehicle to tow. Each vehicle and each method has advantages and disadvantages. If a vehicle you already own or wish to purchase cannot be flat towed, it may be possible to tow it on a dolly or have adaptations made to the vehicle to render it towable.

continued

ACURA

	Transmission		Drive Configuration	Speed/Distance Limits (mph/mi.)	Approx. Curb Weight (lb.)
	Auto	Manual			
*MDX	✓	N/A	Four-wheel drive	65/None	4,354

*Follow the prescribed towing procedure outlined in the owners manual.

CHEVROLET/GMC

	Transmission		Drive Configuration	Speed/Distance Limits (mph/mi.)	Approx. Curb Weight (lb.)
	Auto	Manual			
*Avalanche	✓	N/A	Four-wheel drive	None	5,678
**Blazer/Jimmy 4x4	✓	✓	Four-wheel drive	None	4,049
***Cavalier		✓	Front-wheel drive	65/None	2,617
***Cavalier (4-speed automatic only)	✓		Front-wheel drive	65/None	2,632
****Malibu Sedan	✓	N/A	Front-wheel drive	65/None	3,051
*Silverado/Sierra 4x4	✓	✓	Four-wheel drive	None	4,413
*Suburban/Yukon XL 4x4	✓	N/A	Four-wheel drive	None	5,123
*Tahoe/Yukon 4x4	✓	N/A	Four-wheel drive	None	5,050
****Tracker 4x4	✓	✓	Four-wheel drive	50/200	2,811
*TrailBlazer/Envoy 4x4	✓		Four-wheel drive	None	4,628

*Avalanche 4x4, Silverado/Sierra 4x4, Suburban/Yukon XL 4x4, Tahoe/Yukon 4x4, and TrailBlazer 4x4: The transfer case must be in "neutral," the ignition in the "off" position, and the ignition fuse removed when towing.

**Blazer/Jimmy 4x4: Transfer case must be in "neutral."

***Cavalier: See the owners manual for restrictions and more information.

****Malibu: To prevent battery drain while towing, certain fuses must be removed from the instrument panel fuse block. See the owners manual for restrictions and more information.

****Tracker: After towing 200 miles, start the engine with the transmission in gear — the transfer case oil must be circulated for one minute before continuing.

CHRYSLER/DODGE

	Transmission		Drive Configuration	Speed/Distance Limits (mph/mi.)	Approx. Curb Weight (lb.)
	Auto	Manual			
Dakota 4x4	✓	✓	Four-wheel drive	None	3,852
Durango 4x4	✓	N/A	Four-wheel drive	None	4,648
Neon		✓	Front-wheel drive	65/None	2,590
PT Cruiser		✓	Front-wheel drive	65/None	3,108
*Sebring Coupe LXi		✓	Front-wheel drive	65/None	3,191
**Sebring Convertible GTC		✓	Front-wheel drive	65/None	3,390
Stratus Sedan R/T		✓	Front-wheel drive	65/None	3,294
Stratus Coupe SE, R/T		✓	Front-wheel drive	65/None	3,051
Ram 4x4 (1500 series)	✓	✓	Four-wheel drive	None	4,718

*A V-6 engine and manual transmission are standard on the Sebring Coupe LXi. The base-model Sebring Coupe, a 4-cylinder, comes with automatic transmission only and is not towable.

**The GTC is the only Sebring convertible available with a manual transmission.



CHEVY AVALANCHE



FORD FOCUS

FORD/MERCURY

	Transmission		Drive Configuration	Speed/Distance Limits (mph/mi.)	Approx. Curb Weight (lb.)
	Auto	Manual			
Escape 4x2		✓	Rear-wheel drive	75/None	4,120
Escape 4x4		✓	Four-wheel drive	75/None	4,260
Explorer 4-door 4x2		✓	Rear-wheel drive	None stated	4,159
*Explorer 4-door 4x4	✓	✓	Four-wheel drive	None stated	4,381
Explorer Sport 4x2		✓	Rear-wheel drive	None stated	3,828
Explorer Sport 4x4		✓	Four-wheel drive	None stated	4,027
Explorer Sport Trac 4x2		✓	Rear-wheel drive	None stated	4,095
Explorer Sport Trac 4x4		✓	Four-wheel drive	None stated	4,309
**F-150 4x4	✓	✓	Four-wheel drive	None stated	4,345
Focus		✓	Front-wheel drive	None stated	2,564
Ranger 4x2		✓	Rear-wheel drive	55/None	2,995
Ranger 4x4		✓	Four-wheel drive	55/None	3,500
***Super Duty F-250/350 4x4	✓	✓	Four-wheel drive	None stated	5,851
ZX2		✓	Front-wheel drive	None stated	2,478

*Explorer 4-door 4x4 with automatic transmissions: Control-Trac models with V-6 must be equipped with dealer-installed Neutral Tow Kit.

**F-150 4x4: Lever-operated manual transfer case only (not electronic shift-on-the-fly 4x4). The center disconnect must be locked out by capping off one of the front-axle vacuum motor lines. See dealer for assistance.

***Super Duty F-250/350 4x4: Lever-operated manual transfer case only (not electronic shift-on-the-fly 4x4).

HONDA

	Transmission		Drive Configuration	Speed/Distance Limits (mph/mi.)	Approx. Curb Weight (lb.)
	Auto	Manual			
*CR-V 2WD LX	✓	N/A	Front-wheel drive	65/None	3,201
*CR-V 4WD LX, EX	✓	✓	Real Time 4WD	65/None	3,347

*Follow prescribed towing procedure outlined in owners manual.

HYUNDAI

	Transmission		Drive Configuration	Speed/Distance Limits (mph/mi.)	Approx. Curb Weight (lb.)
	Auto	Manual			
Accent		✓	Front-wheel drive	None stated	2,280
Elantra		✓	Front-wheel drive	None stated	2,650
*Santa Fe		✓	Front-wheel drive	None stated	3,500
Sonata		✓	Front-wheel drive	None stated	3,100
Tiburon		✓	Front-wheel drive	None stated	2,600

*Santa Fe two-wheel drive only; the Santa Fe four-wheel-drive model cannot be flat towed.

INFINITI

	Transmission		Drive Configuration	Speed/Distance Limits (mph/mi.)	Approx. Curb Weight (lb.)
	Auto	Manual			
G20		✓	Front-wheel drive	*60/500	3,000

*After towing 500 miles, idle the engine in "neutral" for several minutes to circulate fluids.

JEEP

	Transmission		Drive Configuration	Speed/Distance Limits (mph/mi.)	Approx. Curb Weight (lb.)
	Auto	Manual			
Grand Cherokee Laredo, Limited, Overland	✓	N/A	Full-time 4WD	None	3,975
Liberty Sport	✓	✓	*Part-time 4WD	None	3,857
Liberty Limited	✓	N/A	*Part-time 4WD	None	4,070
Wrangler X, SE, Sport, Sahara	✓	✓	Part-time 4WD	None	3,294

*Liberty Sport and Limited full-time 4WD (optional) models also towable.

continued

KIA

	Transmission		Drive Configuration	Speed/Distance Limits (mph/mi.)	Approx. Curb Weight (lb.)
	Auto	Manual			
Sportage 4x2		✓	Rear-wheel drive	*55/400	3,186
**Sportage 4x4		✓	Part-time 4WD	55/None	3,352

*Sportage 4x2: After 400 miles, start the engine and allow it to idle for several minutes to ensure proper lubrication of internal transmission parts.

**Sportage 4x4: The transfer case and transmission must be shifted into the "neutral" position before towing.

LAND ROVER

	Transmission		Drive Configuration	Speed/Distance Limits (mph/mi.)	Approx. Curb Weight (lb.)
	Auto	Manual			
*Discovery Series II	✓	N/A	Permanent 4WD	None stated	4,576
**Range Rover	✓	N/A	Permanent 4WD	None stated	4,787

*Discovery Series II: Set the transmission in "park" and the transfer case in "neutral." Turn the starter switch to position "I" to unlock the steering, and then to position "II" for brake light/turn signal operation.

**Range Rover: Insert a fuse (5 amps or greater) in fuse position "11." See owners manual for procedure.

MAZDA

	Transmission		Drive Configuration	Speed/Distance Limits (mph/mi.)	Approx. Curb Weight (lb.)
	Auto	Manual			
B-Series Pickup 4x2		✓	Rear-wheel drive	55/None	2,995
B-Series Pickup 4x4		✓	Four-wheel drive	55/None	3,500
Tribute 4x2		✓	Rear-wheel drive	75/None	4,120
Tribute 4x4		✓	Four-wheel drive	75/None	4,260

MITSUBISHI

	Transmission		Drive Configuration	Speed/Distance Limits (mph/mi.)	Approx. Curb Weight (lb.)
	Auto	Manual			
Eclipse Coupe GS		✓	Front-wheel drive	None	2,944
Eclipse Coupe GT		✓	Front-wheel drive	None	3,120
Eclipse Coupe RS		✓	Front-wheel drive	None	2,855
Eclipse Spyder GS		✓	Front-wheel drive	None	3,042
Eclipse Spyder GT		✓	Front-wheel drive	None	3,241
Lancer ES		✓	Front-wheel drive	None	2,646
Lancer Rally		✓	Front-wheel drive	None	2,701
Mirage Coupe DE		✓	Front-wheel drive	None	2,183
Mirage Coupe LS		✓	Front-wheel drive	None	2,293

NISSAN

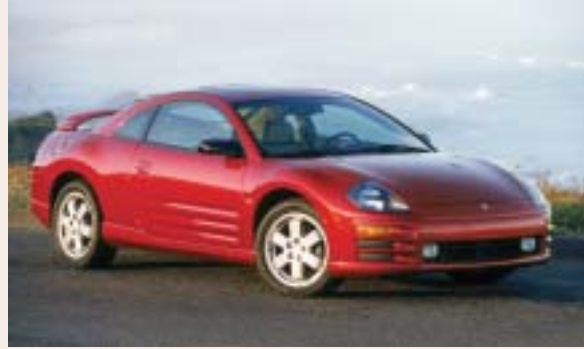
	Transmission		Drive Configuration	Speed/Distance Limits (mph/mi.)	Approx. Curb Weight (lb.)
	Auto	Manual			
Altima 2.5		✓	Front-wheel drive	*60/500	3,000
Altima 3.5		✓	Front-wheel drive	*60/500	3,200
Frontier Crew Cab 4x2		✓	Rear-wheel drive	*60/500	3,800
**Frontier Crew Cab 4x4		✓	Part-time 4WD	*60/500	4,300
Frontier King Cab 4x2		✓	Rear-wheel drive	*60/500	3,300
**Frontier King Cab 4x4		✓	Part-time 4WD	*60/500	4,000
Maxima		✓	Front-wheel drive	*60/500	3,200
Pathfinder 4x2		✓	Rear-wheel drive	*60/500	4,000
**Pathfinder 4x4		✓	Part-time 4WD	*60/500	4,250
Sentra		✓	Front-wheel drive	*60/500	2,600
Sentra SE-R		✓	Front-wheel drive	*60/500	2,750
Sentra SE-R spec V		✓	Front-wheel drive	*60/500	2,800
Xterra 4x2		✓	Rear-wheel drive	*60/500	3,600
**Xterra 4x4		✓	Part-time 4WD	*60/500	4,200

*All Nissan vehicles: After towing 500 miles, idle the engine in "neutral" for several minutes to circulate fluids.

**Four-wheel-drive Frontier Crew Cab, Frontier King Cab, Pathfinder, and Xterra models: The transfer lever must be placed in "2H."



LAND ROVER RANGE ROVER



MITSUBISHI ECLIPSE COUPE



NISSAN XTERRA



OLDSMOBILE ALERO

OLDSMOBILE

	Transmission		Drive Configuration	Speed/Distance Limits (mph/mi.)	Approx. Curb Weight (lb.)
	Auto	Manual			
*Alero	✓	✓	Front-wheel drive	65/None	3,010

*Certain fuses must be removed to prevent battery drain while towing. See owners manual for instructions.

PONTIAC

	Transmission		Drive Configuration	Speed/Distance Limits (mph/mi.)	Approx. Curb Weight (lb.)
	Auto	Manual			
Grand Am SE	✓	✓	Front-wheel drive	65/None	3,066
Sunfire		✓	Front-wheel drive	65/None	2,606
Sunfire (four-speed automatic only)	✓		Front-wheel drive	65/None	2,606

***SATURN**

	Transmission		Drive Configuration	Speed/Distance Limits (mph/mi.)	Approx. Curb Weight (lb.)
	Auto	Manual			
L Series Sedan	✓	✓	Front-wheel drive	65/None	2,948
LW Series Wagon	✓	✓	Front-wheel drive	65/None	3,070
SC Series Coupe	✓	✓	Front-wheel drive	65/None	2,367
SL Series Sedan	✓	✓	Front-wheel drive	65/None	2,341
VUE		✓	Front-wheel drive	65/None	3,179

*On all Saturns, certain fuses must be removed before towing. See owners manuals for details.

*** SUBARU**

	Transmission		Drive Configuration	Speed/Distance Limits (mph/mi.)	Approx. Curb Weight (lb.)
	Auto	Manual			
Forester L, S		✓	All-Wheel Drive	None	3,140
Impreza 2.5 RS Sedan		✓	All-Wheel Drive	None	2,965
Impreza 2.5 TS Sport Wagon		✓	All-Wheel Drive	None	3,045
Impreza WRX Sedan		✓	All-Wheel Drive	None	3,085
Impreza WRX Sport Wagon		✓	All-Wheel Drive	None	3,165
Legacy GT Sedan & Wagon		✓	All-Wheel Drive	None	3,450
Legacy L Sedan & Wagon		✓	All-Wheel Drive	None	3,345
Outback Sport		✓	All-Wheel Drive	None	3,050
Outback Limited Wagon		✓	All-Wheel Drive	None	3,510
Outback Wagon		✓	All-Wheel Drive	None	3,425

*All Subaru vehicles: When towing, the steering wheel must NOT be locked. Move the ignition key to the first position away from "lock" and confirm that the steering wheel can be turned from one side to the other.

*** SUZUKI**

	Transmission		Drive Configuration	Speed/Distance Limits (mph/mi.)	Approx. Curb Weight (lb.)
	Auto	Manual			
Grand Vitara	✓	✓	Four-wheel drive	*Legal/200	3,163
Vitara 2-door	✓	✓	Four-wheel drive	*Legal/200	2,800
Vitara 4-door	✓	✓	Four-wheel drive	*Legal/200	2,976

*Automatic transmission models: Stop towing the vehicle after 200 miles and leave transfer case in "neutral." Start the engine, shift transmission into "drive," and rev the engine for one minute to circulate oil in the transfer case. Shift transmission back into "park" before next towing.

*Manual transmission models: Stop towing after 200 miles and leave the transmission in second gear. With the transfer case lever still in "neutral," start the engine and rev it for one minute with the clutch engaged to circulate oil in the transfer case.

*** TOYOTA**

	Transmission		Drive Configuration	Speed/Distance Limits (mph/mi.)	Approx. Curb Weight (lb.)
	Auto	Manual			
Camry		✓	Front-wheel drive	None	3,296
Camry Solara (including convertible)		✓	Front-wheel drive	None	3,291
Celica		✓	Front-wheel drive	None	2,580
Corolla (2002)		✓	Front-wheel drive	None	2,590
Corolla (2003)		✓	Front-wheel drive	None	2,600
Echo		✓	Front-wheel drive	None	2,055
Matrix (2003)		✓	Front-wheel drive	None	2,679
MR2	N/A	✓	Rear-wheel drive	None	2,215
RAV4 2WD		✓	Front-wheel drive	None	2,711
RAV4 4WD		✓	Four-wheel drive	**55/200	2,877

*Toyota notes that these vehicles will not sustain internal damage to the transmission or transfer case components when towed, but towing these vehicles does not eliminate the possibility of damage to other vehicle systems (body, chassis, electrical systems, etc.). The transmission must be placed in "neutral" when flat towing.

**After towing the vehicle for the recommended distance limit, allow the engine to idle for more than three minutes before driving the vehicle or resuming towing.



TOYOTA ECHO



DODGE RAM

Honda/Acura Towing

Currently, the only vehicles officially recommended by Honda/Acura for towing four wheels down are the Honda CR-V and the Acura MDX. For information about towing those vehicles, see their respective owners manuals. The following letter, provided by American Honda Motor Co. Inc., pertains to all other models except the Insight, S2000, Passport, and NSX.

Honda owners manuals advise against towing at more than 35 mph or for more than 50 miles. However, this recommendation exists primarily because Honda has not conducted formal towing tests of their cars at higher speeds and for greater distances.

Honda is not aware of any particular problems being caused by motorhome towing Honda automobiles, with either manual or automatic transmission, as long as pre-towing preparations are made and the vehicle is towed at legal highway speeds.

When preparing to tow your vehicle, make sure the transmission is full of fluid; do not overfill.

Manual transmission models:

- Release the parking brake.
- Shift the transmission to "neutral."
- Turn the ignition key to the "Accessory (I)" position to release the steering wheel lock. Make sure the radio and all accessories are turned off.

Automatic transmission models:

Do the following every day immediately before you begin towing. Follow the procedure exactly. Otherwise, severe automatic transmission damage will occur.

- Start the engine.
- Press on the brake pedal. Shift the lever through all positions (P, R, N, D, 2, 1).
- Shift to D, then to N. Let the engine run for at least three minutes, then turn off the engine.
- Release the parking brake.
- Leave the ignition switch in the "Accessory (I)" position so that the steering wheel does not lock. Make sure the radio and any items plugged into the accessory power sockets are turned off so you do not run down the battery.

If you tow the vehicle more than eight hours in a day (including stopping time), you must stop and repeat the above procedures.

NOTICE: The steering system can be damaged if the steering wheel is locked. Always leave the key in the Accessory (I) position to prevent damage to the steering system when towing behind another vehicle.

CAUTION: SEVERE AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION DAMAGE WILL OCCUR IF THE CAR IS SHIFTED FROM REVERSE TO NEUTRAL AND THEN TOWED WITH THE DRIVE WHEELS ON THE GROUND.

NOTICE: Improper towing preparation will damage the transmission. If you cannot shift the transmission or start the engine, your vehicle must be transported on a flat-bed truck or trailer.

If you tow a Honda vehicle with an automatic transmission, the transmission fluid must be changed every two years or 30,000 miles, whichever comes first.

Although experience has shown that the Honda/Acura transmission and power train are capable of being "motorhome towed," American Honda does not assume responsibility for any vehicle damage or liabilities incurred due to the towing device, towing vehicle, lighting hookup, or other towing equipment or towing procedures; any responsibility for these items is assumed by the owner/operator.

For more information, contact Honda at (800) 999-1009. 