







**Willys / Jeep Flat Towing**  
(CJ2A, CJ3A, CJ3B, CJ5, CJ7 and newer)


**Disclaimer:** This information has been gathered from various unverified sources and may contain errors. Jeep owners should exercise due diligence to verify the actual transfer case installed in their Jeeps and the capability to flat tow. The best source for this is the Owners Manual and/or OEM Service Manual (*see comments about transmission*).

Source: [JP Magazine Article](#)

Year(s)	Transfer Case Type	Transmission	Transfer Case
1945 - 1979  <b>Flat Towing OK</b>  Do not exceed maximum vehicle speed limitations (i.e. 45-50 mph for CJ2A)	Spicer/Dana 18  	In Gear <sup>Note 1</sup>  Front Hubs Unlocked	In Neutral  Front Hubs Unlocked
1945 - 1979  <b>Flat Towing OK</b>  Do not exceed maximum vehicle speed limitations (i.e. 45-50 mph for CJ2A)	Spicer/Dana 20  	In Gear <sup>Note 1</sup>  Front Hubs Unlocked  <i>Note: 1973 &amp; 1974 Owners manual/Service Manual states to place transmission in Neutral.</i>  <i>Owners experience since manuals were published suggests that placing transmission in gear is a better option to prevent potential transmission damage.</i>	In Neutral  Front Hubs Unlocked
M38 (1956, but should apply to other years.)  <b>Flat Towing OK</b>	1956 publication date Army and Air Force M38 tech manual says the vehicle may be towed with four wheels on the ground.	Not specified	in Neutral  Transfer case front wheel drive lever in "OUT"  High low range gearshift lever to N.

Year(s)	Transfer Case Type	Transmission	Transfer Case
<p>1976 – 1979</p> <p><b>Flat Towing Not Recommended</b></p> <p>Serious damage due to lack of lubrication can occur.</p> <p>OK with rear driveshaft disconnected</p>	<p>Quadra-Trac</p> 	<p>Disconnect Rear Driveshaft</p> <p>Unlocked Front Hubs or Disconnect Front Driveshaft</p> <p><i>Note: Ensure driveshafts are secured to frame and universal joints are covered to prevent loss of parts and contamination.</i></p>	<p>Disconnect Rear Driveshaft</p> <p>Unlocked Front Hubs or Disconnect Front Driveshaft</p> <p><i>Note: Ensure driveshafts are secured to frame and universal joints are covered to prevent loss of parts and contamination.</i></p>
<p>1980 – 1986</p> <p><b>Flat Towing Not Recommended</b></p> <p>Serious damage due to lack of lubrication can occur.</p> <p>OK with rear driveshaft disconnected</p>	<p>Dana 300 T-Case</p> 	<p>Disconnect Rear Driveshaft</p> <p>Unlocked Front Hubs or Disconnect Front Driveshaft</p> <p><i>Note: Ensure driveshafts are secured to frame and universal joints are covered to prevent loss of parts and contamination.</i></p>	<p>Disconnect Rear Driveshaft</p> <p>Unlocked Front Hubs or Disconnect Front Driveshaft</p> <p><i>Note: Ensure driveshafts are secured to frame and universal joints are covered to prevent loss of parts and contamination.</i></p>
<p>1987 – 2006</p> <p><b>Flat Towing OK</b></p>	<p>NP / NV 231</p> 	<p>Manual - In Gear <sup>1</sup></p> <p>Auto – In Park</p> <p>Front Hubs Unlocked if Fitted</p>	<p>In Neutral</p> <p>Front Hubs Unlocked if Fitted</p>

Year(s)	Transfer Case Type	Transmission	Transfer Case
1987 – 2006  <b>Flat Towing OK</b>	NP / NV 241 – Or -- Rock Trac (rubicon only)  	Manual - In Gear <sup>1</sup>  Auto – In Park  Front Hubs Unlocked if Fitted	In Neutral  Front Hubs Unlocked if Fitted

1987 – 2006  NP / NV 207  <b>Flat Towing OK</b>		Manual - In Gear <sup>1</sup>  Auto – In Park  Front Hubs Unlocked if Fitted	In Neutral  Front Hubs Unlocked if Fitted
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Note: In all cases, disconnecting the driveshaft(s) is a good option as it will reduce wear on the driveshaft and transfer case and will reduce rolling resistance thereby reducing fuel costs.

#### Guidelines for Flat Towing Jeeps:

1. Disengage lock out hubs (or disconnect front drive shaft).
2. Ensure that the tow vehicle outweighs the Jeep significantly.
3. The longer the towbar, the better.
4. Make sure tow bar slopes upward to tow vehicle (i.e. hitch is higher than jeep/towbar connection)
5. Do not secure the steering wheel. If it is locking type, turn key to first position to unlock.
6. Windshield down if possible to reduce wind resistance and protect windshield from rock chips.
7. Remove any unnecessary equipment or cargo from jeep to tow vehicle to reduce weight.
8. Ensure all fluids (differentials, transfer case, transmission) are at normal levels. Ensure all grease lubrication has been done.
9. Connect jeep tail lights to tow vehicle running, stop and turn signal lights. Use magnetic tow lights if necessary.
10. Some States and/or Provinces may require supplemental braking on the jeep.
11. DO NOT tow faster than you would drive it. This is more relevant to CJ2As and CJ3As which are limited to 45 – 50 mph.
12. Don't even think of backing up.
13. Watch out for braking on steep hills (Jeep lifts the back end of the pickup)
14. Watch out for sweeping turns at high speed (jack knife)
15. Ensure tires are inflated to normal pressure.

16. Check the hubs for heat build up after driving for 25 miles and then every 100 miles after that.
17. If the jeep wobbles when you drive it, it will wobble when you tow it. Don't tow a wobbler.

Notes:

- 1) A word on placing manual transmissions in gear: Many original service and owner's manuals tell you to place the transmission in neutral. Subsequent experience by owners who have experienced problems and reports from rebuilders/service shops who have repaired transmissions indicates that this practice is **not recommended**. With the transmission in neutral, oil movement induced by the spinning transfer case output shaft will force the transfer case input shaft to spin (similar to a torque converter on an automatic transmission). This will cause the transmission output shaft to spin. However, the spinning transmission output shaft will not cause oil circulation in the transmission which will result in damaged bearings and in many cases has caused fusion of metal parts, requiring costly rebuilds or new transmissions.

## Documentation

- ❑ From 1974 Owners Manual (Identical to 1973 OM)

### TOWING INSTRUCTIONS

All Jeep vehicles can be towed at reasonable and safe speeds (such as specified by state law) for any distance by following the procedures given on page 15.

#### TOWING INSTRUCTIONS (con't.)

##### CJ-5 and CJ-6

Shift the transfer case and transmission into NEUTRAL. The vehicle can then be towed forward or backward with all four wheels on the ground, or forward with the front end raised (also see "Towing in Reverse" below).

##### Cherokee—Wagoneer—Truck

With the anti-theft ignition key in the OFF position (to unlock the steering wheel for either manual or automatic transmission, and in case of the automatic, the selector linkage), shift the transfer case and transmission into NEUTRAL. Also on models equipped with Quadra-Trac, Full Time 4-Wheel Drive, the rear propeller shaft must be removed. The vehicle can now be towed forward or backward with all four wheels on the ground, or forward with the front end raised (also see "Towing in Reverse" below).

#### To Tow Cherokee, Wagoneer and Truck Models Without Ignition Key

##### Manual Transmission (floor shift)

If able to shift transmission and transfer case into NEUTRAL, the vehicle can be towed with the **front end raised**. Steering is locked.

If vehicle is locked and transmission and transfer case cannot be shifted, remove rear propeller shaft or use a "dolly" under the rear wheels and tow with the **front end raised**.

##### Automatic Transmission

Steering and automatic transmission are locked. Remove rear propeller shaft or use a "dolly" under the rear wheels and tow with the **front end raised**.

#### TOWING IN REVERSE

##### All 4-Wheel Drive Models

Should it be necessary to lift the rear wheels and tow the vehicle in reverse, be sure to remove the front axle shaft driving flanges to prevent the front differential from rotating. Also on Cherokee, Wagoneer and Truck models, if the steering wheel cannot be unlocked use a "dolly" under the front axle.

Should the driving flanges be removed, a cover should be improvised that will prevent dirt from entering the wheel bearings.

If the vehicle is equipped with free-wheeling Selective Drive Hubs, there are no drive flanges to be removed, and it is only necessary to lock the hubs in the free-wheeling position.

- ❑ From 1974 Technical Service Manual (Published by Jeep Corporation) (Identical to 1973 TSM)

### TOWING INSTRUCTIONS

All Jeep vehicles can be towed at reasonable and safe speeds (such as specified by state law) for any distance by following the procedures given below. **Should it be necessary to lift the rear wheels and tow the vehicle in reverse, be sure to remove the front axle shaft driving flanges to prevent the front differential from rotating.** If the steering wheel on Cherokee, Wagoneer, and Truck Models cannot be unlocked, use a dolly under the front axle.

#### CJ Models

Shift the transfer case and transmission into

NEUTRAL. The vehicle can then be towed forward or backward with all four wheels on the ground, or forward with the front end raised.

## **Cherokee-Wagoneer-Truck**

### **With Ignition Key**

With the anti-theft ignition key in the off position (to unlock the steering wheel), shift the transfer case and transmission into neutral. The vehicle can now be towed forward or backward with all four wheels on the ground, or forward with the front end raised.

### **Without Ignition Key**

If able to shift manual transmission and Model 20 transfer case into neutral, the vehicle can be towed **with the front end raised**. Steering is locked.

If vehicle is locked and manual transmission and Model 20 transfer case cannot be shifted, remove rear propeller shaft or use a dolly under the rear wheels and tow **with the front end raised**.

Should the driving flanges be removed, a cover should be improvised that will prevent dirt from entering the wheel bearings.

If the vehicle is equipped with free-wheeling selective drive hubs, there are no drive flanges to be removed, and it is only necessary to lock the hubs in the free-wheeling position.

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- ❑ From 1976 FSM for a D20 Transfer Case, Section 8-1...

### **"TOWING**

#### **Manual Transmission**

**Ignition Key Available:** Shift transmission and transfer case into Neutral. Vehicle can now be towed with all four wheels on the ground or with front or rear wheels raised. If vehicle is equipped with selective drive hubs, set them in the FREE position.

**Ignition Key Not Available and Vehicle is Unlocked:** Shift transmission and transfer case into Neutral and tow vehicle with front wheels raised.

**Ignition Key Not Available and Vehicle is Locked:** Place dolly under rear wheels and tow vehicle with front end raised; or, disconnect rear propeller shaft at rear axle yoke (be sure to index mark propeller shaft and koke for proper alignment at assembly), secure shaft to underside of vehicle, and tow with front end raised."

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**Exact copy from 1984 CJ7/Scrambler owner's manual:**

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Towing Your Jeep Vehicle

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with Automatic Transmission:

1. turn ignition switch to Off position to unlock steering wheel
2. shift automatic transmission to Park
3. Shift transfer case to Neutral position
4. Turn selective drive hubs to 4x4 position for axle lubrication

NOTE: When towing vehicle over 200 miles, stop towing every 200 miles and with the transfer case still in Neutral, Start engine, place automatic transmission in Drive, and rev engine for about one minute to circulate oil in the transfer case.

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my note: the owner's manual shows a 5 position ignition switch, Acc,lock,off,on,start; and Off is described as 'unlocks steering wheel and automatic shift controls with engine off'

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**From knowledgeable expert [SIMPLY9999](#)**

Towing – Dana 20 and Dana 300 – An alternate procedure if driveshafts are not disconnected. **Not recommended but offered for information only.**

These vehicles can be towed at freeway speeds with all four wheels on the ground and the ignition key in the Off position (if equipped with locking column by using the following procedures:

Manual transmission

- Shift the transmission and transfer case into Neutral on models built through 1979.
- On 1980 through 1983 models, the transmission should be placed in gear and the transfer case in Neutral.
- If equipped with locking hubs, they should be in the free-wheeling position on models built through 1976 and locked (to ensure axle lubrication) on 1977 through 1983 models.
- On 1980 through 1983 models, it will be necessary to stop every 200 miles, start the engine and run it for one minute with the transmission in gear and the transfer case in Neutral to circulate the transfer case oil.

Automatic transmission

- On models equipped with Quadra-Trac and an automatic transmission, but without the low range reduction unit the vehicle can be towed with the transmission in Neutral and the front and rear driveshafts removed
  - (Chapter 81. If equipped with the reduction unit, shift the transmission into Park and shift the reduction unit into Neutral The Emergency Drive control located in the glovebox must be in the Normal position. If the engine was shut off with this control in the Emergency Drive position, restart it and turn the knob to Normal before towing the vehicle.
  - On 1980 through 1983 models, shift the transmission into Park and the transfer case into Neutral. Stop every 200 miles, start the engine and run it for approximately one minute with the transmission in Park and the transfer case in Neutral to circulate the transfer case oil
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