

“The tongue weight of a trailer is a critical factor in knowing if a trailer is loaded and balanced properly,” said Steve Schertler, President of SenZBar, LLC. Most experts recommend that the tongue weight of a boat trailer be between 7 –15% of the gross trailer’s weight, which is the weight of the trailer plus the boat that sits on it. Too little tongue weight results in a trailer that tends to sway back and forth and may “jackknife” easily when in a hard breaking situation. Too much tongue weight is no better, both the suspension and transmission may be overloaded and loss of steering may result as the weight (traction) is lifted off of the towing vehicle’s front wheels.

Schertler observes, “Seven to fifteen percent on a 4,000 pound trailer & boat is 280 – 600 lbs., that’s a pretty wide gap. In addition, many people are towing quite a bit more than that. What may be optimal on a large heavy-duty SUV would not be optimal on a medium-sized one. The best towing range is actually a much narrower band for optimum fuel and handling efficiency.” Schertler adds, “Archimedes’ principles are at work here. The trailer is essentially a lever that has a fulcrum close to the axle or axles. For example, if your fuel tanks are aft of your trailer’s axle when loaded, and you consumed just 30 gallons of fuel on a day trip, you could be loading a boat that is 255 lbs. lighter but will have a “*heavier*” tongue load. Move a hundred pounds of gear that is located 2 feet in front of the axle to two feet behind the axle the difference is 400 lbs. Solutions to measuring the trailers tongue weight ranged from using a bathroom scale spread between 2x4s, to sitting on your bumper and measuring with a ruler to see how far it drops. I knew that when I typed in ‘Trailer Tongue Weight’ on a popular Internet search engine and got over 100,000 hits, there was a real need for *SenZbar* ...and it had to be as easy to use a tire gauge.”

More information can be found at the website WWW.SENZBAR.COM