

- Make sure tyres are the same type and size and have a minimum tread depth of 1.6 mm.
- Make sure your tyre placard has the recommended tyre size, load rating and tyre pressures.
- Have your caravan serviced every year by a mechanic.

Remember!

These steps are especially important if your caravan or trailer hasn't been used in a while. Don't assume that everything is ok – check first.

What to do if you break down on the road

- If possible, get off the road as quickly as possible to avoid blocking traffic.
- If on a motorway, pull over on the hard shoulder as far to the left as possible. Your wheels should be turned to the left.
- Switch on your hazard lights to warn other drivers. In poor weather, keep your sidelights on as well.
- Before you get out of your car, make sure all passengers are wearing a high visibility vest.
- Make sure passengers leave the car by the left-hand side to avoid other vehicles.
- Put up a warning triangle 45 metres behind your car. Be careful when doing this – do not attempt if it isn't safe.
- Stop near an emergency phone if possible and call a breakdown company from the phone or your mobile.
- If you suspect there might be a danger of being hit by another vehicle, get yourself and other passengers out of the car and clear of the traffic.
- Avoid trying to carry out any repairs. Leave this to an expert!



Working To Save Lives



Údarás Um Shábháilteacht Ar Bhóithre Road Safety Authority

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Designed by The Design House, June 2009

RSA



Road Safety Advice for Tourists Towing Caravans or Trailers

An tÚdarás Um Shábháilteacht Ar Bhóithre
Road Safety Authority

During the summer, Irish roads become much busier with tourist traffic when many holiday makers at home and from abroad will enjoy a caravanning holiday.

We have produced this leaflet to help drivers towing another vehicle make sure they have a safe journey. It offers advice especially for tourist drivers who may be towing a vehicle such as a caravan or a boat trailer.

Where we use 'car' in this leaflet, we mean any vehicle that tows another.

General driving safety tips

- Make sure you have your driving licence and insurance documents at all times when driving.
- Always carry a high visibility vest(s), warning triangle, torch (with working batteries), fire extinguisher, first aid kit, tool kit and spare bulbs with you.
- Have all relevant emergency helpline numbers handy, including those for emergency services, breakdown assistance and your insurance company.



Tips especially for towing a caravan or trailer

- Drive at the right speed. The maximum legal speed limit for a vehicle towing a caravan or trailer is 80km/h. If the speed limit displayed is lower, for example on certain roads or where there are road works, you must obey the lower speed limit.
- Pay particular attention when accelerating and braking, especially when approaching corners.
- Leave more distance than usual between you and the vehicle in front. Allow plenty of extra time and space if entering traffic.
- Allow extra time and distance when overtaking other road users and make sure you are well past them before moving back to the left-hand side of the road again.
- Be careful when driving in wet, foggy or extremely bright conditions or in high winds.
- Where possible, pull over regularly to allow vehicles behind you to overtake.
- Never let passengers travel in the caravan or trailer when you are towing it. All passengers should always travel in the towing vehicle.
- Make sure the load in the caravan is spread evenly to reduce the chance of the caravan swaying. This is especially important in high winds, particularly side winds, when swaying is more likely. Swaying is also more likely when you pass larger vehicles approaching on the other side of the road.
- Where possible, drive out forward from a parking spot, as reversing with a caravan is difficult. It is worth practising reversing, but do so in a safe location and with someone to guide you.
- Plan plenty of rest stops to avoid the onset of fatigue. Remember that the only cure for fatigue is sleep.

Remember!

Both a caravan and a trailer will affect how your car performs and how well you can control it. In particular, towing a caravan increases the amount of fuel your car uses and decreases its ability to accelerate and brake. It's wise to practise towing a caravan on short trips before you attempt a long journey.



What to do before you start your journey

- It is important that your car is mechanically sound, so get the vehicle serviced before starting on your trip. The service should check that:
 - the tow bar or towing device is strong enough and attached securely so that it does not break or become loose during use;
 - the wheels, tyres, steering, suspension and brakes are in good working order;
 - the battery is in good condition and fully charged;
 - all lights and reflectors are clean and working; and
 - oil levels are correct.
- Depending on the width of the caravan, you may need to fit extension mirrors to your car to make sure you can see the road behind you when your caravan is attached.
- Do not attempt to tow if you do not have adequate clear vision in both wing mirrors.

Getting your caravan or trailer in roadworthy condition

- Make sure the safety breakaway cable is secured in place and in good condition.
- If more than 1.5 metres separates the vehicles, use some warning device such as a white flag to draw attention to the tow bar.
- Make sure brakes and lights work correctly and that wheels, tyres, wheel bearings and the suspension are in good condition.