

FAQs on Towing Light Trailers (3.5 tonnes and under)

How do I find out my vehicle's towing capacity (i.e. what it can tow)? You should consult your owner's manual or contact the original manufacturer (or authorised distributor) for this figure. Please note that each vehicle is different and its overall gross towing capacity will depend on whether the trailer being towed is braked or unbraked. These are the **max** weights your vehicle can tow. If you exceed this you are breaking the law.

Do I need a 4x4 / four wheel drive (FWD) to pull a trailer? No. A two wheel drive is fine provided the weight of the loaded trailer doesn't exceed your vehicle's towing capacity (i.e. how much it can tow).

Where do I find out the weight of a trailer? You will find the DGVW (Design Gross Vehicle Weight), also referred to as MAM (Maximum Authorised Mass) on the trailer's plate or by contacting the original manufacturer. This is the weight of a vehicle or trailer, including the max load it can carry, in accordance with the manufacturer's design specifications.

Is it illegal to tow a three axle trailer? No. However the DGVW of the three axle trailer must not exceed the towing capacity of your vehicle and you must have the appropriate [driving licence](#).

What can I tow with a B (car) or BE Driving Licence?

B Licence	BE Licence
A trailer whose DGVW is no more than 750kg, or	A trailer whose DGVW is no more than 3,500kg, or
If the trailer's DGVW is more than 750kg but the combined weight of the vehicle + trailer does not exceed 3,500kg.	The trailer's DGVW is more than 3,500kg but the combined weight of the vehicle + trailer does not exceed 7,000kg.
If you need further clarification on this please contact our Licensing Section on 1890 41 61 41 or (096) 25000	

By law, does a trailer have to be plated? All new light trailers sold after 29th October 2012 must legally be plated.

Where can I get my trailer plated? The original manufacturer or its authorised distributor.

My trailer is homemade (or the original manufacturer is no longer in service) – where can I get it plated?

You can contact an existing trailer manufacturer in your area and ask them if they will plate it for you. If they won't, try contacting the [NSAI](#) (National Standards Authority of Ireland) to enquire whether one of their authorised plating centres will do it.

Do I have to get my trailer roadworthiness tested? Only trailers over 3,500kg have to be roadworthiness tested. However, under Road Traffic law, trailers must be maintained in a roadworthy condition at all times when used in a public place. Please contact the original manufacturer for advice on servicing intervals and part replacement.

Does my trailer need a number plate fitted? No, provided it's under 750kg. However, by law, the number plate on your vehicle must be visible at all times. So, if the trailer obstructs this, you will need to attach another number plate with the towing vehicle's registration number on the light trailer as well.

Does my Trailer need to be licensed and taxed? No. Please contact your [local motor tax office](#) for more info.

Does my trailer need to be insured? Insurance queries should be directed to your insurance company.

I'm buying a trailer, what do I need to know? Since 29th October 2012, all new trailers must be type approved and hold a certificate of conformity. This means that the trailer has met a European safety and quality standard.

How do I get my trailer approved / certified? To obtain certification, please contact the [NSAI](#).

What is the speed limit for towing trailers? The speed limit is 80km/h, unless a lower speed limit sign is posted.

Do I need brakes on my trailer? All trailers with a design weight of more than 750kg must have a service brake (normal running brake), a handbrake and breakaway brake (as specified by manufacturer). Older trailers that do not have a breakaway cable can have a secondary coupling (a chain or wire rope) fitted instead. For more technical information on light trailers please view our [booklet](#) or [email vehiclestandards@rsa.ie](mailto:vehiclestandards@rsa.ie)

Can I tow a double axle caravan with a car? The weight of a laden (loaded) caravan you can tow with a car, van or 4 x 4 depends on the vehicle's **towing capacity** and your **driving licence** not the number of axles. You may wish to refer to our FAQ on [Calculating the Towing Capacity of a Vehicle](#) for further information.

Where breakaway cables are used only when towing, should they be connected to the tow hitch or to the towing structure? It is recommended that the cable be attached to the towing structure. Where designated points are not in place on the towing structure, the cable should be put around the towing ball and ensure it is secured.

For trailers with DGVW over 750kg, we are using breakaway cables. Should we use additional chains between the vehicle and the trailer? No. Once breakaway cables are fitted this is sufficient.

Is it correct that any two-axle O2 trailer sold prior to June 2011, only needs a service brake on one axle? Yes, two-axle O2 trailers sold prior to June 2011 need a service (running) brake on one axle only - the rear axle. Whereas, O2 trailers sold after June 2011 need service (running) brakes on both axles. You may also wish to refer to our FAQ on [Braking Requirements for Light Trailers](#) .