



Long Distance Hauling RECOMMENDATIONS

Hauling horses long distance is quite stressful for them but with an understanding of good trailering practices, it can be managed.

Preparation

The vehicle and trailer you select for distance hauling should both be reliable. Well in advance of your trip, you should have your hauling vehicle and trailer serviced to ensure that both are equipped for a long haul. In addition to verifying the roadworthiness of both, some additional recommendations include:

- All lights should be in working order.
- Brakes should be fully operational.
- Doors should fully open and properly latch.
- Vents should fully open and close.
- Windows should fully open and close.
- Thoroughly check the trailer floor.
- Emergency trailer brake box should be tested and in working order.
- Check and adjust tire pressure according to the manufacturer's suggested levels.
- Verify spare tire is accessible and properly inflated.
- Stock the vehicle with an appropriate trailer and truck jack as well as tire chocks.

It is especially important that the trailer used for long distance horse transport has adequate ventilation and ample space to accommodate the size of the horses hauled.

Your horse also needs to be prepared for the long transport. Make sure your horse safely and calmly loads and unloads from the trailer. You may need to spend time well in advance of the journey training your horse.

Additionally you need to have proof that your horse has the proper testing, vaccinations, and meets the health requirements for the state into which you are travelling. At a minimum all state to state travel requires a current negative Coggins test (usually within 6-12 months depending upon the state) and a certificate of veterinary inspection or health certificate (within 30 days of the date of travel). Depending upon current disease outbreaks and threats, states may require additional documentation, testing, etc. Always contact the office

of the state veterinarian (for the state of destination) and your veterinarian in advance to learn about equine travel requirements to which you are subject.

If the transport will be so lengthy that you are unable to bring enough of your home water for the duration of the trip, you may consider acclimating your horse to flavored water in advance. This can be done by adding a flavored drink like kool aid or Gatorade to your horse's water daily for a week prior to the trip. As you travel, simply continue to add the flavoring to your horse's water at the same ratio. This reduces the potential for your horse's water intake to be affected by changes in water smell and flavor.

Some experts also recommend feeding electrolytes prior to and during transport as it can encourage the horse to drink. This should be done very cautiously as a horse that consumes extra salt without increasing water intake may need veterinary attention.

In advance of a long trip talk to your veterinarian about:

- Equine vital signs assessment.
- Hydration during transport.
- Preventing respiratory illnesses commonly caused by long distance transportation.
- Use of electrolytes.
- Health documentation.
- Stocking a first aid kit.
- Feeding regimens during transportation.
- Strategies for managing long distance transport.

Pack your trailer with:

- A supply of water (at least 24 hours worth) from the farm where the horse has been staying.
- A supply of flavoring (if used).
- Your horse's normal hay—enough to feed him throughout the trip and for a few days after his arrival in the new location (or throughout the duration of his stay).
- Equine first aid kit.
- Blanket (winter hauling).
- Spare halter(s).
- Spare lead rope(s).
- Spare trailer tie(s).
- Bucket(s).
- Bedding.
- Fire Extinguisher.



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During Travel

On the day of travel, prior to loading, the horse's normal routine should be followed with one exception. Grain intake should be reduced or eliminated immediately prior to and during transport.

Make and maintain a good layer of bedding in the horse compartment throughout travel. This will help absorb moisture from urine and manure as well as reduce the likelihood of slipping.

Your horse should have the opportunity to eat his normal hay as he travels. The act of chewing will help keep your horse occupied and digesting will help maintain gut function. If hanging a hay net, hay bag, or feeder make certain that it is at chest height or higher (preferably higher for hay nets).

Your horse should wear a well-fitted leather halter or a nylon halter with a breakaway feature during all transport. For long trips you might consider placing fleece halter tubes over part or all of the halter; this may be especially helpful for sensitive-skinned horses. Fleece halter tubes will help prevent rubbing and sores.

The use of shipping boots/bandages can be of benefit as they protect the horse's lower leg during transport, however during lengthy transport, the risks of use can outweigh those benefits. Wearing shipping boots/bandages for several hours may decrease blood flow, increase heat, and cause sores. Thus, generally it is not advisable to use shipping boots/bandages for long distance hauling.

Standing in a horse trailer takes a lot of effort. It is a constant balancing act for your horse, as the transport vehicle increases and decreases speed and maneuvers into and out of traffic. It is especially important for trailer drivers to gradually increase and decrease speeds and change lanes and turn corners much more slowly than with a non-towing vehicle. Even with good driving your horse will get tired during transport and need a break.

Parking breaks, of 20 minutes or more, should be taken roughly every 4 hours. The stopped break gives your horse an opportunity to relax in the trailer and "unlock" his

legs. Your horse should stay on the trailer during parking breaks and you should park in a well-shaded area and if safely possible, and depending upon the weather, increase the airflow through the trailer by opening drop down windows and upper doors.

During Parking Breaks

- Check your horse's overall health and demeanor. Carefully check him for signs of colic, heat/cold stress, and dehydration.
- Adjust your trailer's ventilation as necessary. You may need to open additional vents/windows during summer travel and close some vents/windows and/or blanket your horse during winter travel. Horses tend to get hot in the trailer, so it is important to monitor their temperature closely and only blanket if required.
- Offer your horse water. Do not be surprised if he doesn't at first drink.

Often during transport horses will not drink for several hours. Regardless you should offer your horse water at every parking break.

- Refill the hay supply.
- Keep your horse on the trailer. It is unsafe to remove your horse from the trailer at rest stops, along the highway, at gas stations, etc.

If traveling more than 24 hours, you may need to make accommodations for your horse to rest in a stable or paddock. There are a number of horse hotels and in some areas fairgrounds can be rented for such stays.

During overnight offloads, monitor your horse's health carefully and allow him free choice access to water. Continue to reduce or eliminate his grain intake, and allow him to eat ample amounts of the hay to which he is accustomed.

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