

## The importance of learning how to tow

There's nothing quite like hitching up a caravan and getting out with the family. But before you embark on any road trip with your van, there are a number of important things you should know to ensure your trip is as safe and trouble free as possible.

### Rules and regulations

Before you even think about connecting your van you must make sure your tow-bar is securely mounted to your vehicle. If your car has a factory-fitted tow-bar it will probably be clearly labelled with maximum permissible weights. If not, make sure you know the towing capacity of your factory or aftermarket tow-bar, and that it is within the load of your van.

It's extremely important to know the weights and capacities of your tow as it's not only illegal to tow a caravan too heavy or with an ill-fitted tow-bar, it could cause costly damage to you or another motorist, or even worse, somebody could be injured.

Further readings and resources:

- NSW Rules: [http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/registration/downloads/2005\\_10\\_towingtrailers.pdf](http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/registration/downloads/2005_10_towingtrailers.pdf)
- WA Rules: [http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/mediaFiles/licensing/lbu\\_vs\\_ib\\_107.pdf](http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/mediaFiles/licensing/lbu_vs_ib_107.pdf)
- SA Rules: <http://mylicence.sa.gov.au/road-rules/the-drivers-handbook/towing>
- QLD Rules: <http://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/Safety/Vehicle-standards-and-modifications/Loads-and-towing/Safe-towing.aspx>
- VIC Rules: <http://www.vic.gov.au/transport-vehicles/vehicles-vessels/heavy-vehicles.html>
- TAS Rules: [http://www.transport.tas.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/49096/road\\_rules\\_booklet.pdf](http://www.transport.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/49096/road_rules_booklet.pdf)
- NT Rules: [http://www.transport.nt.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/19618/ibv65.pdf](http://www.transport.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/19618/ibv65.pdf)

### Driving

It is very important to learn the proper driving techniques for towing, preferably well before you actually set off on your trip. The last thing you want to do is encounter a situation that you've never dealt with before while out on the open road, potentially in a remote area.

Caravans can be quite heavy and can drastically influence the stability and direction of your vehicle, particularly in windy conditions. If you understand how your vehicle behaves when towing, and you are familiar with changing weather conditions and how they can affect your travel, you will remain confident and in control of the outfit for the entire journey.

### Costs

Towing a van puts extra load on your vehicle. This means added burdens for all major components, including the tyres, suspension, and brakes. It's important that you keep your vehicle and your caravan up to service and well maintained. If you don't there is a potential for something to go wrong while on your journey, which might end up costing you more than if you had a routine check-up by a mechanic carried out beforehand.

Towing also requires more effort from your engine, which means fuel consumption will diminish somewhat during your journey with a van compared with driving without the van. It's always a great idea to set aside additional funds to cater for higher fuel costs. And if your journey goes through a remote location, it's important to remember there might be higher fuel rates and possibly lower grade fuels in certain areas.

To fast track your towing skills its worth booking a personalised training session on learning how to tow by a professional. The course is ideal for anyone interested in learning how to tow caravans, camper trailers, boat trailers, horse floats, and promotional trailers or work trailers. Learn new skills or just brush up on existing skills. Half-day training courses are available in and around Perth, Western Australia. For more information on the course and how to book click here : <http://www.globalgypsies.com.au/training/Caravan/>

Otherwise if you do not live near Perth you can pick up your complete guide to towing DVD, it's jam packed with all your need know : <http://www.globalgypsies.com.au/training/Caravan-DVD/> .

It includes:

- Type of van and vehicle to choose
- Towing equipment
- Towing capacity
- Reversing
- Parking
- Safety and towing tips
- Off-road caravanning
- Communications
- Dealing with emergencies
- Planning and budgeting for a caravan trip
- Several essential checklists

**Author:** Brett Davis is obsessed with driving, having played with Matchbox cars until he was tall enough to drive a real one. After earning a degree in journalism he started his career as an editorial assistant at Top Gear Australia magazine and then moved on to caradvice.com.au. Currently he is an editor at [Caravanloans.com.au](http://Caravanloans.com.au).