



SURFACE VEHICLE RECOMMENDED PRACTICE

J3300™/2

APR2025

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Superseding J3300/2 MAY2020

Trailer Towing Driving Skill Certification

RATIONALE

This SAE Recommended Practice describes trailer towing driving skill levels for operating automobiles and light trucks in combination with a trailer, as they relate to vehicle operation, primarily for purposes of vehicle testing and evaluation or other professional driving. This document, in combination with SAE J3300, describes specific criteria for establishing trailer towing driving skill levels, verification methods, and certification procedures for the skill levels. This document may also be used as a basis for developing a trailer towing training program for drivers seeking certification. This document reflects current industry practice as reflected by on-going cooperation of OEM, supplier, independent test facilities, and other driving-related organizations. It is anticipated that this Recommended Practice will evolve into a broadly accepted SAE Standard that will promote harmonization of driving skill levels across the industry.

SAE J3300/2 has been reaffirmed to comply with the SAE Five-Year Review policy.

1. SCOPE

This Recommended Practice is intended to establish a procedure to certify the trailer towing driving skill levels of professional drivers. This certification can be used by the individual driver to qualify their skills when seeking employment or other professional activity. These certification levels may also be used by test facilities or other organizations when seeking test or professional drivers of various skills.

This document provides directions for obtaining certification through Probitas Authentication^{®1} and associated trailer towing driving skill examination requirements.

This document is a supplement to SAE J3300, providing information specific to the trailer towing driving skill certification and clarifying the application of the rules set forth in SAE J3300 to the trailer towing certification. While the references, definitions, rules, and guidelines presented in SAE J3300 Sections 1 through 5 apply to the trailer towing certification, they are not repeated in this document.

¹ Probitas Authentication[®] is an SAE International affiliate organization that provides certification services for technical transportation professionals (<http://www.sae-itc.org/probitas/about/>).

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Documents

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2. REFERENCES

2.1 Applicable Documents

The following publications form a part of this specification to the extent specified herein. Unless otherwise indicated, the latest issue of SAE publications shall apply.

2.1.1 SAE Publications

Available from SAE International, 400 Commonwealth Drive, Warrendale, PA 15096-0001, Tel: 877-606-7323 (inside USA and Canada) or +1 724-776-4970 (outside USA), www.sae.org.

SAE J266	Steady-State Directional Control Test Procedures for Passenger Cars and Light Trucks
SAE J670	Vehicle Dynamics Terminology
SAE J2664	Trailer Sway Response Test Procedure
SAE J2807	Performance Requirements for Determining Tow-Vehicle Gross Combination Weight Rating and Trailer Weight Rating
SAE J3085	Terminology for Light and Medium Duty Trailers and Components
SAE J3300	Driving Level Skill Certification

3. DEFINITIONS

In addition to the definitions provided in SAE J3300, the following definitions are specific to the trailer towing certification.

3.1 ELECTRIC BRAKES

Brake system that uses electrical power to actuate the trailer brakes, commanded by the towing vehicle.

3.2 LINEAR RANGE

The lateral acceleration range over which vehicle response to steering control inputs is nearly proportional (beyond the on-center range, typically to about ± 0.4 g). (Refer to SAE J670.)

NOTE: The linear range is limited to less than 0.3 g for the trailer towing 1 (TT1) certification. (See [6.1.1](#) and [6.1.2](#).)

3.3 SURGE BRAKE SYSTEM

A self-contained, permanently closed hydraulic brake system for trailers that relies on inertial forces, developed in response to the braking action of the tow vehicle, applied to a hydraulic device mounted on or connected to the tongue of the trailer. (Refer to SAE J3085.)

NOTE: A surge brake system may also be referred to as an “overrun brake.”

3.4 SWAY TEST

Vehicle evaluation test designed to develop and measure trailer sway. (Refer to SAE J2664.)

3.5 TRAILER SWAY

Oscillatory response to a disturbance of a combination vehicle characterized mainly by relative yaw motion between the tow vehicle and trailer. This is typically observed as an oscillatory turning and translational motion of the trailer at highway speeds. (Refer to SAE J2664.)

3.6 UNDERSTEER TEST

Vehicle evaluation test designed to measure understeer. (Refer to SAE J266 and SAE J670.)

3.7 WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION HITCH

A hitch that includes features to transfer moments between tow vehicle and trailer. The intended purpose is to redistribute axle loads by means of leverage applied on both the trailer and tow vehicle structures. (Refer to SAE J3085.)

NOTE: A “weight distribution hitch” may also be referred to as a “load-leveling hitch.”

4. PROGRAM STRUCTURE

SAE J3300/2 is a trailer-towing skill certification process. It has multiple levels of certification based on complexity or difficulty of driving task. All SAE J3300 certifications must be tested by an SAE-certified examiner, using an SAE-certified test course and test vehicle. SAE J3300/2 trailer towing certifications have driving level prerequisites (see [6.2](#)). Each certification has a specified validity period after which recertification is required as well as annual maintenance requirements. Certifications may be revoked (decertification) for specific cause, or for failure to complete annual maintenance requirements (see [6.5](#)). A tabular summary of examiner requirements, candidate prerequisites, annual maintenance requirements, and recertification periods is also presented in [Appendix A](#).

Refer to SAE J3300, Section 4, for processes regarding if a candidate does not pass, recertification, annual maintenance, and decertification.

5. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Probitas Authentication® is designated as the personnel credentialing body for the SAE J3300 driving skill certification.

Refer to SAE J3300, Section 5, for information regarding application for SAE J3300 driving skills certifications through Probitas Authentication®, submitting documentation of annual maintenance requirements, the certification decision authority, complaints and appeals, examiner requirements, certifier requirements, and lead certifier requirements.

5.1 Examiner Requirements Specific to Trailer Towing

Examiner responsibilities are outlined in SAE J3300, 5.5. All examiners must be a certified by a certifier for the examinations to be administered. Examiners must possess a driving level certification at least one level higher than required for the prerequisite, plus the same trailer towing level certification, for the examination being administered.

See [Table A1](#) for a tabular summary of examiner requirements.

An examiner may employ non-certified helpers to set the course, move vehicles, or otherwise set up before and clean up after an examination, but examiners alone are responsible for ensuring proper course setup.

Any new examiner candidates must complete a SAE J3300 examiner application form and submit to the lead certifier. If approved, the lead certifier will assign a certifier to conduct the certification. The recertification period for an examiner is 3 years. An examiner may be decertified if he/she does not maintain the integrity of the SAE J3300 process.

6. TRAILER TOWING CERTIFICATION

This section specifies criteria and evaluation methods for assessing the trailer towing driving skill level of test drivers or other professional drivers. Vehicle-trailer combination control and spatial awareness skills are assessed through the trailer towing certification process. Multiple trailer towing driving skill levels are presented, testing drivers' trailer towing knowledge, ability to conduct pre-trip inspections, parking lot skills, city driving skills, highway driving skills, and trailer sway response. Each level has approximately two certification tests with objective pass/fail criteria. All tests have four pass/fail criteria: safety, control, consistency, and pace. Each level also has a fifth pass/fail criteria that applies to the whole test: attitude/behavior. A procedure for each skill level and test is included.

6.1 Trailer Towing Overview

Currently, there are two trailer towing levels: TT1 and TT3. Each trailer towing level corresponds with a driving level certification (DL1 and DL3). Additionally, each trailer towing level has multiple categories for the class of trailer to be operated which is denoted by “-L” (light) or “-H” (heavy). See [Appendix A](#) for a summary of trailer towing certifications.

NOTE: There is no TT2 certification. For consistency, TT1 coincides with DL1 prerequisites, and TT3 with DL3.

6.1.1 Trailer Towing 1, Light Trailers (TT1-L)

Assesses ability to conduct professional driving tasks with a vehicle-trailer combination on public roads such as operating a fleet vehicle. TT1 is recommended for test drivers operating a vehicle-trailer combination on proving ground access roads or evaluating vehicle performance on proving ground tracks or public roads where tasks are limited to the linear range of cornering performance (less than 0.3 g). Trailer gross weight is no greater than tow vehicle gross weight, up to 3493 kg (7700 pounds). Anyone with trailering experience should be able to pass without practice.

6.1.2 Trailer Towing 1, Heavy Trailers (TT1-H)

Assesses ability to conduct professional driving tasks with a vehicle-trailer combination on public roads such as operating a fleet vehicle. TT1 is recommended for test drivers operating a vehicle-trailer combination on proving ground access roads or evaluating vehicle performance on proving ground tracks or public roads where tasks are limited to the linear range of cornering performance (less than 0.3 g). Trailer gross weight is greater than tow vehicle gross weight and/or greater than 3493 kg (7700 pounds). Anyone with extensive trailering experience (including use of weight-distribution hitches) should be able to pass without practice.

6.1.3 Trailer Towing 3, Light Trailers (TT3-L)

Assesses ability to conduct testing or evaluation on proving ground tracks that may include lateral acceleration levels that exceed the linear range of cornering performance (0.3 g or greater). Trailer gross weight is no greater than tow vehicle gross weight, up to 3493 kg (7700 pounds). Anyone with SAE advanced skill level certification (DL3) and extensive trailering experience should be able to pass without practice.

6.1.4 Trailer Towing 3, Heavy Trailers (TT3-H)

Assesses ability to conduct testing or evaluation on proving ground tracks that may include lateral acceleration levels that exceed the linear range of cornering performance (0.3 g or greater). Trailer gross weight is greater than tow vehicle gross weight and/or greater than 3493 kg (7700 pounds). Anyone with SAE advanced skill level certification (DL3) and extensive trailering experience should be able to pass without practice.

6.2 Prerequisites

- TT1 (-L or -H): Requires driving level DL1 or higher prior to examination.
- TT3 (-L or -H): Requires driving level DL3 or higher and trailer towing level TT1 (-L or -H, as appropriate), prior to examination.

6.3 Examination Requirements

6.3.1 Knowledge Assessment

Each trailer towing level includes a knowledge assessment to be administered prior to the trailer setup and pre-trip inspection and dynamic evaluation. The intent of the knowledge assessment is to ensure that Candidates possess the critical knowledge to safely connect, payload, and operate a trailer prior to any dynamic driving test events. An example knowledge assessment is presented in [Appendix C](#). Candidates will be tasked to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of trailer loading terminology, how to properly load the tow vehicle and trailer combination, and the effects of improper loading.
- Demonstrate the ability to determine if the vehicle, trailer, and hitch characteristics are within the GVWR and GAWR for the tow vehicle and trailer and within the hitch rating.
- Demonstrate understanding of the effects of driver input as well as the implications of grade of descent on maintaining speed.

To pass, a candidate must achieve a score of at least 70% on the knowledge assessment. All incorrect answers will be reviewed with candidate prior to any driving events.

6.3.2 Trailer Setup and Pre-Trip Inspection

Each trailer towing level includes a trailer setup and pre-trip inspection demonstration by the candidate to be administered prior to the dynamic evaluation. The intent of the trailer setup and pre-trip inspection are to ensure that candidates demonstrate the ability to:

- Properly set up the hitch (including weight-distribution hitch for TT1-H and TT3-H).
- Hook up the trailer.
- Perform pre-trip inspection of vehicle-trailer combination, including confirmation that cargo is properly secured.
- Perform walk-around inspections before each time driving during the dynamic evaluation.

To pass, candidates must complete the trailer setup and pre-trip inspection with zero checklist items missed.

6.3.3 Dynamic Evaluation

Each trailer towing level has multiple objective pass/fail certification tests. Each driving test has criteria for safety, control, consistency, and pace. There is also an overall pass/fail criterion for behavior and attitude at each level. The dynamic evaluation consists of parking lot skills, city driving skills, and highway driving skills assessments. The TT3 certifications include an assessment of driver response to trailer sway, which consists of one driving test. See [Appendix C](#) for a summary of the pass/fail criteria for each test.

The candidate must pass all criteria for all tests within a trailer towing level to pass the examination for that level.

6.3.4 Facility Requirements

- Vehicle dynamics area (VDA) or equivalent with an area of 90 x 90 m (300 x 300 feet) and including a run-up lane is required to perform these driver certification test. The length of the run-up lane should be sufficient to allow a fully loaded combination vehicle to reach 100 km/h (60 mph) prior to entering VDA.
- A VDA or roadway with sufficient width to allow a pulse-steer or manually inputted sway at the required speeds.
- A continuous track or access to a public road that enables 16 km (10 miles) continuous driving at freeway speeds and with multiple travel lanes. Track or public road route must include a minimum of three traffic signs and other traffic. Ability to ascend or descend a grade of at least 6%, if available.
- Approximately 125 cones are required for this examination. Two colors or other distinguishing factors are preferred.
- A timer or stopwatch.
- See [Appendix D](#) for course layout diagrams. Any layout other than the standard layout must be approved by an SAE J3300 certifier.

6.3.5 Vehicle Requirements

One tow vehicle and one trailer are each required for any trailer towing examination. A certifier must approve tow vehicles, trailers, and their respective set-ups; e.g., hitch, payload.

6.3.5.1 Tow Vehicle Requirements

The tow vehicles required to conduct the trailer towing tests include:

- TT1-L and TT3-L: Mid-size SUV or equivalent with a wheelbase of 2794 to 3175 mm (110 to 125 inches).
- TT1-H and TT3-H: Full-size truck/SUV or equivalent with a wheelbase of 3556 to 3937 mm (140 to 155 inches).

6.3.5.2 Trailer Requirements

The trailers required to conduct the trailer towing tests include:

- TT1-L, TT3-L: SAE conventional-type, C-class trailer or equivalent: single-axle box trailer, GVW = 1588 kg (3500 pounds). Use of surge brake is acceptable. (Refer to SAE J2807 and SAE J3085.)
- TT1-H, TT3-H: SAE conventional-type, E-class trailer or equivalent: dual-axle box trailer, GVW = 3493 kg (7700 pounds). Must have electric brakes and weight-distribution hitch. (Refer to SAE J2807 and SAE J3085.)

6.4 Recertification

- TT1: Recertification is required every 10 years.
- TT3: Recertification is required every 5 years.

6.5 Annual Maintenance Requirements for Trailer Towing Levels

6.5.1 TT1

In the last year, I have:

- Met the annual maintenance requirements of driving level 1 (DL1), as provided in SAE J3300, 6.5.1.
- Conducted at least 4 hours of testing or driving at the TT1 level.

6.5.2 TT3

In the last year, I have:

- Met annual maintenance requirements of TT1.
- Conducted at least 4 hours of testing or driving at the TT3 level that involved some operation in the non-linear range of cornering performance.