

Ten Horse Trailer Shopping Tips

Once you've decided on the type (link) of trailer you'll need, it's time to go shopping! When shopping for a new or used trailer, look for these features:

1. **Size:** An average horse needs about 10' of length, 7' height and 6' width.
2. **Light:** Look for plenty of windows and slats for ventilation.
3. There should be no sharp edges anywhere! Check inside and out.
4. **Ramps:** Low to the ground and non-slip. Ramps are preferred over step-ups.
5. Quick-release mechanisms on all tie rings, center dividers, chest bars, and butt bars.
6. Floor mats should be non-slip and floor boards should run the length of the trailer, not across the width.
7. All tie rings and latches should fold flat against the wall when not in use.
8. **Suspension:** Rubber torsion suspension is best. This type of suspension reduces stress on the horse and increases safety in the event of a flat.
9. **Storage:** Many trailers have rear tacks, side tacks and mangers with underneath storage. Think about your storage needs and overestimate your needs!
10. **Options:** Consider water tanks, door-mounted tack organizers, load lights, on-board RV battery and a DC plug. All add convenience to the trailering experience.

There are three types of horse trailers:

Stock: open, often with slatted sides. Airy and open. Not for long distance hauling or for use in bad weather.

Straight Load: the most common type of trailer. Often has a hay manger which may prohibit the horse from lowering its head and clearing its respiratory tract. Usually the same width as the tow vehicle.

Slant Load: Horses ride diagonally in a slant-load trailer. May be more comfortable for the horse, especially during acceleration and deceleration. Horse usually can lower its head. Offer more design options for living quarters and equipment rooms. Generally wider than tow vehicle so may be more difficult to pilot.

Some other factors to consider when shopping for a horse trailer:

- How will you use the trailer? Locally or across the country?
- How many horses will you be hauling at a time?
- What is the capacity of your towing vehicle?
- Should you choose a bumper pull or gooseneck trailer? Goosenecks are larger, carry more weight and are easier to maneuver and back up. But the gooseneck ball will take up more space in the bed of the towing truck.
- Steel or aluminum? Steel trailers are less expensive but aluminum lasts longer.
- What is your budget?