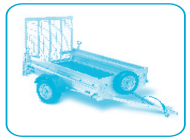
1923 Safety Guidance

v:032017

Single Axle Trailer

The rules and procedures in force where people are at work may require the person responsible for this equipment to carry out a specific risk assessment.

It is important to read all of this leaflet BEFORE you use the Single Axle Trailer



1. It is important to read all of this leaflet and any others provided before using the single axle trailer.
2. If the vehicle/trailer combination exceeds 3.5 tonnes and is being used 'at work' then the tachograph rules apply. Find out about tachographs.
3. This single axle trailer is designed solely to carry goods, up to its rated carrying capacity, being towed by a road legal vehicle on made up roads. It must not be used for any other purpose.
4. It must not be used for carrying passengers or livestock.
5. The use of this Trailer can cause injury or damage if not used in a careful and controlled way.
6. The following items of personal protective equipment must be worn when operating this Trailer: High visibility clothing, complying with EN 471, when working on the public highway or on a construction site.
7. Unauthorised personnel must not use this single axle trailer. Authorised personnel must have the appropriate driving licence. See driving licence.
8. This single axle trailer must not be used by minors, or by anyone under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
9. The manual maneuvering of this single axle trailer should be carried out by one or more able bodied adults. Anyone with a temporary or permanent disability must seek expert advice before using it.

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DRIVING LICENCE

1. A full driving licence must be held to tow any trailer. Most drivers who passed their driving test before 1st January 1997 have licence categories allowing them to drive a vehicle and trailer combinations weighing up to a combined weight of 8.25 tonnes.
2. TZ. With effect from 1st January 1997 the EC Directive on driving licences (91/439/EEC) came into effect affecting new drivers passing their test after that date and HGV drivers who obtained their licence after 31st December 1991.
   These new drivers are only allowed to drive vehicle and trailer combinations in the categories listed below without taking a further driving test.
   - Vehicles up to 3.5 tonnes (category B) with a 750kg trailer (4.25 tonnes total **MAM** *).
   - Category B vehicles with larger trailers i.e heavier than 750kg, provided that the combined MAM does not exceed 3.5 tonnes and the gross MAM* of the trailer does not exceed the unladen weight of the towing vehicle. To be able to tow combinations outside the ruling requires the passing of an additional test.
   - New HGV drivers and those who have passed their HGV tests since 1 January 1992 will be restricted to towing trailers up to 750kg until they pass an additional test.
   - **MAM*** - Maximum Authorised Mass (permitted authorized weight** weight of the vehicle and/or trailer i.e the maximum designed carrying capacity).
   Driving licenses should be checked and the vehicle and trailer VIN and ID plates closely to establish limitations or enquire with the DVLA (leaflet INF30).
   - It must be established that the vehicle to be used to tow this trailer is capable of so. The manufacturers' recommended towing limit must not be exceeded; this can be found in the vehicle manufacturer's handbook and Maximum Gross Weight (G.VW) or Maximum Authorised Mass (MAM) of the trailer may be found on the identification plate, normally located on the 'A' frame, close to the towing hitch.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

1. To reduce the risk of serious or fatal injury from breathing toxic fumes, do not drive the towing vehicle inside a building, unless the area has good ventilation.
2. Select as firm a surface as possible to stabilise the trailer when loading or unloading.
3. Keep children and animals away when loading, unloading or manoeuvring the trailer.
4. The unloaded vehicle and trailer may become bogged down if parked or driven onto soft ground.
5. If the trailer is detached from the towing vehicle, apply the trailer handbrake, lower the jockey wheel and support legs if fitted and, if necessary, chock the wheels.
6. A Single Axle Trailer is heavy, help must be sought to manoeuver it into position, especially on sloping ground. Operators must not pull beyond their own capabilities, seek help.
7. If used on any public road or highway this trailer and the towing vehicle must comply with road traffic regulations. In addition, the driver must have an appropriate driving licence.

For guidance on managing construction health risks go to **www.hse.gov.uk/construction**

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Using the Single Axle Trailer

1. The addition of a loaded trailer to a vehicle will inevitably have a very serious effect on the vehicles performance.
   - Starting, particularly on hills will be more difficult
   - Stopping can take longer distances
   - Cornering and negotiating sharp bends requires extra care
   - The rate of acceleration will be reduced
   - Fuel consumption will be increased
2. Driving style will need to be modified. The reduced performance mentioned above will require:
   - Greater concentration
   - The additional length will require greater care when overtaking and cornering
   - Reduced acceleration will require longer distances required when overtaking
   - The effect of side winds will be more noticeable
   - The slipstream and suction effect of large commercial vehicles can affect the stability of the vehicle
3. Speed limits and limitations when towing. You must not exceed the speed limits - these are maximum speeds allowed and are not necessarily safe speeds.
   - 30mph limit applies on all roads with street lighting unless signs show otherwise
   - On other roads the speed limit is 50mph on a single carriageway and 60mph on a dual carriageways and motorways for general vehicles under 7.5 tonnes.
   - The speed limits may be different for vehicles over 7.5 tonnes, articulated vehicles, and other unusual vehicles, check the speed limit for the vehicle before driving it.
   - The single axle trailer must not be driven in the right hand lane of a motorway with three lanes or more.
   - The vehicle should be driven at a speed that is well within in its capabilities, the drivers capabilities and suitable to the road and weather conditions.
   - Should the trailer start to snake or swerve (usually caused by excessive speed), ease off the accelerator and reduce speed gently.
   - Reversing will require practice but it is also recommended to get out of the vehicle and check for blind spots or seek assistance.
4. If the Maximum Authorised Mass (the combined maximum designed carrying capacity of towing vehicle and trailer) exceeds 3500kg, and the vehicle is used for hire or reward, or for the commercial carriage of goods, a tachograph must be used. The driver of the towing vehicle in these circumstances must comply with the Drivers' Hours and Tachograph rules for Goods Vehicles in the UK and Europe. These rules can be obtained from the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (www.vosa.gov.uk).
5. If the trailer does not work properly do not attempt to repair it. Contact the hire company.

Please store this leaflet safely. It may be required for further information

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Before Starting Work...

OPERATORS

1. The driver of the towing vehicle has the responsibility for the safe operation of the vehicle and trailer.
2. The driver of the towing vehicle must hold an appropriate driving licence to tow this trailer. See driving licence.
3. The driver of the towing vehicle must establish that the vehicle is capable of towing the trailer safely.
   The vehicle manufacturer's recommended towing limit, which is found in the vehicle manufacturer's handbook and on the VIN plate on the chassis, must not be exceeded. The Maximum Gross Weight (G.VW) of the trailer will be found on the identification plate, normally located on the 'A' Frame, close to the towing hitch.
4. The driver of the towing vehicle must have at least the following items of personal protective equipment: A safety helmet, complying with EN397, when working on a construction site.
   Strong gloves for handling wire ropes.
   High-visibility clothing, complying with EN471, when working on the public highway or on a construction site.
5. Anybody who is assisting the driver of the towing vehicle will also need to wear appropriate personal protective equipment.
6. Help must be sought when reversing or manoeuvring the towing vehicle and trailer. The trailer will reduce the rear view vision.
7. If driving off road, assess the route for soft ground, slopes, holes and trenches. Remember the seesaw action of the towing hitch will reduce the ground clearance and increase the possibility of grounding.
8. If the trailer is to be detached from the towing vehicle, always apply the hand brake, lower the jockey wheel and support legs. It may also be necessary to chock the wheel in some circumstances.
9. If the trailer is left unattended ensure that it is protected from theft with either a high lock, wheel clamp or other suitable security device.
4. The driver of the towing vehicle should carry out the following checks each time the trailer is used. It will have been supplied in good condition and ready to use by the hire company. It must be checked to ensure that it has not been damaged or altered since then.
   - Are all the lights undamaged?
   - Are the 7 core cable and plug undamaged?
   - Is the correct number plate fitted?

SINGLE AXLE TRAILER

1. Check the Single Axle Trailer. If anything is found to be damaged, do not use the trailer and contact the hire company immediately. Ensure that the trailer hitch is compatible with the towbar on the towing vehicle – it will either be a 50mm ball or an eye coupling.
2. If the trailer is to be detached from the towing vehicle, always apply the hand brake, lower the jockey wheel and support legs. It may also be necessary to chock the wheel in some circumstances.
3. If the trailer is left unattended ensure that it is protected from theft with either a high lock, wheel clamp or other suitable security device.
4. The driver of the towing vehicle should carry out the following checks each time the trailer is used. It will have been supplied in good condition and ready to use by the hire company. It must be checked to ensure that it has not been damaged or altered since then.
   - Are all the lights undamaged?
   - Are the 7 core cable and plug undamaged?
   - Is the correct number plate fitted?
   (both registration number and style)
   - Is the breakaway cable undamaged and correctly connected to the trailer handbrake mechanism?
   - Are the tyre pressures correct (seek advice from the Hire Company) and all tyres free from cuts, bulges, and with adequate tread, (including the spare)? Tyres must have a continuous tread depth of at least 1.60mm on cars, light vans and trailers, across the centre three-quarters of the width (1mm for other vehicles)
   Are you satisfied that the wheel nuts/bolts are tightened?
   If required are the mudguards in satisfactory condition and secure?
   Is the trailer tow hitch or eye in good condition?
   Are the jockey wheel and any corner supports or support legs in good condition, fully raised and secure before moving?

INSURANCE

1. Under the terms of hire, the operator is responsible for the safe custody of the Single Axle Trailer. The hire company must also be indemnified against any loss or damage however caused. The best way to do this is to take out proper insurance.
2. Some hire companies will offer insurance cover at an extra charge.
3. It should be established with the insurers of the vehicle that the operator is insured to tow a trailer.
4. The operator should be aware that they are responsible for any damage caused to property belonging to a third party, or if they are involved in a road traffic accident.
5. If there is any doubt about the insurance cover check with the hire company or the insurer immediately.

LOADING SINGLE AXLE TRAILER

1. Great care should be taken when loading this trailer; poor loading can cause significant risks including:
   - Overloading the rear of the trailer will lighten the front of the trailer and the rear of the towing vehicle causing loss of stability and likely to cause snaking.
   - Overloading the front of the trailer will lighten the rear of the trailer and the front of the towing vehicle, causing the towing vehicle's steering to be extremely light and less effective, and losing traction. This excessive nose weight is also likely to place unacceptable stresses on the towbar and mounting points.
   - Stability can be lost if loads are heavier on one side or the other.
   - If loads are left loose and can move around, the sudden change of weight distribution can cause a dangerous loss of stability. In addition it is possible that part of the load can fall from the trailer endangering other road users and pedestrians.
2. Loads must be securely tied down or restrained. There is a significant danger of light items being lifted out of the trailer by a slipstream. All items should be secured using adequate strength load restraints attached to purpose made restraint points on the chassis of the trailer. Do not attach restraints to parts of the bodywork or mudguards that are not that are not designed to carry the weight of the load. A net is useful to restrain small items.
3. Loads must not project outside the trailer thus causing danger to other road users.
4. Loads should be distributed across the width of the trailer.
5. Loads must be positioned to keep the nose weight (the downward weight on the towbar) within the recommended limits (typically between 50 and 100kg). Refer to the towing vehicles handbook for the manufacturer's recommendation.
6. If uneven loads have to be carried, adjust the load so that the correct nose weight is achieved. It may be necessary to reduce the overall load to achieve this.
7. If the trailer is fitted with a tailgate/loading ramp take care when raising or lowering it as it will be heavy. Help may be needed.

LOADING A FREE STANDING SINGLE AXLE TRAILER

1. Before loading an unhitched trailer consider that it will be considerably more difficult to move when fully loaded. Place it where it can easily be moved or where the vehicle can easily reverse to it to hitch.
2. Always apply the handbrake. In addition it may be necessary to chock the wheel on slopes.
3. An unhitched Single Axle Trailer will dangerously seesaw, pivoting on the central axle as loads are placed at either end. To prevent this from happening lower and clamp the jockey wheel and rear support legs, if fitted, to a position where the trailer is level.
4. When it is necessary to move the trailer manually ensure that it has the appropriate nose weight, raise and securely clamp the rear legs, leaving the jockey wheel down. A Single Axle Trailer is heavy; help will be needed to manoeuver it into position, especially on a sloping ground. The operator should not pull beyond their capabilities and help must be sought.

LOADING A HITCHED SINGLE AXLE TRAILER

1. Always apply the towing vehicle handbrake.
2. A hitched trailer is considerably more stable than when unhitched. The jockey wheel must be left raised. The rear support legs may be left in the raised position but if loading from the rear they may be lowered to maintain a constant height during loading.

HITCHING A SINGLE AXLE TRAILER

1. The operator should take their time and not hurry, working to a routine or from a check list to ensure nothing is missed.

TOWBALL HITCH

1. Apply the handbrake and check the support legs are raised. Remove any towball and electrical socket dust covers and security devices then wind the jockey wheel to the required height. Some older towball hitches require lubrication – check with the hire company.
2. If the towing vehicle mirrors do not give a good view past the trailer you should fit towing mirrors.
3. Raise the front of the trailer by means of the jockey wheel assembly to a height just above the towball.

Useful Reference Points • www.hae.org.uk/businessguard

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