



# Caravan towing safety tips

## Before heading off

### Make sure:

- Gas cylinders are turned off and secured and the fridge door is closed.
- Roll-out awning(s) are stored away and locked in the travel position.
- Front and rear corner stabilisers are in the up position.
- Caravan handbrake has been correctly released.
- Roof hatches, windows and stone shields are secure.
- 240v electrical cord and water hoses have been disconnected and stored away.
- Tv antenna is in the travel position.
- There are no unrestrained items in the caravan or towing vehicle that could upset the balance of the caravan or injure vehicle occupants if they came loose.
- Tyres fitted to the van are compliant with the manufacture's recommendations.
- Tyre pressure is correct on the caravan (including spare wheels). If in doubt, check with your local tyre dealer.
- Tyres on the caravan have legal tread depth and the tyre casings are not cracked or perished. Most tyre manufacturers recommend replacing tyres every five years.
- Wheel nuts on the caravan are all tightened to the manufacturer's specifications.
- The wheel brace, caravan jack and a toolbox are in the caravan.
- Coupling socket and tow ball match each other in size.
- Coupling is correctly and securely fastened.
- Anti-rattle bolt is removed from the towbar tongue receiver.
- Towbar tongue is the correct size for the caravan.
- Safety chains are correctly connected to the towing vehicle. It's recommended that rated d-shackles are used to connect the chains.
- External mirrors are secured and adjusted correctly.
- Caravan light connections are secure, and all lights work.
- Lights and number plates are clearly visible on the caravan and towing vehicle.
- Towing vehicle and caravan are serviced to ensure they're safe and roadworthy.
- Load distribution between the towing vehicle and caravan is correct and properly balanced, front to rear and side to side. Consider weighing your caravan and towing vehicle before departure.
- Wheel chocks and jack stands are working in case tyre changes are required.

### When towing

- Allow for the extra length and width of the caravan when entering traffic flow or overtaking other vehicles.





## When towing (continued)

- Operate the accelerator, brakes and steering smoothly and gently to avoid caravan sway, especially in wet or slippery conditions.
- Avoid applying the towing vehicle's brakes if the caravan starts to sway or snake.
- To reduce caravan sway caused by wind buffeting, slow down when larger vehicles pass or overtake.
- If possible, keep to the hard road surface. When wheels hit a soft edge, the caravan can sway excessively, causing loss of control.
- Maintain an increased distance from the vehicle in front to allow for a longer stopping distance.
- Use a lower gear in both manual and automatic vehicles to increase vehicle control and reduce brake strain when travelling downhill.
- Where areas are provided, pull over regularly to allow following vehicles to overtake.
- Slow down at rail crossings and when travelling over bumpy roads.
- If possible, reverse with a person watching the rear of the caravan from outside the vehicle. Don't always rely on just the reversing camera.
- Towing is more stressful than normal driving and more likely to cause fatigue, so plan for extra rest stops.
- Use your side mirrors for good visibility along the full length of the towing vehicle and caravan on both sides.
- Remove the jockey wheel from its clamp and store it securely in the caravan or car boot. If it's a swivel-mounted type, lock it in the travelling position.
- back of a hand near each caravan wheel to feel if an even amount of heat is coming from each wheel. High temperatures may indicate sticking brakes, or wheel bearing failure.
- Caravan connections are still secure, and the lights are working.
- Tyres are inflated to the correct pressure for the road surface you're driving on.
- All items in the towing vehicle and caravan are still secure and haven't come loose.
- Any roll-out awning is still properly locked in the travel position.
- Side mirrors give a clear view of the road behind the caravan.

## Loaded Mass

The loaded mass of your caravan and towing vehicle must not exceed:

- The capacity of the tow bar.
- The maximum towing mass (gvm) specified by the towing vehicle's manufacturer.
- The maximum ball weight (tbm) specified by the towing vehicle's manufacturer.
- The maximum rating or towing mass (atm) the caravan can legally weigh once everything is loaded aboard, as specified by the manufacturer. Check the caravan's compliance plate for this figure.

## During the trip

### Make sure:

- Couplings and chains are still correctly fastened.
- Caravan brakes are operating correctly, and wheel bearings are not overheating. At rest stops, hold the

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