

Wheels: Scott from Middletown writes, “I hope you can help me out. My wife just bought a boat. I’ll take all the sympathy I can get, thanks. My problem is towing it without overloading my truck. I have a 1998 Chevy 4 x 4, 1500 Z-71 w/off-road. It has 12-inch axles and .373 gear with a 350 V-8. It also has a factory towing package (I think it has a trans cooler). The boat and trailer have been weighted at 4,100 lbs. I have read all I can to make sure I’m not sending my truck to an early grave towing this boat. Tongue weight is well under 500 lbs. as stamped on the hitch. It has a GVWR of 6600, GAWR feet of 3,925, and GAWR rr of 3,750. That adds up to more than 6,600 (7,675). The problem is I’m getting many different answers. I don’t know what the truck weighs by itself, but it has to be over 3,000 lbs. and that means all together I would be over 6,600 lbs (7,100) but under 7675 figure. I have heard that you never want to tow something heavier than the truck towing it. The manual says maximum trailer weight is 6,500 lbs, which I’m under. I was thinking about upgrading to a 2500, but the manual also says for a 2500 truck with the same specifications, its only 6,000 lbs. How is that possible? I know this is a lot of information and really several questions. I just want to know what all this means and how to figure it this truck is going to be OK towing this boat.

Halderman: From your figures, I think you will be OK. The idea of having a truck heavier than what you are towing doesn’t really apply that well and is why the 2500 series has about the same towing capacity. The heavier truck, while it could be a better truck for the size of the trailer, also weights more. If in the market for a new truck, check with a knowledgeable sales person at the dealer and have him or her run the numbers. It starts with the basic truck and then the options are added, which also add weight, etc. I have been to school on selecting the proper truck for towing and hauling and it is not a simple process.

Good luck and be sure to tow with the gear selector in tow mode or at least not in overdrive.

