Always use the parking brake when you park your car. The indicator on the instrument panel shows that the parking brake is not fully released; it does not indicate that the parking brake is firmly set. Make sure the parking brake is set firmly or your car may roll if it is parked on an incline.

If your car has an automatic transmission, set the parking brake before you put the transmission in Park. This keeps the car from moving and putting pressure on the parking mechanism in the transmission — making it easier to move the shift lever out of Park when you want to drive away.

If the car is facing uphill, turn the front wheels away from the curb. If you have a manual transmission, put it in first gear.

If the car is facing downhill, turn the front wheels toward the curb. If you have a manual transmission, put it in reverse gear.

Make sure the parking brake is fully released before driving away. Driving with the parking brake partially set can overheat or damage the rear brakes.

Parking Tips

- Make sure the moonroof and the windows are closed.
- Turn off the lights.
- Place any packages, valuables, etc., in the trunk or take them with you.
- Lock the doors with the key or the remote transmitter. Check the indicator on the instrument panel to verify that the security system is set.
- Never park over dry leaves, tall grass, or other flammable materials. The three way catalytic converter gets very hot, and could cause these materials to catch on fire.

The Braking System

Your Acura is equipped with disc brakes at all four wheels. A power assist helps reduce the effort needed on the brake pedal. The ABS helps you retain steering control when braking very hard.

Put your foot on the brake pedal only when you intend to brake. Resting your foot on the pedal keeps the brakes applied lightly, causing them to build up heat. Heat build-up can reduce how well your brakes work. It also keeps your brake lights on all the time, confusing drivers behind you.

Constant application of the brakes when going down a long hill builds up heat and reduces their effectiveness. Use the engine to assist the brakes by downshifting to a lower gear and taking your foot off the accelerator pedal.

Check your brakes after driving through deep water. Apply the brakes moderately to see if they feel normal. If not, apply them gently and frequently until they do. Since a longer distance is needed to stop with wet brakes, be extra cautious and alert in your driving.

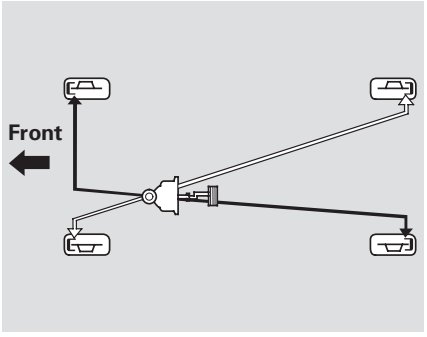
Brake Wear Indicators
All four brakes have audible brake wear indicators.

When the brake pads need replacing, you will hear a distinctive metallic "screeching" sound when you apply the brakes. If you do not have the brake pads replaced, they will begin screeching all the time.

Your brakes may sometimes squeal or squeak when you apply them lightly. Do not confuse this with the brake wear indicators. They make a very audible "screeching."

Brake System Design

The hydraulic system that operates the brakes has two separate circuits. Each circuit works diagonally across the car (the left-front brake is connected with the right-rear brake, etc.). If one circuit should develop a problem, you will still have braking at two wheels.



Anti-lock Brakes

Your car has an Anti-lock Brake System (ABS) as standard equipment. ABS helps to prevent the wheels from locking up and skidding during hard braking, allowing you to retain steering control.

When the front tires skid, you lose steering control; the car continues straight ahead even though you turn the steering wheel. The ABS helps to prevent lock-up and helps you retain steering control by pumping the brakes rapidly; much faster than a person can do it.

The ABS also balances the front-to rear braking distribution according to car loading.

You should never pump the brake pedal; this defeats the purpose of the ABS. Let the ABS work for you by always keeping firm, steady pressure on the brake pedal as you steer away from the hazard. This is sometimes referred to as *"stomp and steer."*

You will feel a pulsation in the brake pedal when the ABS activates, and you may hear some noise. This is normal; it is the ABS rapidly pumping the brakes.

Activation varies with the amount of traction your tires have. On dry pavement, you will need to press on the brake pedal very hard before you activate the ABS. However, you may feel the ABS activate immediately if you are trying to stop on snow or ice.

CONTINUED

The Braking System

Important Safety Reminders

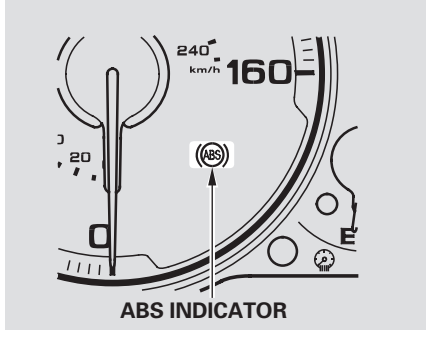
ABS does not reduce the time or distance it takes to stop the car; it only helps with steering control during braking. You should always maintain a safe following distance from other vehicles.

ABS will not prevent a skid that results from changing direction abruptly, such as trying to take a corner too fast or making a sudden lane change. Always drive at a safe, prudent speed for the road and weather conditions.

ABS cannot prevent a loss of stability. Always steer moderately when you are braking hard. Severe or sharp steering wheel movement can still cause your car to veer into oncoming traffic or off the road.

A car with ABS may require a longer distance to stop on loose or uneven surfaces, such as gravel or snow, than a car without anti-lock. Slow down and allow a greater distance between cars under those conditions.

ABS Indicator



ABS INDICATOR

The ABS is self-checking. If anything goes wrong, the ABS indicator on the instrument panel comes on (see page 61). This means the anti-lock function of the braking system has shut down. The brakes still work like a conventional system without anti-lock, providing normal stopping ability. You should have the dealer inspect your car as soon as possible.

If the ABS indicator and the brake system indicator come on together, and the parking brake is fully released, the front-to-rear braking distribution system may also shut down.

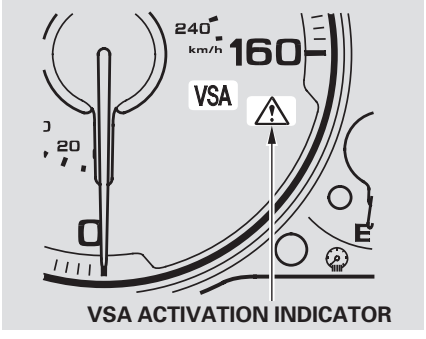
Test your brakes as instructed on page 321 . If the brakes feel normal, drive slowly and have your car repaired by your dealer as soon as possible. Avoid sudden hard braking which could cause the rear wheels to lock up and possibly lead to a loss of control.

Vehicle Stability Assist (VSA) System

The Vehicle Stability Assist system helps to stabilize the car during cornering if the car turns more or less than desired. It also assists you in maintaining traction while accelerating on loose or slippery road surfaces. It does this by regulating the engine's output, and by selectively applying braking.

When VSA activates, you may notice that the engine does not respond to the accelerator in the same way it does at other times. You will also see the VSA Activation Indicator blink.

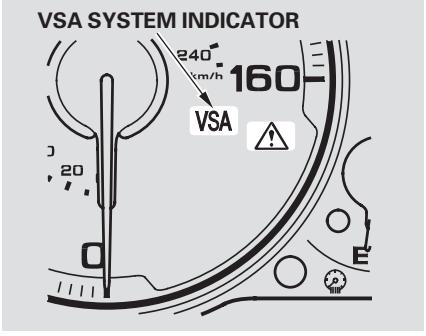
VSA Activation Indicator



VSA ACTIVATION INDICATOR

The VSA system cannot enhance the car's driving stability in all situations and does not control your car's entire braking system. It is still your responsibility to drive and corner at reasonable speeds and to leave a sufficient margin of safety.

VSA System Indicator



The VSA system indicator (see page 61) comes on and stays on when there is a problem with the VSA system. The VSA Activation indicator will also come on.

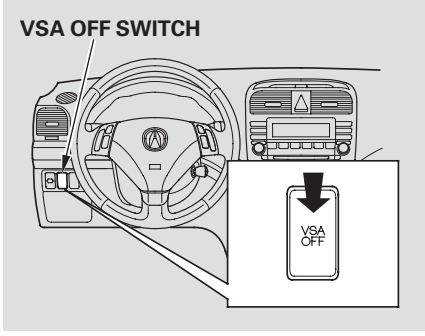
The VSA system indicator may come on along with the ABS indicator if there is a problem with the anti-lock brake system.

If the VSA indicator comes on while driving, pull to the side of the road when it is safe and turn off the engine. Reset the system by restarting the engine, and watch the VSA system indicator. If the indicator remains on, or comes back on while driving, have the VSA system inspected by your Acura dealer.

If the indicator does not come on when the ignition switch is turned ON (II), there may be a problem with the VSA system. Have your dealer inspect your car as soon as possible.

Without VSA, your car will have normal braking and cornering ability, but it will not have VSA traction and stability enhancement.

VSA Off Switch



This switch is under the left vent. Press it to turn the Vehicle Stability Assist system on and off.

When VSA is off, the VSA Activation Indicator light comes on as a reminder. Pressing the switch again turns the system back on.

CONTINUED

Vehicle Stability Assist (VSA) System

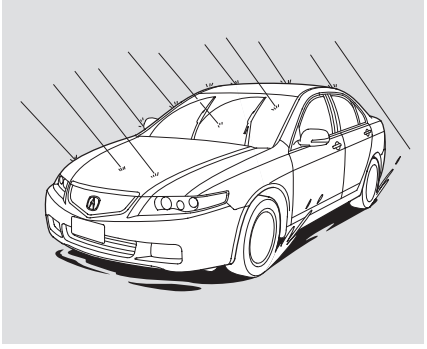
VSA is turned on every time you start the engine, even if you turned it off the last time you drove the car.

VSA and Tire Sizes

Driving with varying tire or wheel sizes may cause the VSA to malfunction. When replacing tires, make sure they are of the same size and type as your original tires (see page 276).

Deactivate the VSA system if you need to drive with the compact spare tire installed (see page 304).

If you install winter tires, make sure they are the same size as those that were originally supplied with your car. Exercise the same caution during winter driving as you would if your car was not equipped with VSA.



Rain, fog, and snow conditions require a different driving technique because of reduced traction and visibility. Keep your car well-maintained and exercise greater caution when you need to drive in bad weather. The cruise control should not be used in these conditions.

Driving Technique — Always drive slower than you would in dry weather. It takes your car longer to react, even in conditions that may seem just barely damp. Apply smooth, even pressure to all the controls. Abrupt steering wheel movements or sudden, hard application of the brakes can cause loss of control in wet weather. Be extra cautious for the first few miles (kilometers) of driving while you adjust to the change in driving conditions. This is especially true in snow. A person can forget some snow-driving techniques during the summer months. Practice is needed to relearn those skills.

Exercise extra caution when driving in rain after a long dry spell. After months of dry weather, the first rains bring oil to the surface of the roadway, making it slippery.

CONTINUED

Driving in Bad Weather

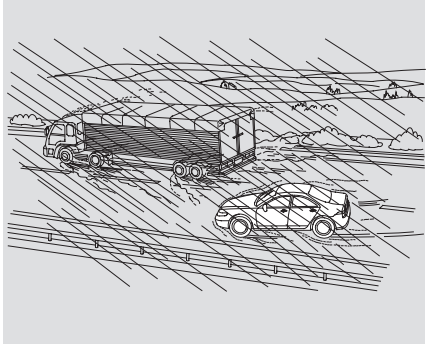
Visibility — Being able to see clearly in all directions and being visible to other drivers are important in all weather conditions. This is more difficult in bad weather. To be seen more clearly during daylight hours, turn on your headlights.

Inspect your windshield wipers and washers frequently. Keep the windshield washer reservoir full of the proper fluid. Have the windshield wiper blades replaced if they start to streak the windshield or leave parts unwiped. Use the defroster and air conditioning to keep the windows from fogging up on the inside (see pages 119 and 126).

Traction — Check your tires frequently for wear and proper pressure. Both are important in preventing “hydroplaning” (loss of traction on a wet surface). In the winter, mount snow tires on all four wheels for the best handling.

Watch road conditions carefully, they can change from moment to moment. Wet leaves can be as slippery as ice. “Clear” roads can have patches of ice. Driving conditions can be very hazardous when the outside temperature is near freezing. The road surface can become covered with areas of water puddles mixed with areas of ice, so your traction can change without warning.

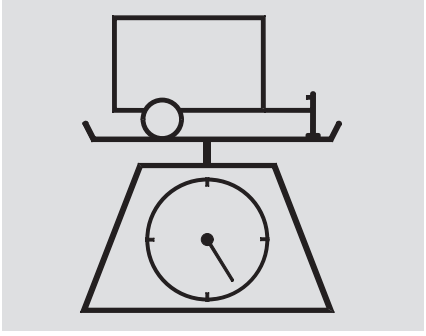
Be careful when downshifting. If traction is low, you can lock up the drive wheels for a moment and cause a skid.



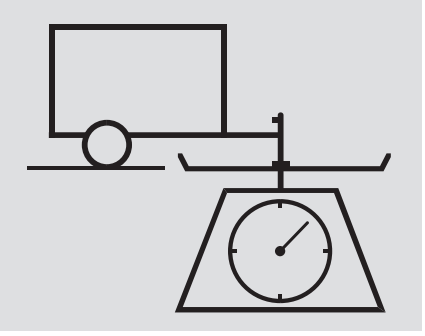
Be very cautious when passing, or being passed by other vehicles. The spray from large vehicles reduces your visibility, and the wind buffeting can cause you to lose control.

Your Acura has been designed primarily to carry passengers and their cargo. You can use it to tow a trailer if you carefully observe the load limits, use the proper equipment, and follow the guidelines in this section.

Load Limits



- **Total Trailer Weight:** The total weight of the trailer and everything loaded in it must not exceed 1,000 lbs (450 kg). Towing a load that is too heavy can seriously affect your car's handling and performance. It can also damage the engine and drivetrain.



- **Tongue Load:** The weight that the tongue of a fully-loaded trailer puts on the hitch should be approximately 10 percent of the trailer weight. Too little tongue load can make the trailer unstable and cause it to sway. Too much tongue load reduces front-tire traction and steering control.

CONTINUED

Towing a Trailer

To achieve a proper tongue load, start by loading 60 percent of the load toward the front of the trailer and 40 percent toward the rear, then re-adjust the load as needed.

- **Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR):**
  The total weight of the car, all occupants, all cargo, and the tongue load must not exceed:

  4,300 lbs (1,950 kg)

- **Gross Axle Weight Rating (GAWR):**
  The total weight of the car, all occupants, all cargo, and the tongue load must not exceed:

  2,335 lbs (1,060 kg)
  on the front axle
  2,030 lbs (920 kg)
  on the rear axle

⚠ WARNING

Exceeding load limits or improperly loading your car and trailer can cause a crash in which you can be seriously injured or killed.

Check the loading of your car and trailer carefully before starting to drive.

Checking Loads

The best way to confirm that car and trailer weights are within limits is to have them checked at a public scale.

Using a suitable scale or a special tongue load gauge, check the tongue load the first time you set up a towing combination (a fully-loaded car and trailer), then recheck the tongue load whenever the conditions change.

Towing Equipment and Accessories

Towing can require a variety of equipment, depending on the size of your trailer, how it will be used, and how much load you are towing.

Discuss your needs with your trailer sales or rental agency, and follow the guidelines in the rest of this section. Also make sure that all equipment is properly installed and that it meets federal, state, province, and local regulations.

Hitches

Any hitch used on your car must be properly bolted to the underbody.

Safety Chains

Always use safety chains. Make sure they are secured to both the trailer and hitch, and that they cross under the tongue so they can catch the trailer if it becomes unhitched. Leave enough slack to allow the trailer to turn corners easily, but do not let the chains drag on the ground.

Trailer Brakes

Acura recommends that any trailer having a total weight of 1,000 lbs (450 kg) or more be equipped with its own electric or surge-type brakes.

If you choose electric brakes, be sure they are electronically actuated. Do not attempt to tap into your car's hydraulic system. No matter how successful it may seem, any attempt to attach trailer brakes to your car's hydraulic system will lower braking effectiveness and create a potential hazard.

See your trailer dealer for more information on installing electric brakes.

CONTINUED

Towing a Trailer

Trailer Lights

All states and Canadian provinces require some type of trailer lights. Check requirements for the areas where you plan to tow.

You can get an optional trailer lighting connector for your car from your Acura dealer.

If you use a converter, you can get the connector and pins that mate with the connector in your car from your Acura dealer.

Since lighting and wiring vary in trailer type and brand, you should also have a qualified mechanic install a suitable connector between the car and the trailer.

Always consult your Acura dealer before connecting the trailer lights to your car's lighting system.

Refer to the following table for the wiring color code.

Wiring Color Code for Lighting

Applicable Light	Wiring Color
Taillight	Red/Black
Brake Light	White/Black
Back-up Light	Green/Black
Right Turn Signal	Green/ Yellow
Left Turn Signal	Green/Blue
Ground	Black

Additional Trailer Equipment

Many states and Canadian provinces require special outside mirrors when towing a trailer. Even if they don't, you should install special mirrors if you cannot clearly see behind you, or if the trailer creates a blind spot.

Ask your trailer sales or rental agency if any other items are recommended or required for your towing situation.

Pre-Tow Checklist

When preparing to tow, and before driving away, be sure to check the following:

- The car has been properly serviced, and the tires, brakes, suspension, and cooling system are in good operating condition.
- All weights and loads are within limits (see pages 221 and 222).
- The hitch, safety chains, and any other attachments are secure.
- All items on and in the trailer are properly secured and cannot shift while you drive.
- The lights and brakes on your car and the trailer are working properly.
- Your car tires and spare are properly inflated (see page 274), and the trailer tires and spare are inflated as recommended by the trailer maker.

Towing a Trailer

Driving Safely With a Trailer

The added weight, length, and height of a trailer will affect your car's handling and performance, so driving with a trailer requires some special driving skills and techniques.

For your safety and the safety of others, take time to practice driving maneuvers before heading for the open road, and follow the guidelines discussed below.

Towing Speeds and Gears

Drive slower than normal in all driving situations, and obey posted speed limits for cars with trailers. If you have an automatic transmission, use D position when towing a trailer on level roads. D3 is the proper shift lever position to use when towing a trailer in hilly terrain. (See "***Driving on Hills***" in the next page for additional gear information.)

When towing a trailer in the Sequential SportShift mode, select Fourth, Third, Second, or First gear; depending on the vehicle speed and road condition. Do not use Fifth gear.

If the automatic transmission fluid temperature increases and exceeds the specified limit, the transmission will also automatically downshift to the first gear even with the Sequential Sportshift mode. This prevents the automatic transmission from overheating. In this case, the gear position "1" in the instrument panel between tachometer and speedometer blinks about for five seconds, then it stays on.

Making Turns and Braking
Make turns more slowly and wider than normal. The trailer tracks a smaller arc than your car, and it can hit or run over something the car misses. Allow more time and distance for braking. Do not brake or turn suddenly as this could cause the trailer to jackknife or turn over.

Driving on Hills
When climbing hills, closely watch your temperature gauge. If it nears the red (Hot) mark, turn the air conditioning off, reduce speed and, if necessary, pull to the side of the road to let the engine cool.

If the automatic transmission shifts frequently within 3rd, 4th, and 5th gears while going up a hill, shift to D3.

If you must stop when facing uphill, use the foot brake or parking brake. Do not try to hold the car in place by pressing on the accelerator, as this can cause the automatic transmission to overheat.

When driving down hills, reduce your speed and shift down to 2nd gear. Do not "ride" the brakes, and remember it will take longer to slow down and stop when towing a trailer.

Handling Crosswinds and Buffeting
Crosswinds and air turbulence caused by passing trucks can disrupt your steering and cause trailer swaying. When being passed by a large car, keep a constant speed and steer straight ahead. Do not try to make quick steering or braking corrections.

Backing Up
Always drive slowly and have someone guide you when backing up. Grip the *bottom* of the steering wheel; then turn the wheel to the left to get the trailer to move to the left, and turn the wheel right to move the trailer to the right.

Parking
Follow all normal precautions when parking, including firmly setting the parking brake and putting the transmission in Park (automatic) or in 1st or Reverse (manual). Also, place wheel chocks at each of the trailer's tires.