

Optimal Fifth Wheel Position: Why the 12,000-Pound Steer Axle Limit Is Outdated

Let's face the facts.

Optimizing the position of the fifth wheel and trailer tandems reduces the risk of winter accidents and can save fuel by shortening the distance between the truck and the trailer.

In my opinion, the **12,000-pound steer axle weight limit** prevents professional drivers from adjusting the fifth wheel into a more efficient position—**closer to the steer axle**.

This positioning allows more weight to be carried on the steer axle and makes it possible to **safely balance winter loads** between heavy drive axles and trailer tandems by shifting axle weight distribution by approximately **6%**.

By optimizing the fifth wheel position, aerodynamic drag can be reduced, resulting in **fuel savings of up to 1% per year**.

In my view, it is necessary to **advocate for regulatory changes** to revise these limits—specifically the **12,000-pound steer axle cap imposed by many states**—because manufacturer specifications for trucks and wheels allow for significantly higher loads.

Modern trucks and wheel assemblies are capable of handling **up to 13,200 pounds on the steer axle**, yet state regulations lag behind the actual technical capabilities of today's equipment.

Once we have a sufficient number of subscribers to our email newsletter, we will send you a request to sign a **petition calling for changes to the relevant regulations**.