

# USER SAFETY GUIDE



## Towing Safely

A guide to safely driving with a trailer  
from **groundhog**

Section 1

Information

Please refer to Groundhog manual for full details on service and inspection of the axle, brakes and suspension.

Safety

Before using this equipment and to avoid personal injury, carefully read and understand this guide. If there is anything you do not understand, **DO NOT** use this equipment.

Make sure you are aware of all safety requirements.

Wear suitable personal protective equipment.

Do not wear loose jewellery or clothing that may get in the way or become trapped.

Carefully inspect the mobile unit before towing.  
If there is any doubt about its condition, **DO NOT CONTINUE.**

Information

Please refer to Groundhog manual for full details on service and inspection of the axle, brakes and suspension.

Safety

Before using this equipment and to avoid personal injury, carefully read and understand this guide. If there is anything you do not understand, **DO NOT** use this equipment.

Make sure you are aware of all safety requirements.

Wear suitable personal protective equipment.

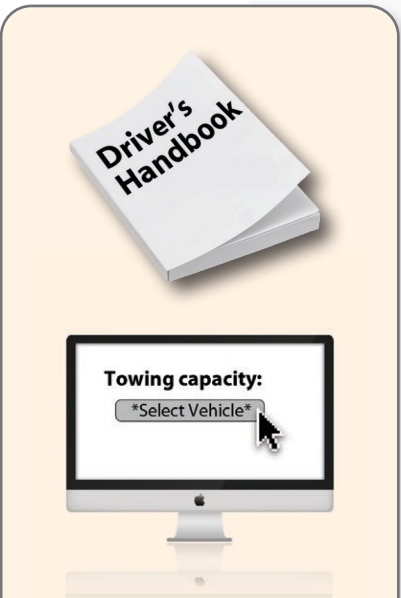
Do not wear loose jewellery or clothing that may get in the way or become trapped.

Carefully inspect the mobile unit before towing.  
If there is any doubt about its condition, **DO NOT CONTINUE.**

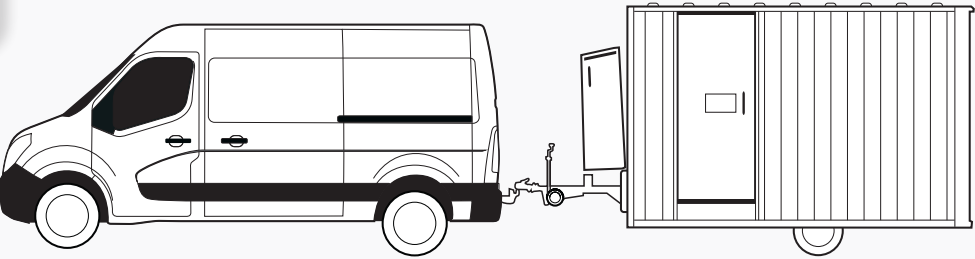
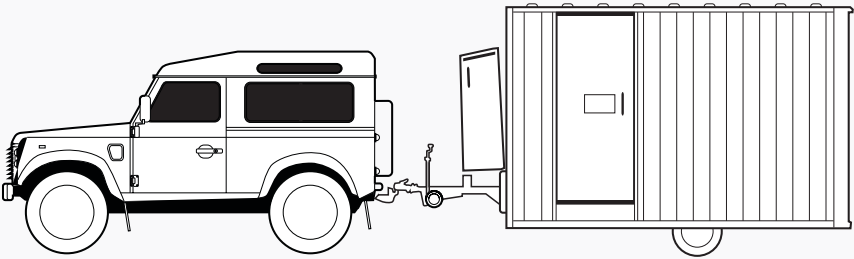
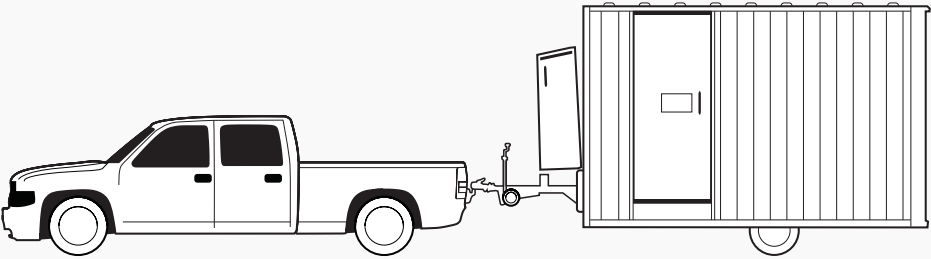
Section 2

Towing vehicles

Check the towing capacity of vehicle.



Refer to driver's handbook or the internet for guidance.



**NOTE:** When towing the unit, ensure that you are licensed for the correct vehicle.  
See page 4 for full details

Section 3  
Driving license categories

To be able to drive a particular type of vehicle, you need an ‘entitlement’ for that category on your driving licence.

Cars

Category B

You can also tow heavier trailers if the total weight of vehicle and trailer isn’t more than 3,500kg.

Category B+E

You can drive a category B vehicle with a trailer when they have a combined weight over 3,500kg.. To qualify for this entitlement, you need to be over 17 years and, if you passed your car driving test after 1st January 1997, undergo training and take a practical test.

Medium-sized vehicles

Category C1

You can drive vehicles weighing between 3,500 and 7,500kg (with a trailer up to 750kg).

Category C1+E

You can drive C1 category vehicles with a trailer over 750kg, but the trailer – when fully loaded – must not weigh more than the vehicle.

The combined weight of both must not exceed 12,000kg.

To qualify for this entitlement, you need to be over 18 years, and if you passed your car driving test after 1st January 1997, apply for a provisional medium-sized vehicle entitlement (category C1) and take the C1 test.If you passed your car driving test before 1st January 1997 you are already entitled to drive medium-sized vehicles.

Please be aware of the additional requirements that apply for towing.

Large vehicles

Category C

You can drive vehicles over 3,500kg (with a trailer up to 750kg).

Category C+E

You can drive category C vehicles with a trailer over 750kg.  
  
To qualify for this entitlement, you need to be over 21 years and passed the large vehicle and lorry entitlement (category C) test. Once you’ve passed your Category C test you can then take the towing entitlement (category C+E) test. Once passed, you are entitled to drive large vehicles and lorries with trailers.

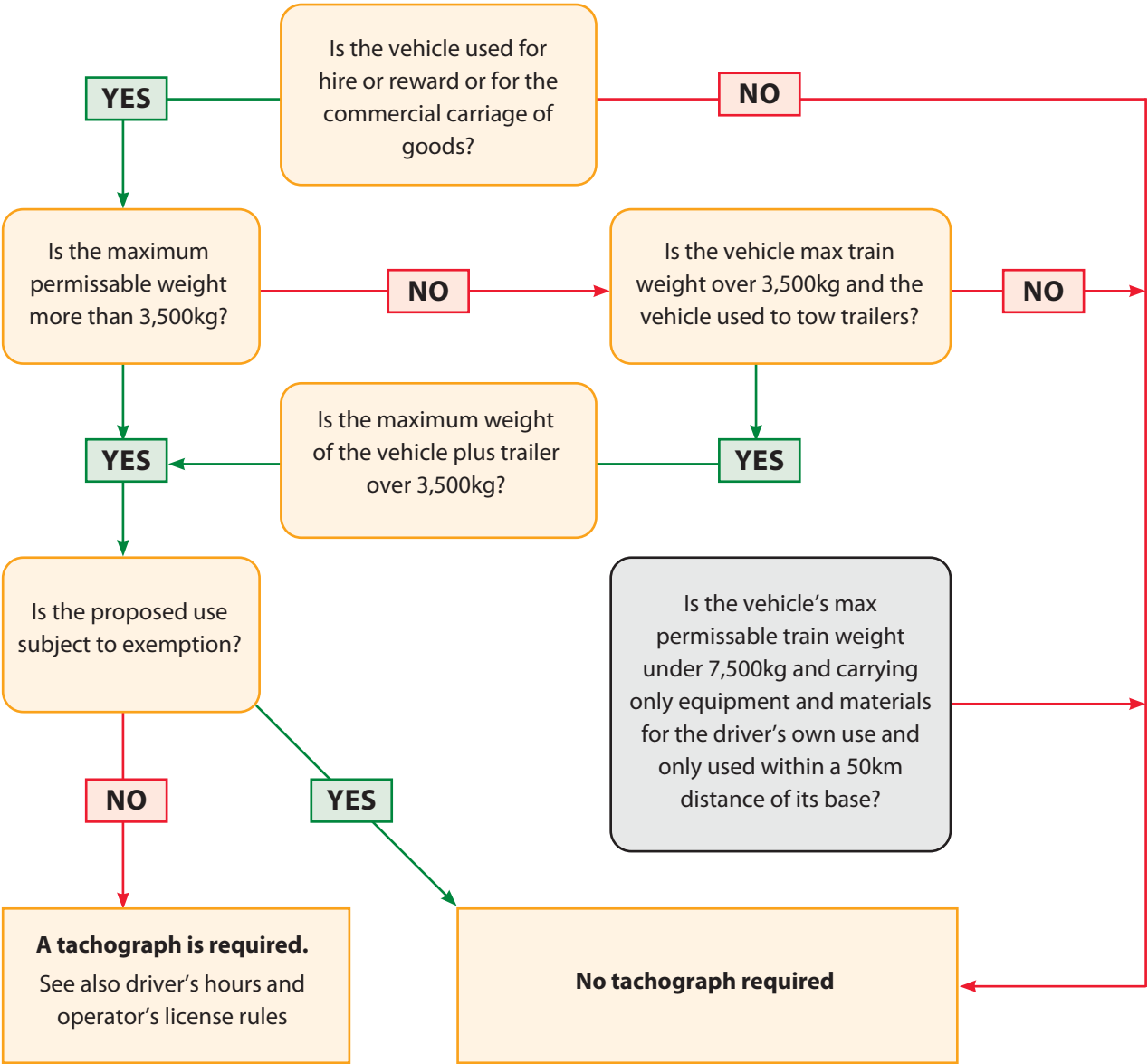
Section 4  
Trailers & tachographs

The flow chart below is designed to tell whether a vehicle/ trailer combination needs a tachograph.

This is an important issue and one in which the police are taking a keen interest. Drivers who legitimately do not have a tachograph should carry a copy of this information if they think the police might possibly expect them to have one in their cab.

As a result of the recent appeal court case, it might well be that the vehicle and trailer would have to be taken to a weighbridge and weighed at over 3,500kg before prosecution could proceed.

If either the gross plated weight or the train weight of your vehicle is over 3,500kg, you need to consider your position very carefully. The DETR and the NTTA stress that their comments are for advice only and that is for the courts to interpret.





Section 5  
Towing bracket safety checks

1

Check the tow bar fitted is an approved type.

Any vehicle registered on or after 1st August 1998 must be fitted with a European Type approved towing bracket (tow bar). It will have a label, data plate or stamping showing an E number (eg. E11\*0001\*00). This figure denotes that it is EU Approved in th UK (E11).

2

The towing vehicle must be suitable for towing the trailer. Ensure the 5cm Ball Hitch is greased and kept in good condition.

✓ Suitable

✗ Unsuitable

3

Check that the Tow Ball, Pin or Combination Pin/ Ball attachment fitted to towing vehicle is free of wear and any safety pins are in place and in good working order.

Ball Hitch

Pin Hitch

Combination pin/ ball

Section 6  
Towing coupling, safety cable and jockey wheel

1. Ensure that the safety cable is present and in good working condition
2. Apply grease to grease nipples lubricating the coupling draw tube
3. Check jockey wheel condition
4. Ensure handle is suitably greased
5. Check coupling gatar for damage
6. Check ball or eye coupling for excessive wear
7. Check draw tube and damper are not bent
8. Check drawbar is not bent or cracked



Images are for illustration purposes only. Actual product may vary due to product innovations.



Section 7  
Coupling and drawbar safety checks

1


Trailer coupling is secure and free of wear.




Wear indicator

2

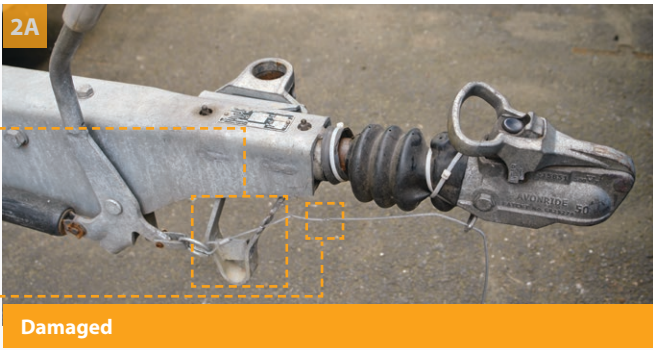
Trailer drawbar is free of any damage.




X Bent handbrake protection skid



X Frayed breakaway cable




2A  
Damaged




2B  
New

3

Damper is in working order.



3A  
Push damper in <



3B  
Damper should release slowly back to original position

Section 8  
Checking the tyres

1

Check treads on tyres.



1.60mm on cars, light vans and trailers across the centre three-quarters of the width (1mm for other vehicles)

2

Check for sidewall damage to tyres.



Side wall in good condition



Damaged side wall

3

Check wheel rims are free of damage.



Wheel rim

4

If wheel nut indication pointing tags are fitted, check they are in alignment with the other tags (point to point).



4A  
Wheel nut indicators correctly aligned



4B  
Wheel nut indicators out of alignment

5

Wheel nuts are secured.



Tighten to 120 NM

6

Check tyre pressures.



90 PSI



Section 8  
cont.

Securing the windows/  
shutters

Check all window shutters are fully secured and locked before towing.

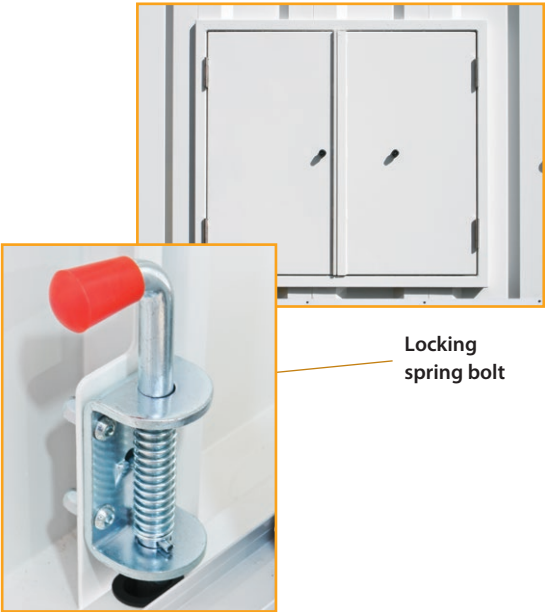
The window is protected by steel shutters, which are locked internally and can only be closed from inside the rest room.

To access the shutters, first open the window.

To open the window, release the catch and slide the left hand glass panel open.

Pull shutters closed and secure locking spring bolt.

Slide the window shut and ensure that the catches are engaged.

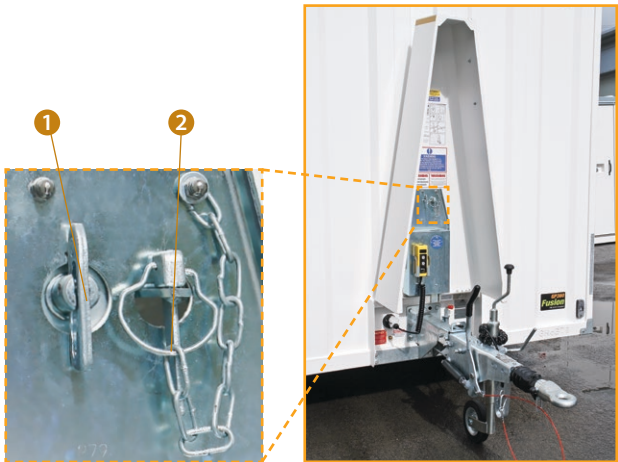


Nose cone

Take a firm hold of the nosecone security cover handle to prevent it from swinging down and causing injury. Remove the safety clip and release the anti luce clip, then carefully lower the cover.

1. Nosecone Cover Securing Bolt (Anti Luce)  
2. Nosecone Cover Safety Clip (Pin & Chain)

Once in position, use the key supplied to lock the nosecone lock. If this lock is not secured, the unit could be removed from site without requiring entry.



Securing the doors

Check all doors are fully secured and locked.



WARNING

No goods to be  
carried in transit.

Section 8  
cont.

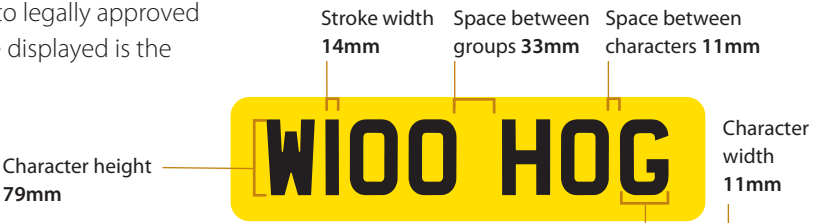
Lighting board

Check road lighting is free of damage and all lamps are working.



Number plates

Ensure number plates conform to legally approved standards and the number plate displayed is the same as on the towing vehicle.



Front marker lamps

Check that front marker lamps are in good working order.



Rear marker lamps

Check that rear marker lamps are in good working order.



Side reflectors

Ensure that side reflectors are located on unit and clear of dirt.



Front reflectors

Ensure that front reflectors are located on unit and clear of dirt.





Section 9

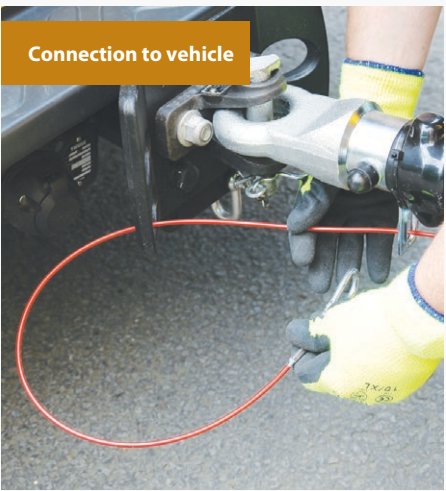
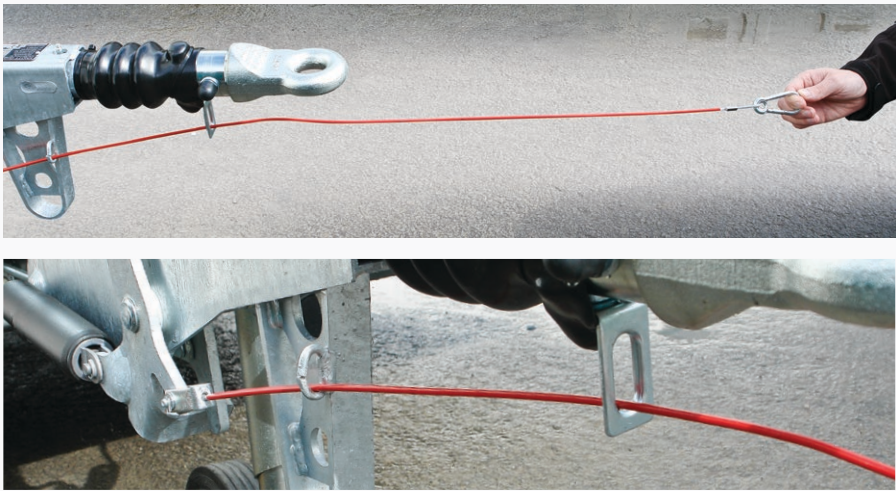
Attaching the Groundhog  
to the towing vehicle

The following instructions are conditional upon the Mobile Welfare Unit being ready to tow.

- 1. Position the unit on level ground and apply the parking brake.
- 2. **Ball** Turn the jockey wheel operating handle anti-clockwise to raise the coupling head higher than the vehicle's tow ball. (Fig A)
- 2. **Eye** Turn the jockey wheel operating handle anti-clockwise to raise the coupling head in line with the vehicle's tow jaw, remove R-Clip and then remove towing pin from vehicle's tow jaw. (Fig B)
- 3. **Ball** Manoeuvre the towing vehicle to the unit until the coupling head is directly over the tow ball. Fully apply the handbrake of the towing vehicle and switch its engine off. (Fig C)
- 3. **Eye** Manoeuvre the towing vehicle to the unit until the coupling head is directly inserted into the vehicle's tow jaw. Fully apply the handbrake of the towing vehicle and switch its engine off. (Fig D)

- 4. **Ball** Raise and hold the coupling head handle in the raised position (Fig E). Now, turn the jockey wheel operating handle clockwise until the coupling head is in place on the ball. Allow the coupling to close on the ball (Fig F). Carefully check that the ball is correctly in place.
- 4. **Eye** Carefully check that the Eye is correctly in place. Now, fully insert the towing pin through the vehicle's tow jaw and eye connection. Reattach R-Clip to pin to ensure pin cannot work itself free when towing. (Fig G)
- 5. **Ball & Eye** Attach the breakaway cable to a suitable location on the towing vehicle. (Fig H)
- 6. **Ball & Eye** Once the unit is coupled to the towing vehicle, release the welfare unit's handbrake. (Fig I)
- 7. **Ball & Eye** Fully raise the jockey wheel, then raise and lock the jockey wheel assembly clear of the ground with the wheel facing to the rear (Fig J for Ball) (Fig K for Eye). Secure the clamp. Attach the lighting cable plug to the towing vehicle's socket and check that all the lights are working correctly. (Fig L)

**IMPORTANT!** Ensure breakaway cable is fitted and free of damage.



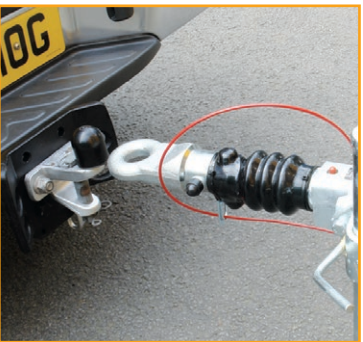
Section 9  
cont.



Ball connection



Eye connection



Universal ball/pin connection

These images refer to towing instructions on previous page.

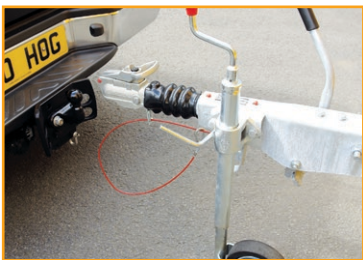


Figure A (Ball)



Figure B (Eye)



Figure C (Ball)

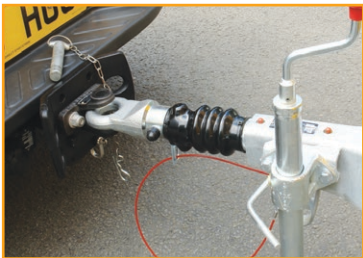


Figure D (Eye)



Figure E (Ball)



Figure F (Ball)



Figure G (Eye)



Figure H (Ball & Eye)



Figure I (Ball & Eye)

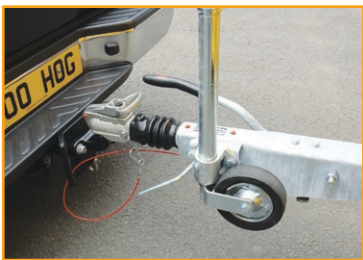


Figure J (Ball)

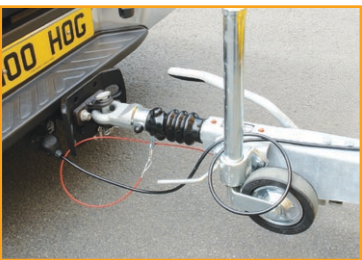


Figure K (Eye)



Figure L (Ball & Eye)



NOTE

Although the speed limit on certain roads is 60 mph, Groundhog advises that the mobile unit is restricted to a maximum of 50 mph.

Speed limits

- Always keep to the legal speed limit for the road you are using.
- Speed limits for vehicles towing mobile welfare units:
- 30mph limit applies on all roads with street lighting unless signs show otherwise.
  - 50mph applies on single carriageways unless signs show otherwise.
  - 60 mph applies on dual carriageways and motorways.

Drive within your capabilities

- Always drive at a speed that is well within your capabilities, and to the road and weather conditions that prevail at the time.
- If your trailer begins to shake or swerve, ease off the accelerator and reduce speed gently. (This can happen if you are driving too fast or the load in the trailer is wrongly positioned.)
- Do not brake sharply on a bend (this could cause a jack-knife situation). Reduce speed before the bend and take the appropriate gear for speed you are doing. Then gently accelerate out of the bend.

Matching the trailer with the towing vehicle

- It is important that the vehicle you use is adequate for the job.
- Check that the Trailer Gross Weight does not exceed the Towing Capacity of the towing vehicle.
- The addition of a loaded trailer to a vehicle will inevitably have a very serious effect on the vehicle’s performance. Starting, particularly on hills, can be much more laboured; stopping can take longer distances; cornering and negotiating sharp bends requires extra care.
- The most important check is the vehicles manufacturer’s recommended towing limit, which

should be in vehicle manufacture’s handbook and on the VIN plate on the chassis.

Police Forces use the manufacturer’s recommended towing limit as their guide. Under no circumstances should the vehicle’s gross train weight be exceeded.

Avoid large potholes

It is inevitable that Groundhogs require towing across uneven site grounds from time to time. Where possible, large potholes should be avoided to prevent springs being subjected to abnormal loading conditions.

Care taken when approaching speed humps and curbs.

You are not under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Have you had your eyes tested?

Groundhog welfare units are not goods carrying trailers, therefore please ensure no equipment or tools are inside whilst towing.

Check angle of headlights with trailer attached. Adjust if necessary.

**WARNING!**

- Never reverse a trailer without checking behind because of the huge blind spot. Ideally, have someone see you back, especially in crowded spaces.
- Reversing a trailer is a skill that can be mastered with a little perseverance by anyone who has learned the basic theory. Find somewhere with plenty of space and keep trying until you get it right. It helps to have someone who knows how to do it to tell you where you are going wrong.

Extension mirrors

Check that extension mirrors are in place if required.



Trailer checks before each journey

**The Trailer operator or the driver of the towing vehicle, if different, has the responsibility for the safe operation of the trailer and needs to carry out the following checks:**

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If the trailer is laden, is the load correctly distributed, ie. not too much or too little nose weight?</li></ul>                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is the breakaway cable or secondary coupling undamaged and correctly connected, to a suitable port on the tow bar or towing vehicle?</li></ul>                                                                                                    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is the load within the trailer’s official payload, ie. not overloaded?</li></ul>                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Are the tyre pressures correct and all tyres free from cuts, bulges and with adequate tread? Tyres must have a continuous tread depth of at least 1.6mm on cars, light vans and trailers across the centre three-quarters of the width.</li></ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is the actual gross weight being towed within the towing vehicle manufacturer’s recommended maximum towing limit (whether braked or un-braked)?</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Are you satisfied that the wheel nuts/bolts are tightened to the correct torque?</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                        |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is the load correctly secured?</li></ul>                                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is the trailer correctly coupled to the tow-ball or pin?</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Are all the lights undamaged and working correctly?</li></ul>                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is the coupling height correct? ie. Not excessively nose down or nose up</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Are the 7 core cable and plug undamaged?</li></ul>                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is the correct number plate fitted (both registration number and style)?</li></ul>                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

**NOTE** Check the correct operation of damper and brakes as soon as possible after commencement of journey.





Tel 01639 641166

Email [parts@groundhog.co.uk](mailto:parts@groundhog.co.uk)

[www.groundhog.co.uk](http://www.groundhog.co.uk)

Version 1.9 | 01/25

Copyright ©2025 Groundhog UK Limited. All rights reserved.

No part of this material may be reproduced in any form  
by any means without the express written permission of Groundhog UK Limited.

\* Weights and sizes shown may vary slightly. Groundhog reserve the right to change specification without prior notice.