



America's Horse

How to Trailer Safely

www.MarkandDusty.com

By Mark Peterson

I'm asked all the time how Dusty can travel so far in a trailer. I hear the phrase "We/Our horses just can't go that far." I hear them say that about a 3-6 hour haul. The sad part? Those people and their **horses** are missing out on exploring this great country and all the thousands of miles of beautiful trails available to them.

Dusty and I travel up to 30,000 miles a year together. Traversing the entire country with your horse is possible and can be made safe for anyone. Here is how I keep Dusty happy and healthy on our journeys:

First we start with the trailer. Make sure ALL your tires are properly and equally inflated. When the trailer is hitched and loaded, the front end should be 2"-3" higher than the back end of the trailer. The rear axle should carry slightly more weight than the front axle. Most goosenecks have an adjustable tongue, for bumper pulls get the proper "drop" hitch for leveling. These simple things stabilize the trailer resulting in a smoother ride for your horse and a better pull for you.

As for bedding? 2"-4" of wood shavings (or substitute) is fine. Horses tend to urinate more willingly, in a bedded trailer and on a long haul, you want your horse to urinate.

DO NOT water your horses within an hour of loading to go. (for ANY length of trip) The water sloshes around in their belly making them prone to colic. Horses can safely go up to 18 hrs. without watering. If you feel you have to water, limit to a small amount, (a sip or two) never let them drink their fill, and wait an hour before resuming the trip.

NO grain. Good digestible hay is all any horse needs on the trip. And when you stop you can refill the hay bags.

When trailering cross country, my goal is to get to my destination as soon as possible. When I stop for fuel, it is as short as possible. Getting back on the road is that much quicker to letting Dusty out to stretch and relax. If I stop for food (about every 6 hrs) it is for fuel also, and I make it 30 minutes or so for the horses to stand "still" and relax.

It is entirely possible to trailer 12 hrs. or more without letting the horse out. If you do let a horse out to stretch, it takes a full 20 minutes of walking fast, to get the full effect. Any less time and it doesn't properly stretch them out.



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If you haul with a slant trailer, it is very important to tie your horses. (Preferably with a release mechanism like "The Clip".) Tying your horse insures that the horse will not try and look behind them and get their head stuck between the panels. **MANY ACCIDENTS/ DEATHS HAPPEN THIS WAY!** And if your horse does go down, the release of the rope will give them the slack they need.

In hot weather, open all your vents and keep the air flowing. Your rest stops should be kept to a minimum.

In weather below 30 degrees? **OPEN** a window or vent in front of your horse's nose about 5" wide. They **MUST** have their breath escape or it will be re-inhaled, causing damage to the lungs. The colder it is, the more important this is. Horses are **VERY** adept at cold temperatures and enjoy them more than we do! But their cold breath **MUST** escape!

When pulling your trailer up a steep hill, put your truck in 4 Low, this helps for traction and the motor has more power.

These are just tips to help you, the rider, make things better for your horse and better for you. Hopefully it will give you the confidence to go farther, to places you never before thought were within reach.

Remember, your horse loves to explore as much as you do! Give them back their job, Get out and Ride!!!

Happy Trailering! www.markanddusty.com