



Irish Camping & Caravan Club

Tips for towing a caravan

Drive at the right speed. The maximum legal speed limit for a vehicle towing a caravan is 80km/h, 49.7mph. 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 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.

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.

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.

REMEMBER

Your caravan 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

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