



Safety Tips Towing a Caravan



Checks During The Trip

During the trip check that the:

- Couplings and chains are still correctly fastened.
- Caravan brakes are operating correctly and wheel bearings are not overheating. During rest stops, hold the 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 that the lights are working.
- Tyres are inflated to the correct pressure.
- All items in the towing vehicle and caravan are still secure and have not come loose.
- Any roll out awning is properly locked in the travel position.
- Side mirrors give a clear view of the road behind the caravan.



For More Information

Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure
dtei.sa.gov.au

Caravan and Camping Industries Association of SA
caravanandcampingsa.com.au

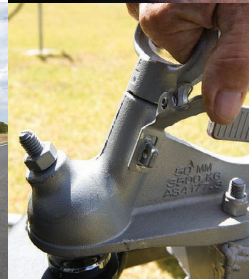


Government of South Australia
Department for Transport,
Energy and Infrastructure

Recent changes may not be reflected. This document is a guide only and should not be considered as a substitute for legislation. *The Motor Vehicles Act, 1959* is available from the Government Legislation Outlet, 101 Grenfell Street, Adelaide or www.legislation.sa.gov.au

An Overview

This brochure provides information and driving tips that should be considered before and while towing a caravan.



The Driver

Apart from adding to the driver's legal responsibilities, towing requires a greater degree of knowledge and skill than normal driving.

When towing you should:

- Allow for the extra length and width of your caravan when entering or passing traffic.
- Apply 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.
- When larger vehicles pass in either direction, slow down to reduce swaying of the caravan caused by wind buffering.
- Keep to the hard road surface where possible as the wheels that enter a soft edge may cause the caravan to sway excessively with possible loss of control.
- Maintain an increased distance between you and the vehicle in front to allow for a longer stopping distance.
- Engage a lower gear in both manual and automatic vehicles to increase vehicle control and reduce brake strain when travelling down hill.
- Where areas are provided, pull over regularly to allow following vehicles to overtake.
- Slow down when travelling over bumpy roads or at rail crossings.
- If possible, reverse with a person outside the vehicle watching the rear of the caravan.
- Be aware that towing is more stressful than normal driving and more likely to cause fatigue, therefore more rest stops should be planned.
- Use your side and rear view mirrors to give you good visibility along the full length of the towing vehicle on both sides.

Checks Before The Trip

Before departing make sure you check:

- Tyre pressure is correct on the caravan (including spare wheels). If in doubt, check with your local tyre dealer.
- The tyres on the caravan have legal tread depth and the tyre casings are not cracked or perished.
- Wheel nuts on the caravan are all tightened to the manufacturer's specifications.
- Coupling socket and ball match each other in size.
- Coupling is correctly and securely fastened.
- Safety chains are correctly connected.
- Caravan light connections are secure and that all lights work.
- Caravan lights, number plate and registration label are clearly visible.
- Load distribution between towing vehicle and the caravan are correct and properly balanced, front to rear and side to side.
- Wheel chocks and jack stands are working in case tyre changes are required.
- Gas cylinders in your caravan are turned off and that the refrigerator door is closed.
- Any roll out awning is stored away and locked in the travel position.
- Front and rear corner stabilisers are in the up position.
- Hand brake of the caravan has been correctly released.
- Check the caravan wheel bearings are correctly adjusted and lubricated.

- Where brakes are fitted check the brakes are operating correctly on all axles of the caravan.
- Roof hatches, windows and stone shields are secure.
- 240v electrical cord has been disconnected and stored away.
- TV antenna is in the travel position.
- Limit the amount of load in the boot of the towing vehicle.
- Ensure that there are no loose items in either the caravan or the towing vehicle that could upset the balance of the caravan or injure vehicle occupants should they become unrestrained.
- Remove the jockey wheel from its clamp and store it in the boot of the car or caravan, or if it is a swivel mount variety, lock it in the travelling position.

Loaded Mass

The loaded mass of your caravan must not exceed:

- The capacity of the tow bar, or
- The maximum towing mass specified by the towing vehicle's manufacturer, or
- The maximum ball weight specified by the towing vehicle's manufacturer.

