

CURT 13454

CURT 13454 Class 3 Trailer Hitch

User Instruction Manual

Brand: CURT | Model: 13454

INTRODUCTION

The CURT 13454 Class 3 Trailer Hitch is engineered to provide reliable towing capabilities for select Ford Escape and Lincoln Corsair vehicles. Designed for serious towing, this hitch offers a vehicle-specific fit and the necessary weight capacity to handle a variety of trailers, including utility, boat, and camper trailers, as well as snowmobile or ATV haulers. Its robust construction and protective finish ensure durability and long-lasting performance.



Image: The CURT 13454 Class 3 Trailer Hitch, a robust black steel component designed for vehicle-specific mounting.

SAFETY INFORMATION

Adhering to safety guidelines is paramount when installing and operating your trailer hitch. Please read and understand all warnings and instructions.

- **WARNING:** This product can expose you to chemicals including lead, which is known to the State of California to cause cancer and birth defects or other reproductive harm. For more information go to

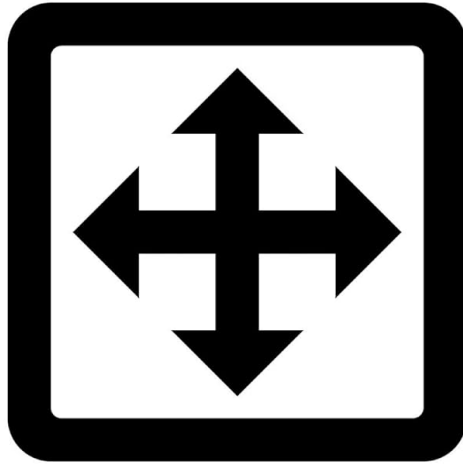
- **Important:** Never exceed the lowest-rated towing component of your vehicle or trailer setup. This includes the vehicle's towing capacity, the hitch's capacity, or the trailer's capacity.
- Ensure all fasteners are securely tightened to the specified torque values before towing. Regularly check tightness.
- Always use safety chains when towing a trailer.
- Do not use this hitch with vertical hanging bike racks that require bikes to be hung or mounted vertically.

PRODUCT FEATURES AND BENEFITS

The CURT 13454 Class 3 Trailer Hitch offers a range of features designed for superior performance and durability:

- **Dependable Strength:** This trailer hitch is rated for 3,500 lbs. gross trailer weight (GTW) and 525 lbs. tongue weight (TW), providing robust towing capability.
- **Versatile Design:** Equips your vehicle with a standard 2-inch x 2-inch hitch receiver, compatible with a wide range of towing accessories.
- **Fully Tested:** Every CURT Class 3 trailer hitch design undergoes rigorous testing in real-world, on-vehicle conditions at our Detroit engineering facility, adhering to SAE J684 standards for utmost safety.
- **Rust, Chip, UV-Resistant:** Protected with a unique dual-coat finish consisting of rust-resistant liquid A-coat and highly durable black powder coat, co-cured for exceptional resistance to environmental damage.
- **Easy to Install:** Designed for a custom, factory fit on select model years of the Ford Escape and Lincoln Corsair, simplifying the installation process.

RECEIVER TUBE SIZE



2"



Image: Icon indicating a 2-inch receiver tube size, standard for this hitch.

FEATURES & BENEFITS

Representative Image

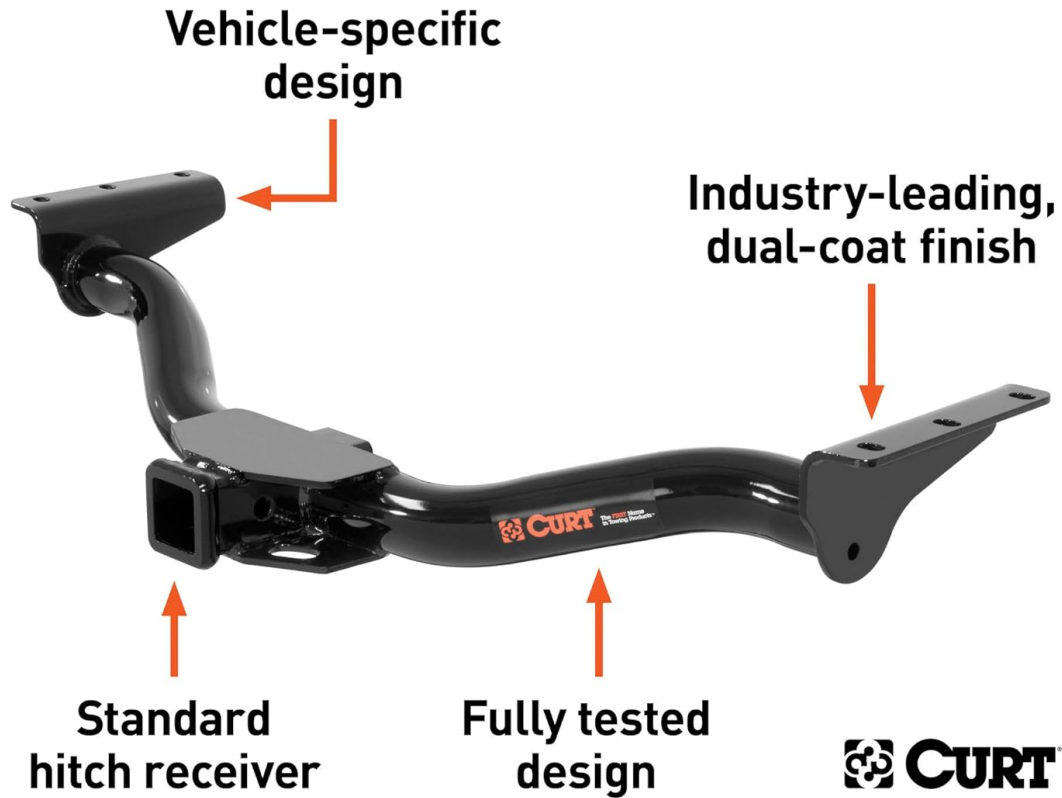


Image: Overview highlighting vehicle-specific design, standard hitch receiver, fully tested design, and industry-leading dual-coat finish.

FEATURES & BENEFITS

Standard hitch receiver



Image: Close-up view of the 2-inch standard hitch receiver opening.

FEATURES & BENEFITS

Fully tested design



Image: Trailer hitch components undergoing the liquid A-coat process, part of the dual-coat finish for corrosion resistance.

FEATURES & BENEFITS

Industry-leading, dual-coat finish



Image: A CURT hitch undergoing rigorous testing on specialized equipment to ensure durability and safety.



Image: Welding sparks during the manufacturing process of a CURT trailer hitch, indicating robust construction.

INSTALLATION GUIDE

Vehicle Compatibility

This CURT Class 3 Trailer Hitch (Model 13454) is specifically designed for a custom fit on select model years of the **Ford Escape** and **Lincoln Corsair**. Always verify compatibility with your specific vehicle model year before beginning installation. Refer to the application guide provided with your product or on the manufacturer's website.

Tools and Preparation

Before you begin, gather the following tools and prepare your workspace:

- Standard mechanic's tools (e.g., wrenches, sockets, torque wrench).
- Ratchet strap (for exhaust lowering, if necessary).
- Grinding tool (e.g., Dremel, die grinder, or file) for frame hole enlargement, if required.
- Rust-preventative paint or coating for exposed metal.
- Safety glasses and gloves.
- A second person is highly recommended for easier maneuvering and alignment of the hitch.
- Jack stand with a towel (optional, for supporting the hitch during installation).

Installation Steps

Follow these steps carefully for a successful installation. For detailed diagrams and torque specifications, consult the instruction sheet included with your hitch.

1. **Review Instructions:** Thoroughly read the detailed instructions provided with your CURT hitch. Watching official installation videos from CURT or reputable sources like eTrailer and U-Haul can provide valuable visual guidance.
2. **Prepare Vehicle:**
 - While not always necessary, raising the vehicle on a lift or jack stands can provide better access. Ensure the vehicle is stable and secure.
 - If the exhaust system obstructs access to the frame rails, temporarily lower it. Use a ratchet strap to support the exhaust and prevent damage.
 - Remove any heat shields, plastic panels, or other components that block access to the frame mounting points.
3. **Frame Hole Preparation:**
 - Although often advertised as "no drilling required," some vehicle frames (particularly certain Ford Escape and Lincoln Corsair models) may necessitate enlargement or elongation of existing mounting holes. This modification allows the carriage bolts and spacer plates to pass through or align correctly.
 - Identify the specific holes that require modification. These are typically the oval-shaped holes towards the front of the vehicle's frame.
 - Use a grinding tool (e.g., a pointed grind stone, step bit, or diamond tile bit) to carefully enlarge or elongate the holes as needed.
 - After grinding, thoroughly clean off any metal shavings and immediately apply rust-preventative paint to the exposed bare metal around the modified holes to prevent corrosion.



Note: While the product is designed for minimal modification, some vehicle variations may require minor hole enlargement for optimal fit.

4. **Fish Hardware:** Use the provided fish wire or bolt leader to guide the carriage bolts and spacer plates into the frame rails and out through the mounting holes. This step can be tedious; patience is key. If bolt flanges are too large to pass through, minor grinding of the flange may be required.

5. **Position Hitch:** With the assistance of a second person, carefully lift the hitch into position, aligning the mounting holes on the hitch with the prepared holes on the vehicle's frame.
6. **Secure Fasteners:** Hand-tighten a few nuts on each side to temporarily hold the hitch in place. Ensure the hitch is centered and properly aligned with the vehicle's bumper.
7. **Final Tightening:** Torque all nuts and bolts to the specific values provided in the detailed instruction manual. Ensure all connections are secure and evenly tightened.
8. **Reinstall Components:** Reattach any removed heat shields, plastic components, or exhaust hangers. Double-check that all parts are securely fastened.

Installation Tip: Supporting the hitch with a jack stand and a soft cloth can significantly ease the process, especially when working alone, by allowing you to maneuver and align the hitch more easily.

OPERATING YOUR TRAILER HITCH

The CURT Class 3 Trailer Hitch provides a secure and reliable attachment point for various towing applications. It is suitable for a wide range of trailers and accessories:

- Utility trailers
- Boat trailers
- Campers
- Snowmobile or ATV haulers
- Bike racks (ensure compatibility with 2-inch receiver; not compatible with vertical hanging bike racks)

Towing Best Practices

To ensure safe and efficient towing, observe the following best practices:

- Always ensure your trailer is properly loaded and balanced, with appropriate tongue weight.
- Connect safety chains securely between the trailer and the vehicle's designated attachment points.
- Verify all trailer lights (brake lights, turn signals, running lights) are functioning correctly before each trip.
- Adhere to all local and national towing regulations, including speed limits and weight restrictions.
- Regularly inspect your hitch, hitch ball, and all towing components for wear, damage, or loose connections before and after each use.
- Adjust your driving style when towing, allowing for increased braking distance and wider turns.



Image: A vehicle equipped with a CURT hitch towing a trailer on a road, demonstrating typical use.

MAINTENANCE AND CARE

Proper maintenance will extend the life and ensure the safe operation of your CURT Class 3 Trailer Hitch:

- **Regular Inspection:** Periodically inspect the hitch for any signs of rust, chipping, cracks, or damage. Pay close attention to weld points and mounting areas, especially after heavy use or exposure to harsh environmental conditions (e.g., road salt, extreme weather).
- **Cleanliness:** Keep the receiver tube free of dirt, debris, and moisture. This prevents corrosion inside the receiver and ensures proper fitment of towing accessories.
- **Finish Protection:** The dual-coat finish (liquid A-coat and black powder coat) provides excellent resistance to rust, chipping, and UV damage. If any scratches or chips occur, promptly touch them up with a suitable rust-preventative paint to maintain the protective barrier.
- **Fastener Check:** Routinely check all mounting bolts and nuts to ensure they remain securely tightened. Re-torque if necessary according to the specified values in your instruction manual.
- **Lubrication:** Apply a light coat of grease or anti-seize compound to the inside of the receiver tube and any hitch pins to prevent seizing and ease accessory insertion and removal.

TROUBLESHOOTING

This section addresses common issues you might encounter during installation or operation.

Common Installation Challenges

- **Hole Alignment Issues:** If mounting holes on the vehicle frame do not perfectly align with the hitch, it is often necessary to enlarge or elongate the vehicle's frame holes. This is a common modification for a custom fit on certain vehicle models. Refer to the "Installation Steps" section for detailed guidance on this process.
- **Difficulty Fishing Bolts:** If the carriage bolts or spacer plates are difficult to fish through the frame, ensure the access holes are sufficiently large. In some cases, minor grinding of the bolt head flanges may be required to allow them to pass through the frame opening.
- **Exhaust Interference:** If the exhaust system obstructs hitch placement, it typically needs to be temporarily lowered. Ensure it is properly supported with a strap and reinstalled securely after the hitch is mounted.

Towing Performance Issues

- **Excessive Trailer Sway:** Ensure the trailer is properly loaded with adequate tongue weight (typically 10-15% of the gross trailer weight). Verify tire pressures on both the tow vehicle and trailer are correct. Consider using a weight distribution hitch or sway control device if issues persist.
- **Unusual Noises (Squeaking, Grinding):** Check all connections for tightness. Lubricate the hitch ball and receiver if squeaking or grinding occurs. Inspect for any loose, worn, or damaged components that may be causing the noise.

SPECIFICATIONS

Detailed specifications for the CURT 13454 Class 3 Trailer Hitch:

Attribute	Detail
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Brand	CURT
Model Number	13454
Model Name	Class 3 Hitch
Receiver Tube Size	2-inch x 2-inch
Gross Trailer Weight (GTW)	3,500 lbs.
Tongue Weight (TW)	525 lbs.
Material	Carbon Steel
Finish Type	Powder Coated (Dual-coat: Liquid A-coat & Black Powder Coat)
Item Weight	38 Pounds
Product Dimensions	44 x 19 x 11 inches
Vehicle Service Type	ATV, Car, Pickup Trucks, Sport-Utility-Vehicles, Trailer
Testing Standard	SAE J684
Position	Rear
UPC	192019101707, 612314134540

WARRANTY AND SUPPORT

For specific warranty information and customer support regarding your CURT 13454 Class 3 Trailer Hitch, please refer to the documentation included with your product. CURT Manufacturing stands behind its products and is committed to quality and customer satisfaction.

You can typically find detailed warranty terms, product registration, and contact information for customer service on the official CURT Manufacturing website (www.curtmfg.com). Please have your model number (13454) and purchase information ready when contacting support.