

Towing Your Vehicle Behind a Motorhome

Your MDX can be towed behind a motorhome at legal highway speeds up to 65 mph (100 km/h). Do not exceed 65 mph (100 km/h). Otherwise, severe transmission damage will occur. To avoid damage to the 4WD system, it must be towed with all four wheels on the ground (flat towing).

When purchasing a tow bar, make sure you select a reputable manufacturer and installer. Follow the manufacturer's attachment instructions carefully.

After attaching the tow bar to your motorhome, do the following to prepare your MDX for "flat towing":

When preparing to tow your MDX, check the transmission fluid level (see page 271). Maintaining the correct level is very important. *Do not overfill.* Do the following every day immediately before you begin towing. Follow the procedure exactly. Otherwise, severe automatic transmission damage will occur.

- Start the engine.
- Press on the brake pedal. Shift the lever through all the positions (P, R, N, D, 2, 1)
- Shift to D, then to N. Let the engine run for three minutes, then turn off the engine.
- Release the parking brake.
- Leave the ignition switch in ACCESSORY (I) so the steering wheel does not lock. Make sure the radio and any items plugged into the accessory power sockets are turned off so you do not run down the battery.

Extended Towing

If you tow more than 8 hours in one day, you should repeat the above procedure at least every 8 hours. (when you stop for fuel, etc.)

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NOTICE

The steering system can be damaged if the steering wheel is locked. Leave the ignition switch in Accessory (I), and make sure the steering wheel turns freely before you begin towing.

NOTICE

Improper towing preparation will damage the transmission. Follow the above procedure exactly. If YOU cannot shift the transmission or start the engine, your vehicle must be transported on a flat-bed or trailer.

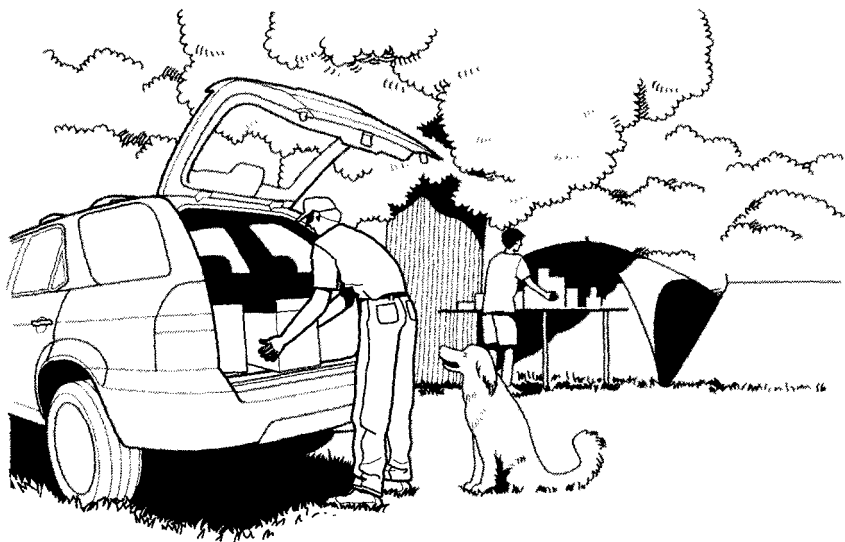
Replace the transmission fluid every two years or 30,000 miles (48,000 km), whichever comes first.

Off-Highway Guidelines

General Information

Your MDX has been designed primarily for use on pavement. But its higher ground clearance and new four-wheel drive VTM-4 system allow you to occasionally travel on unpaved roads, to campgrounds, picnic sites, and similar locations. It is not designed for trailblazing, mountain climbing, or other challenging off-road activities.

If you decide to drive on unpaved roads, you will find that it requires somewhat different driving skills. Your MDX will also handle somewhat differently than it does on pavement. So be sure to read this owner's manual, pay special attention to the precautions and tips in this section, and get acquainted with your vehicle before you leave the pavement.



Important Safety Precautions

Remember that your MDX has higher ground clearance and a higher center of gravity than passenger vehicles designed for use only on pavement. This means your vehicle can more easily tip or roll over if you make abrupt turns or drive on slopes.

Utility vehicles have a significantly higher rollover rate than other types of vehicles. To avoid loss of control or rollover, be sure to follow all recommendations and precautions on page [208](#) and in this section.

Seat belts are just as important off-road as on paved roads. Wherever you drive, make sure you and your passengers always wear seat belts. If children or infants are along for the ride, see that they are properly secured. In a rollover crash, an unbelted person is more likely to die than a person wearing a seat belt.

WARNING

Improperly operating this vehicle on or off-pavement can cause an accident or rollover in which you and your passengers could be seriously injured or killed.

- Follow all instructions and guidelines in the owner's manual.
- Keep your speed low and don't drive faster than conditions permit.

On many unpaved roads, you won't find lane markers, traffic signals, or signs to warn you of possible trouble ahead. It's up to you to continually assess the situation and drive within limits.

The route presents limits (some roads are too steep and bumpy for example). You have limits (in driving skills and comfort). And your vehicle also has limits (traction, stability, and power, for instance).

Driving off-highway can be hazardous if you fail to recognize limits and take proper precautions. For example, you can have an accident or rollover during maneuvers such as turning, driving on hills, or over large obstacles.

Be sure to store cargo properly, and do not exceed your MDX's cargo load limits (see pages [204](#) and [226](#)).

Off-Highway Guidelines

Driving Tips

The following pages contain practical tips on basic off-highway operation.

Check Out Your Vehicle

Driving off-highway can be hard on a vehicle. Before you leave the pavement, be sure all scheduled maintenance and service has been done, and that you have inspected your vehicle. Pay special attention to the condition of the tires, and use a gauge to check the tire pressures.

After you return to the pavement, carefully inspect your vehicle to make sure there is no damage that could make driving it unsafe. Check the tires for damage and for proper pressure.

Controlling Speed

Off-highway, the general rule is to keep your speed low. Of course, you'll need enough speed to keep moving forward. But at higher speeds, you have less time to assess conditions and make good decisions. There's also a greater chance of sliding if you brake or turn too quickly on wet soil, gravel, or ice. In any situation, never go faster than conditions allow.

Accelerating and Braking

For better traction on all surfaces, accelerate slowly and gradually build up speed. If you try to start too fast on wet soil, mud, snow, or ice, you might not have enough traction to get underway. You may even dig yourself into a hole. Starting with the shift lever in second gear (2) will help get you to a smooth start on snow and ice.

Generally, the best off-pavement braking technique is to gently depress the brake pedal, then increase pressure as more braking is needed. Avoid hard braking. Keep in mind that you will usually need more time and distance to brake to a stop on unpaved surfaces.

If you need to brake hard because of an emergency, apply steady, even pressure to the brake pedal. Do not pump the brakes; let the anti-lock braking system pump them for you. If you pump the brakes, the anti-lock cannot work as efficiently, and your stopping distance may be increased.

Test your brakes from time to time to make sure they are operating properly. This will also give you a feel for how much traction you have on a given surface.

Turning

Off-highway, the basic turning technique is to drive at low speed and gradually adjust the amount of steering to suit the surface.

You should have no problem making sharp turns at low speed on level ground. But never make an abrupt turn at higher speeds, on or off pavement. With a higher center of gravity, your vehicle can more easily tip or roll over.

Driving on Slopes

Before driving up or down a hill, stop and assess the situation. If you can't clearly see all road conditions (good traction, no bumps, holes or other obstacles, a safe way out, etc.) walk the slope before you drive on it. If you have any doubt about whether you can safely drive on the slope, *don't do it*. Find another route.

If you are driving up a hill and find that you cannot continue (because of the steepness, a large obstacle, etc.), *do not try to turn around*. Your vehicle could roll over. Slowly back down the hill, following the same route you took up the hill.

Avoiding Obstacles

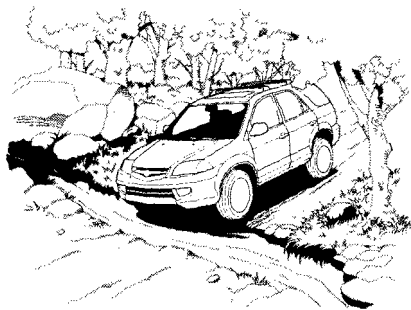
Bumps, holes, rocks, and other obstacles can be hazardous. Debris in the road can damage your suspension or other components. Even small rocks can cut your tires.

More important, because your vehicle has a high center of gravity, driving over a large obstacle, or allowing a wheel to drop into a deep hole, can cause your vehicle to tip or roll over.

Drive slow enough to observe obstacles ahead and maneuver around them. If you can't avoid a serious obstacle, turn around and look for a better route.

Off-Highway Driving Guidelines

Crossing a Stream



Before driving through water, stop and make sure that:

- The water is never deep enough to cover your wheel hubs, axles or exhaust pipe. You could stall, and not be able to restart the engine. The water could also damage important vehicle components.

- The water is not flowing too fast. Deep rushing water can sweep you downstream. Even very shallow rushing water can wash the ground from under your tires and cause you to lose traction and possibly roll over.

- The banks are sloped so you can drive out.
- The banks and surface under the water provide good traction. The water may hide hazards such as rocks, holes, or mud.

If you decide it's safe to drive through water, choose a suitable speed and engage VTM-4 Lock (see page 217), then proceed without shifting or changing speed. Do not stop the vehicle or shut off the engine while trying to cross a stream. After driving through water, test your brakes. If the brakes got wet, drive slowly while gently pumping the brakes until they operate normally.

If the water is deeper than the wheel hubs, some additional service to the engine, transmission and differential may be required. This service is not covered by your warranties.

If You Get Stuck

If you get stuck, engage the VTM-4 Lock mode (see page 218). Carefully try to go in the direction (forward or reverse) that you think will give you the best chance of getting unstuck.

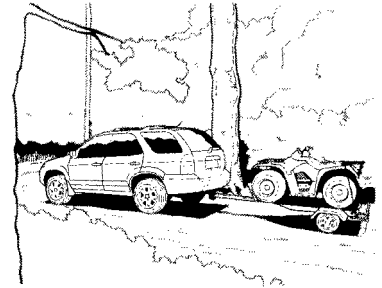
Do not spin the tires at high speeds. It will not help you get out and may cause damage to the transmission or the VTM-4 system.

If you are unable to free yourself, you will need to be pulled out by another vehicle. Your MDX is equipped with front and rear tow hooks designed for this purpose.

Use a nylon strap to attach the MDX to the recovery vehicle and carefully take out the slack in the strap. Once the strap is tight, the recovery vehicle should apply force. Remember that the recovery vehicle needs good traction to avoid becoming stuck, too.

You should never use a jack to try getting unstuck. A jack only works on firm, level ground. Also, your vehicle could easily slip off the jack and hurt you or someone else.

Towing a Trailer



You may be able to safely tow a light weight trailer (such as a motorcycle trailer or small tent trailer) off-road if you follow these guidelines:

- Do not exceed a trailer weight of 1,000 pounds (including cargo) or a tongue weight of 100 pounds. (Tongue weight should be about 10% of the trailer weight.)

CONTINUED

Off-Highway Driving Guidelines

- Try to stay on smooth, level dirt roads, and avoid driving in hilly terrain.
- Allow extra room for starting, stopping, and turning.
- Slow down if you encounter bumps or other obstacles.