

# Towing and Road Service Procedures for the 2002 BMW Mini Cooper and Mini Cooper S

## Towing

Refer to all information and precautions found in the General Information section of the AAA/CAA Towing and Service Manual. Always use the latest available edition of the manual to assure the most up-to-date information.

**The following procedures and precautions are specific to the Mini Cooper and Mini Cooper S.**

The manufacturer has **not** approved a procedure for sling equipment.

Wheel-lift equipment may be used from the rear only. Check the clearance between the wheel-lift stinger and the exhaust system as the vehicle is raised. A self-loading dolly must be placed under the front wheels due to low ground clearance at the front valance (Figure 1) when the rear wheels are raised. If the vehicle cannot be towed from the rear, car carrier equipment must be used! Any attempt to place a wheel-lift under the front wheels will damage the front valance.



Figure 1

When towing from the rear with a wheel-lift, the steering wheel must be secured using only an approved clamping device (Figure 2.) Use of a rope or other device that is placed around the door edge may cause damage to the door or window closing mechanism.



**Figure 2**

When loading the vehicle onto a car carrier, additional ramping may be needed due to low ground clearance. The only approved locations for attaching the winch wire rope are the tow sockets located in the front and rear bumper fascia on the passenger's side (Figures 3 and 4).



**Figure 3**



**Figure 4**

The screw-in eye bolt is found in the vehicle's on-board tool kit, located in the storage area behind the left wall of the luggage compartment along with the first aid kit (Figure 5.) Ensure that the eye bolt and tool kit remain with the vehicle. Do not winch the vehicle too far forward, as the eye bolts are intended for horizontal pulls only, and the winch pulls downward as the vehicle gets closer to the drum.



**Figure 5**

Secure the vehicle to a car carrier using four nylon wheel strap tie-downs (Figure 6.) This is the only approved tie-down method. The winch wire rope must not be used as a securing device. Secure the rear wheels first, then raise the bed and allow the front drive wheels to “settle,” then tie them down.



**Figure 6**

The only approved locations for attaching secondary safety chains are the T-slots located above the rubber lifting blocks along the front and rear of the rocker panels. To access the T-slots, remove the rubber blocks using a screwdriver or small pry bar. Note: Chains, bridles, and/or straps must not be attached to any other suspension or underbody component or damage may result!

## Jacking

The only approved locations for jacking with a garage-type floor jack are the rubber lifting blocks located along the front and rear of the rocker panels. Using any other location to jack may cause damage (Figure 7.)



**Figure 7**

## Tire Change

On the Mini Cooper S, run-flat safety tires are standard and no spare is provided. A space-saver spare tire is located beneath the rear luggage compartment on Mini Cooper models without optional run-flat safety tires. To use the spare tire, proceed as follows:

1. Obtain the wheel nut wrench and tire lifting tools from the on-board tool kit.
2. Using the wheel nut wrench, unscrew the retaining bolt located beneath the rear luggage compartment floor cover.
3. Screw the lifting handle into the threads, and then lift the tire slightly.
4. Squeeze the two retaining clips together. The tire is now released and may be gently lowered using the lifting handle.
5. When the tire is lowered, unscrew the lifting handle and unscrew the extension tube from the tire valve stem. The spare tire may now be installed using proper jacking and safety precautions.

## Jump-starting

Refer to all general jump-starting procedures and precautions found in the General Information section of the AAA/CAA Towing and Service Manual. Always use the latest available edition of the manual to assure the most up-to-date information. The following procedures are specific to the Mini Cooper and Mini Cooper S.

Prepare for jump-starting as follows:

1. Ensure that all accessories and systems are turned off on both the Mini and the service vehicle. The batteries should be of approximately the same capacity rating. Never use more than normal charging system voltage (12 volt battery and charging system of 14.8 volts or less.)
2. Turn off the engine of the service vehicle until connections are made.
3. On Mini Cooper models, the battery is located in the engine compartment. Depress both clips of the Mini's battery cover at the same time and remove the cover. On Mini Cooper S models, the battery is located in the rear luggage compartment. Open the engine compartment and remove the cover from the positive terminal connection provided for jump-starting.
4. Connect the jumper cables in the standard sequence:
  - a. Connect the positive cable to the service vehicle battery, then to the positive terminal of the Mini.
  - b. Connect the negative cable to the service vehicle battery, then to an engine or body ground of the Mini.
5. Start the engine of the service vehicle. Wait several minutes to charge the battery before cranking the Mini.
6. Crank the Mini's engine. If the engine does not start after 10 seconds of cranking, wait at least 2 minutes before trying again.
7. Before disconnecting the jumper cables, switch on the Mini's headlights, rear window defroster, and high blower speed. Wait 10 seconds before disconnecting.
8. Disconnect the jumper cables in the reverse order of connection as stated above.

## Equipment

Nylon wheel strap tie-downs are available at discount pricing to all AAA Service Providers through AW Direct by contacting **1-800-243-3194**. Below is the pricing for the set used during our research.

<b>Item #</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>AAA Price</b>
AB428	Car Carrier Tie Down Kit (Standard)	\$115.13
AB429	Car Carrier Tie Down Kit (Chain)	\$118.94
AB430	Car Carrier Tie Down Kit (D-Ring)	\$121.77

The nylon steering wheel strap pictured in Figure 2 also is available through AW Direct. Below is the pricing for this simple but effective tool.

<b>Item #</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>AAA Price</b>
BA3	Steering Wheel Lock Belt	\$18.76

## **Towing Update: Towing of Mini Cooper and Cooper S Vehicles with Wheel-Lift**

In the current editions of the vehicle owner's manual for Mini vehicles, towing with wheel-lift equipment from the front is shown as acceptable. While some wheel-lifts may be usable for towing these vehicles from the front, the vast majority of wheel-lifts do not allow the tires to be seated in the cradles tightly enough to avoid damage to the aluminum oil pan and/or undercarriage.

For this reason, the *AAA/CAA Towing and Service Manual* recommends only the use of flatbed car carrier equipment for transporting these vehicles. If a wheel-lift must be used in an emergency situation, a dolly should be placed under the front wheels to avoid powertrain damage, with the cradles installed tightly against the tires for maximum vehicle-to-dolly clearance and the vehicle secured to the tow dolly using wheel straps. The vehicle may then be lifted and towed from the rear, only if adequate clearance can be maintained between the vehicle and the wheel-lift crossbar components.

Source: Roy Cox  
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