

## 2. STATE SAFETY CHAIN LAWS

A safety chain is a flexible tension device usually connected between the towed vehicle and the towing vehicle and normal has sufficient strength to prevent separation of those vehicles if the primary coupling device fails.

State/Cite	At Least One Chain Required	Fifth-Wheel RV Kingpin Assemblies Exempt	Chain Strength		No More Slack Than for Proper Turning	Prevent Tow Bar From Dropping to Ground if Disengaged	Remarks
			Maintain Control if Tow Bar/Hitch Fails	State has Strength/Design Rules			
<u>Alabama</u>	--						
Alaska Rule 13 AAC 04.275	X	X	X		X	X	
<u>Arizona</u>	--						
Arkansas 27-35-111	X		X				
<u>California</u> 29004; 29004.5	X	X	X	Breaking strength must equal or exceed gross weight of towed vehicle.	X	X	No RV trailer shall be manufactured for sale in CA, sold, offered for sale, leased or rented unless equipped with a safety connection in compliance with CA law. All safety connections and attachments shall have a positive means of ensuring that the safety connection or attachment does not become dislodged while in transit.
<u>Colorado</u> 42-4-506	2	X <sup>a</sup>	X				
Connecticut Rule 14-1-6	X		X				Must be coupled to frame of towing vehicle.
<u>Delaware</u>	--						
<u>Florida</u> 316.530	2	X	X				
<u>Georgia</u>	--						

-- No safety chain required by law or rule

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<u>Hawaii</u>							Each island's government may have specific requirements.
<u>Idaho</u>	--						
<u>Illinois</u> 625/5/15-110	2	X					
<u>Indiana</u> 9-20-9-8	2			Each chain or device and combination used must be of sufficient strength to haul trailer when loaded.			Attach one on each side of coupling at extreme outer edge of trailer. Permits other suitable devices in lieu of safety chains.
<u>Iowa</u> 321/462	X		X				
<u>Kansas</u> 8-1907							Requires adequate "safety hitch".
<u>Kentucky</u>	--						
<u>Louisiana</u> 32:384	X		X				Required on trailers with loaded gross weight capacity up to 6,000 pounds.
<u>Maine</u> 2385	X	X <sup>e</sup>	X				Safety chain or steel cable shall be made of at least 1/4" wire.
<u>Maryland</u> 24-107	X	X <sup>e</sup>		11.13.08 10D	X	X	Must be coupled directly to frame of towing vehicle. Attachment to pintle hook does not meet this requirement.

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a Provided it meets requirements of Department of Transportation

b Provided it is an approved coupling and kingpin assembly

c Upper and lower halves or assembly may not be separated without being manually released

d Provided locking pins or bolts are of sufficient strength to hold gross weight of towed vehicle

e Exempts truck and semi-trailer

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<u>Massachusetts</u> Rule 540 CMR 2.21	2		X	Each chain shall have ultimate strength at least equal to gross weight of trailer and its load.	X	X	Attach one on each side of central trailer hitch, independently and securely.
<u>Michigan</u> 257.721	2			Each chain shall be of sufficient strength to haul trailer when loaded.			Attach one on each side of coupling at extreme outer edge of trailer. Safety chains used in three-vehicle RV combination must have locking mechanism.
<u>Minnesota</u> 169.82	2	X <sup>b</sup>	X				Carried through a ring on tow bar and permanently attached to trailer.
<u>Mississippi</u> 63-5-25	X	X <sup>d</sup>	X		X	X	Permits cable or equivalent devices.
<u>Missouri</u> 307.170	X	X	X				Permits cable or equivalent devices.
<u>Montana</u> 61-9-208	X						Required on trailers 3,000 pounds GVWR or less. Securely fastened to front of towing unit. Steel chain or cable must have minimum diameter of 1/4".
<u>Nebraska</u> 60-6, 246	2					X	
<u>Nevada</u>	--						

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<u>New Hampshire</u> 266:63	X	e	X	Each chain must have ultimate strength at least equal to gross weight of trailer and load.		X	
<u>New Jersey</u> 39:4-54	X	X	X			X	<u>OR</u> trailer shall have an adequate device to prevent its rolling backwards.
<u>New Mexico</u>	--						
<u>New York</u> 375 29-a; Rule 57.3(f)	X		X	Table 4 of Section 57.2	X Each chain shall have same length of slack.	X	Attach single chain on trailer's longitudinal center line. If 2 chains, attach equal distance from and on opposite sides of longitudinal center line, chains must be crossed. Means of attachment shall not be common with or utilize fasteners common with ball or coupling. No welding may be performed on chain after its manufacture.
<u>North Carolina</u> 20-123	2	X <sup>d</sup>	X				
<u>North Dakota</u> 39-21-32; Rule 37-06-03-02	2	X					<u>OR</u> brakes that automatically apply upon trailer breakaway.

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<u>Ohio</u> 4513.32	2		X			X	
<u>Oklahoma</u> 47 12-405	2	e	X				
<u>Oregon</u> 818.150; 818.170	X	X <sup>c</sup>	X	Tensile strength equal to loaded weight of trailer.	X	X	
<u>Pennsylvania</u> 4905	2	X		Each chain must have strength at least equal to GVWR of trailer	X	X	Chains must be equal length. Must be crossed. Applies to ball-and-socket type hitch or pintle hook without a locking device.
<u>Rhode Island</u>	--						
<u>South Carolina</u> 56-5-5150	X	X	X				
<u>South Dakota</u> 32-19-9;-10	X	X <sup>a</sup>	X		X	X	Permits cable or equivalent devices.
<u>Tennessee</u> 55-7-114	X	X	X				
<u>Texas</u> 545.410; Rule TAC 37.27.1	X	X	X		X	X	Chains must be equal length. Attach to towing vehicle equidistant right and left of point where vehicles are connected. Attach to towed vehicle either side of tongue equidistant forward and left of hitch. Connect by means of bolts, pins or secure connecting methods meeting strength requirements. Cannot be directly welded.

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<u>Utah</u> 41-6-148.40	X	X	X		X	X	Securely connect to chassis of towing vehicle, trailer and drawbar. Must be adequate to insure public safety.
<u>Vermont</u> 1341	X						
<u>Virginia</u> 46.2-1118	X						
<u>Washington</u> Rule 204-70-070	2		X	WAC 204-70-99004; 99005	Each chain shall have same length of slack.	X	Equal distance from and on opposite sides of longitudinal center line of towing vehicle and trailer. Must be crossed. Attachment cannot be common with or utilize fasteners common with ball or coupling. No welding subsequent to manufacture including direct welding by link to towed or towing vehicle. Permits use of wire ropes or cables.
<u>West Virginia</u>	--						
<u>Wisconsin</u> 347.47	2	X		TRANS. 308.12	X	X	Two separate lengths required. Leveling bars or cables can be substituted.
<u>Wyoming</u>	--						
<u>District of Columbia</u>	--						

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– **Additional References (not included):**

**SAE J697: Safety Chains for Full Trailers or Converter Dollies**

Scope: This SAE Recommended Practice covers the number, location, and method of attachment of safety chains for full trailers, and/or converter dollies. (Revised May 1988)

**SAE J847: Trailer Tow Bar Eye and Pintle Hook / Coupler Performance**

Scope: This SAE Recommended Practice applies to highway trailer tow bar eye-type applications, including multiple trailers. (November 1987)

**SAE J849: Connection and Accessory Locations for Towing Multiple Trailers**

Scope: This SAE Recommended Practice applies to all commercial trailers except drop frame and car haul types. It specifies the dimensional parameters and loads for the Connection and Mounting Structure, and the location of the Brake and Electrical Connections. (November 1985)

**SAE Standards** may be purchased online at [www.sae.org](http://www.sae.org) or by contacting:

Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) Phone: (724) 772-8511  
400 Commonwealth Drive  
Warrendale, PA 15096-0001