



## 2009 Ford Escape - Flat Towing Problems: Battery Issues

The following instructions are from my 2009 Escape Owner's Guide (page 193) for Front Wheel Drive (FWD) vehicles:

Notes: If you tow your vehicle with all four wheels on the ground, follow these instructions:

- Tow only in the forward direction.
- Release the parking brake.
- Place the transmission shift lever in (N) Neutral.
- Place the ignition to the accessory position (refer to *Starting* in the *Driving* chapter).
- Do not exceed 70 mph with manual transmission vehicles and 65 mph for automatic transmission vehicles.
- Start the engine and allow it to run for five minutes at the beginning of each day and at each fuel stop.

From *Starting* in the *Driving* chapter (page 195):

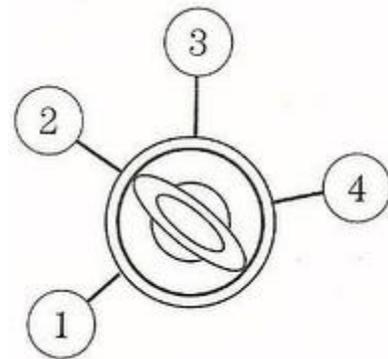
### Positions of the ignition:

1 - Off - locks gearshift level & steering column for key removal.

2 - Accessory - allows electrical accessories to operate while engine is not running.

3 - On - all electrical circuits operational and warning lights will illuminate. This is the position the key is in when you're driving.

4 - Start - cranks the engine. Release the key as soon as the engine starts.



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Here's the problem with some of the above information:

The first time I towed it for more than a day at a time (even after following all the instructions explicitly), the battery was dead. Roadside service came out and confirmed that it looked like I was doing everything right according to the book. After it happened 2 more times with the same results, [I posted a question on RV.net](#) to see if I could get some help from the techy guys there. Some mentioned the key position, but I was sure I was doing everything according to Ford's directions and dealers had confirmed that. After that stop, I was in SC for a month, and it was then that I started having transmission problems, so my attention was redirected. But here's what I learned as part of that research:

When you put the car in Neutral according to the 3rd bullet point instruction above, and then try to put the car in Accessory position according to the next bullet point (and look at the picture they reference with key in #2 - Accessory position), the position of the key is actually in the "On" position (#3). This is because the picture is correct only when the car is in **Park**. When it's in **Neutral**, you have to have the key all the way to the left (which looks like the #1 position that says the wheels are locked, etc.)

When I was finally shown this by the last guy who jumped the battery, I thought it was just me that could be that dense to misunderstand the instructions, but then I found other people who experienced the same confusion. In an [RV.net forum post](#) about the transmission problems, I saw on page 3 comments from other people about this same thing:

"Also - once you are in Neutral, turn the key as far as it will go towards the off position - I think the Ford manual is a little misleading in that regard...in that position, the stereo etc. is not powered up, the steering is still unlocked and the key cannot be removed."

"Once you have the car in neutral and turn the key off - are you turning it as far as it will go? There is one more "stop" past where the owners manual says to leave it - This last stop will power down the stereo etc. ...I'm pretty sure that last key stop might solve your battery drain."