



Tricky transport

Hauling equipment safely means more than just load-and-go.

The accident: A tractor-trailer hauling construction machines rear-ended a pickup truck with two men inside. The tractor-trailer ended up on top of the pickup before going off the road. Both of the pickup truck's occupants were ejected. The driver received only minor injuries; however, the passenger was killed.

The bottom line: Hauling construction equipment adds weight, reduces handling ability and increases momentum on inclines. The tractor-trailer's driver did not allow for adequate stopping distance between his truck and the vehicle traveling in front of him.

Tie it down well.

Safe machine transport is as important as safe machine operation, and keeping the machine in place is the first step. According to the Association of Equipment Manufacturers, most manufacturers provide tie-down and lifting points, but assume no liability for product transport. Some manufacturers also provide recommended loading procedures, but it's critical to remember that all machines are not loaded in the same way. As a general rule of thumb, keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Know the correct loading/unloading procedures for the specific machine
- Transport vehicle must be on a firm, level surface
- Block transport vehicle to prevent movement
- Ramps should be of adequate size and strength, low angle and proper height



Illustration by Don Lomax

- Ensure trailer bed and ramps are clean and clear
- Install the frame lock if equipped
- Keep others clear of the area
- Secure all attachments
- Chain and block the machine
- Check your overall transport height.

Know your stopping distance. Once you're en route, be aware the added weight of the machine will increase your stopping distance, and that increase will vary depending on the weight and configuration of the machine you're transporting and the grade of the road. Be aware of how long it takes you to achieve a complete stop.

Remember the equipment can loosen from its secured state.

Although you've loaded and secured the equipment properly, always stop within the first 25 miles and recheck your tie-down points. Ensure that nothing has come loose, and make needed adjustments to chain lengths.

Increase your following distance. Once you've calculated your stopping distance, adjust your following distance as well. Although maintaining a safe following distance can prove a challenge in congested areas, implement your calculated following distance whenever possible. **EW**

Information for this Safety Watch came from an accident report, OSHA and the Association of Equipment

Manufacturers. It is meant for general information only.