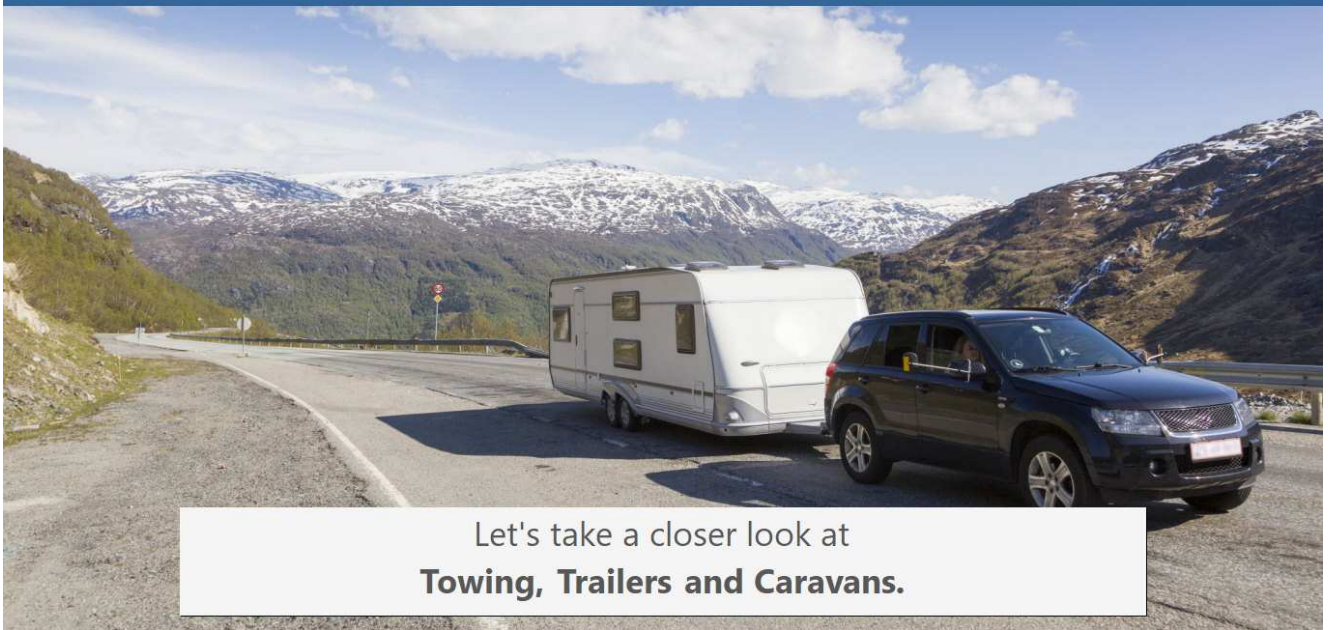


## Towing, Trailers and Caravans

Welcome to this **Perfect Driver** course. Throughout this course, we are going to look at the law, skills, techniques, and ideas to help you become a better, and safer driver.

In this lesson, we'll look at **Towing, Trailers and Caravans.**

## Towing, Trailers and Caravans



Let's take a closer look at  
**Towing, Trailers and Caravans.**

### Towing, Trailers and Caravans

**Tow Balls.** In order to be able to tow anything - a trailer, caravan, boat, horses, or caravan, you must have a towbar and tow ball installed correctly on your vehicle. This towbar will also include all the electrics necessary to ensure that the item being towed is able to display brake lights and driving lights when in use.



### Towing, Trailers and Caravans

**Connecting the Trailer.** A trailer attachment involves the connector on the trailer being placed on the towbar of the car. Once these are connected and secured, a chain is connected with a U-bolt as a safety measure.

Finally, the electrical connectors snap together, and the connection is complete. There are several different standard of electrical connectors, and they need to match on trailer and car - but there are converters available to ensure this is not a difficult task.



### Towing, Trailers and Caravans

**Properly Connected.** The image on the left indicates how a properly connected trailer works - when the lights on the car display - driving lights, brake lights, or indicators, the corresponding lights display on the trailer.

On the right, this trailer is **not** connected properly - the brake lights display on the car, but not on the trailer. This is illegal.



### Towing, Trailers and Caravans

**Register Your Trailer.** No matter what you are towing - from a small box trailer to a large boat - the trailer or caravan being towed needs to be registered, just like a car. Large fines can be levied if you don't follow this rule.



### Towing, Trailers and Caravans

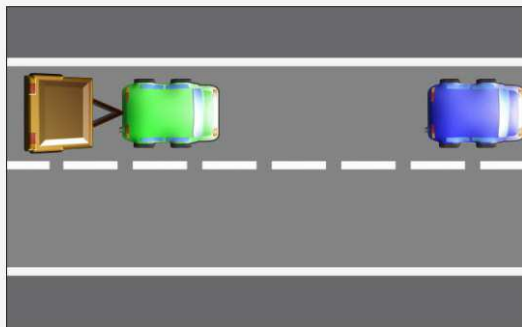
**Speed Limits.** Depending on the size and weight of what is being towed, your maximum speed may be limited to 100km/h, even if the speed limit is 100km/h. If you are unsure, don't exceed 100km/h - towing a trailer adds weight, decreases control, and increases stopping distance.



### Towing, Trailers and Caravans

**Following Distance.** Again, depending on size and weight of what is being towed, you may be required by law to increase distance between you and cars you are following to up to 60m. While this may not be required for small box trailers, for example, you must always leave more room than you normally would.

With a trailer, you will take longer to stop, and you will not have as much control. So take care - slamming on the brakes with a trailer on the back can be quite dangerous.





### Towing, Trailers and Caravans

**Turning Circle.** You must also take your new turning circle into account. It is likely to be larger with a trailer, and attempting things like three point turns can be very difficult.

If your trailer is large enough that you need more than one lane to make turns, you may be allowed to display a **Do Not Overtake Turning Vehicle** sign at the rear of the trailer or caravan. This allows you to use two lanes to make a turn.



### Towing, Trailers and Caravans

**Reversing a Trailer.** Learning to reverse with a trailer attached is a skill that requires practise. It is almost counter-intuitive - you have to steer the car in the opposite direction than you might think.

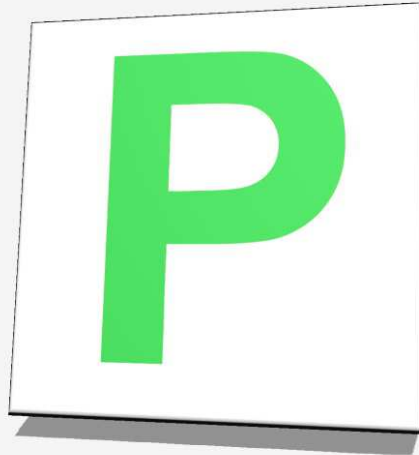
Try and find a large open area, with no dangers or cars around, to practise reversing. Try not to practise at the boat ramp, or at the tip, where other cars are around.



### Towing, Trailers and Caravans

**P and L Plate Drivers.** *Learner Drivers*, are not allowed to tow anything. At all.

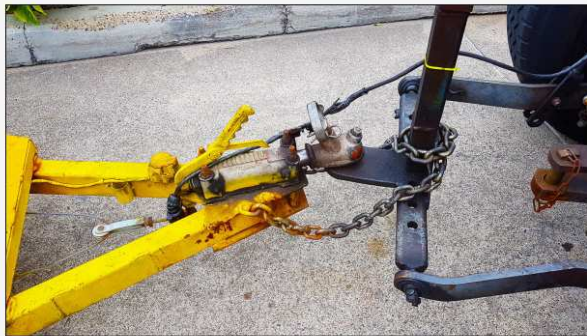
*Provisional License Holders*, can tow small trailers, up to 250kg.



### Towing, Trailers and Caravans

**Choose a Trailer to Match the Car.** While almost all cars these days can handle a small trailer, caravan, or boat, you need to ensure that if you are towing something larger, you can handle it - both physically, and legally.

Most cars will have a towing specification that dictates the maximum weight of a trailer they can tow. This is normally up to about 750kg - but once you get larger than this, you are going to require a more powerful car, and a towbar to match.



### Towing, Trailers and Caravans

**Towing Another Car.** Towing cars is best left to specialised operators in tow trucks. They are trained, have the right equipment, the vehicles prepared, and it can be done in safety.

While in some cases, if the distance is small, and the speed is very slow, it can be done legally, it is best restricted to areas where getting a tow truck is impractical. For example, a car bogged on a beach might be able to be towed by another 4WD just a few feet to get to safety. Even then, it can only be done if it is safe to do so, and with the correct towing straps or chains.

This sort of towing is **not without risks** - to the cars involved, and to bystanders if towing straps or chains snap. Attaching a towing strap to the wrong part of a car could result in severe damage to that car. If the towed car becomes free with a jolt, a collision could occur.



### Towing, Trailers and Caravans

**Bottom Line.** The bottom line is that when you are towing anything, your car is heavier. It takes longer to stop. It is less responsive. You will have less control.

You need to drive with this in mind. Drive more slowly than you normally might. Leave more distance between you and other cars. Exercise more care than you might without the trailer attached.

In open areas, you may even need to watch out for strong wind conditions that can affect vehicle stability.



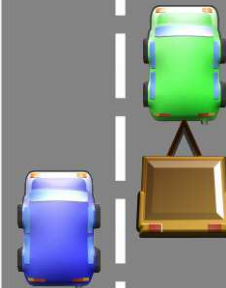
### Towing, Trailers and Caravans

While a **three second rule** generally applies as a following distance for cars without trailers, you should at least double this time when you are towing a trailer - even more if the trailer or van is particularly large or heavy.



### Towing, Trailers and Caravans

When towing a trailer, ensure you leave enough room when performing manoeuvres such as changing lanes - you may even forget you have a trailer attached, and not compensate for the extra room the trailer takes. Stay vigilant!

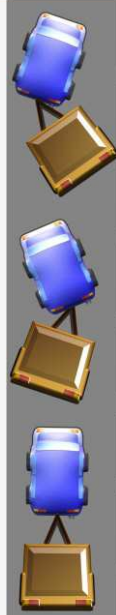




### Towing, Trailers and Caravans

When towing a trailer, travelling too fast, or attempting to brake too quickly may send the car and trailer into what is called a **fishtail**, seen in the top two images on the right.

This occurs when the trailer and the car start moving in different directions, and is very difficult to control, and very dangerous.



### Towing, Trailers and Caravans

# SUMMARY

In this lesson, **Towing, Trailers and Caravans**, we discussed:

- Tow balls. Connecting the Trailer, Properly Connected.
- Speed Limits.
- Following Distance.
- Turning Circle, Reversing a Trailer.
- Choose a Trailer to Match the Car.
- P and L Plate Drivers.
- Changing Lanes.
- Bottom Line.

[FINISH LESSON](#)

## Towing, Trailers and Caravans

**Signature.** It is very important that you use the mouse, or touch, to *sign* the form below. This helps us record your progress accurately.

SUBMIT SIGNATURE

CLEAR SIGNATURE

## Towing, Trailers and Caravans

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Towing, Trailers and Caravans

Towing, Trailers and Caravans