



Safety Alert - check your trailer

Last year there were several incidents caused by lack of maintenance for trailers, including gig trailers. Failures of the brakes and incorrect use of the towing hitch have caused trailers to break free and roll away causing damage.

Please note the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 do apply to trailers. Even though there is no requirement for annual (MOT) tests for trailers, For example:-

- A trailer with a Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) of 750kg or lower, is not required to have brakes, but if brakes are fitted they must be in full working order.
- A trailer with a GVW from 751kg up to 3,500kg is required to have brakes, they too must be in full working order.

GVW = unladen trailer weight + maximum permitted payload = Maximum Permissible Mass
The tyres should be correctly inflated and free from any defects which might damage the road or endanger any person. The legal minimum tread depth is 1.6 millimeters. This 1.6 mm should be in a continuous band throughout at least the central three-quarters of the tread width, throughout the whole of the circumference.

Check the safety linkage. Unbraked trailers must have a stout secondary coupling, such as a chain, which is connected securely to the towing vehicle when it is being towed. Braked trailers must be fitted with a breakaway cable (break free chain) that applies the brakes.

Here is more information on the [National Trailer and Towing Association](#) website.

The speed limit when towing is 60 mph on motorways and dual carriageways, 50 mph on other roads unless there are lower speed restrictions in operation.

Please also see [section 7.2](#) of RowSafe, Transport and Trailers. Please also be aware of the [Towing: license and age requirements](#) and the legal [Requirements for towing trailers](#).

Check your straps too. There have been incidents where boats have fallen from trailers due to defective or badly fitted straps. This can be very dangerous and damaging. Understand that sections of boats are tapered so that a small horizontal movement can cause the straps to become slack. Tying a stretcher to the arm of the trailer can prevent this.

Tie in the ends of straps. Loose straps have been caught under trailer wheels. They have become so tight that they have cut boats in half.

Take care of your trailer and ensure that it is safe

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[This Safety Alert is a safety guidance document. Please read our safety message and disclaimer in RowSafe.](#)