



1. Preparation and towing

Towing is very different from everyday driving - it requires additional driving skills and safety precautions. As a driver, you have a legal responsibility to other road users when towing a camper to drive to suit the conditions. Also, the towing vehicle, camper and its load must meet all legal and safety requirements. GT Camper will deliver the camper in a condition that meet all legal requirements, but it is the owner's responsibility to maintain the camper in this condition.

Towing will affect your vehicle

The first step to safe towing is to ensure the vehicle, camper and load are suited. While modern vehicles are lighter and provide better service for normal motoring, some do not have the necessary characteristics for towing. Vehicle manufacturers usually indicate in the owner's manuals the maximum weight, or other trailer features, appropriate for the vehicle. These limits should not be exceeded.

Other ways towing will affect your vehicle are:

- ✓ Decreased acceleration and braking performance
- ✓ Reduced vehicle control and manoeuvrability
- ✓ Increased fuel consumption.

These effects become more pronounced on your vehicle as trailer size and the mass of the load increase. By understanding the limitations of your vehicle and trailer, you can help prevent crashes and both structural and mechanical damage to your vehicle.

Driving with a GT Camper takes practice. Remember:

- Allow for the camper's tendency to 'cut-in' on corners and curves.
- Allow longer distances for braking, overtaking and joining a traffic stream.
- When reversing, it is advisable to have someone outside the vehicle giving directions.
- Avoid sudden lane changes or changes of direction.
- Look further ahead than normal so you can react to changes in traffic or road conditions.
- Use the accelerator, brakes and steering smoothly and gently at all times.
- Use a lower gear when travelling downhill to increase vehicle control and reduce strain on brakes.
- Slow down well before entering corners and curves.
- Accelerator, brake and steering must be operated smoothly when towing.
- Unnecessary steering wheel movement should be avoided because sway or "snaking" of the vehicle and camper may result. If sway occurs a steady speed or slight acceleration should be maintained if possible, until the sway ceases. *The tow vehicle's brakes should only be applied as a last resort.*
- Plan more rest stops and shorter travelling days as towing is more stressful and tiring than normal driving.
- Leave earlier than later to avoid frustration and rushing. That is the number 1 reason for most accidents.

Legal requirements

To ensure the safety of yourself and other road users, you must abide by the laws governing the towing of trailers.

These are:

- ✓ The vehicle and camper must comply with all relevant registration requirements.
- ✓ The vehicle and camper must be in a roadworthy and safe condition.
- ✓ A GT Camper must be fitted with a rear number plate and a registration disc.

- ✓ Towbars and couplings must not obscure the towing vehicle's number plate or rear lights when the camper is not connected.
- ✓ People are not permitted to ride on camper.
- ✓ The speed limit for a vehicle towing a camper is the same as for a normal vehicle.

Towing vehicle

In the interests of reliability and safety, follow these rules and conditions:

- ✓ Ensure the vehicle is suitable for towing
- ✓ Ensure the vehicle is properly equipped for the type and size of trailer - towbars must be of a suitable type and capacity
- ✓ Ensure that the gross weight of the trailer is not exceeding the maximum towing capacity of the motor vehicle as specified by the vehicle manufacturer.

Note: This information can be obtained from the owner's manual or the manufacturer.

Towbars

A properly designed and fitted towbar is essential for safe towing. The load capacity of the towbar must be at least equal to the loaded mass of the trailer

Driver

Apart from the added legal responsibilities for drivers, towing requires more knowledge and skills than normal driving. Drivers with no experience in towing need to make sure they understand the general principles of driving with a trailer before attempting to tow in traffic or at highway speeds.

When towing, drivers should:

- ✓ Allow for the extra length and width of a trailer when entering traffic and allow for its tendency to "cut in" on corners and curves.
- ✓ Apply the accelerator, brakes and steering smoothly and gently to avoid sway, especially in wet or slippery conditions.
- ✓ Allow for the increased effects of cross-winds, passing vehicles and uneven road surfaces on the vehicle and trailer combination.
- ✓ Avoid applying the towing vehicle's brakes if the trailer begins to sway or snake. If the trailer is fitted with brakes that can be operated independently, apply them gently otherwise continue at a steady speed or accelerate slightly until the sway stops.
- ✓ Leave a longer stopping distance to the vehicle ahead, increase the gap for longer, heavier trailers and allow even more distance in poor driving conditions.
- ✓ Engage a lower gear in both manual and automatic vehicles when travelling downhill to increase vehicle control and reduce strain on brakes.
- ✓ Allow more time and distance to overtake because of the reduced performance of the towing vehicle and avoid "cutting off" the overtaken vehicle when returning to the left lane.
- ✓ Reverse, if possible, with a person watching the rear of the trailer - reversing is difficult and takes practice.
- ✓ Pull off the road where suitable, to avoid a build-up of traffic unable to overtake.
- ✓ Be aware, when a heavy vehicle is overtaking the car/caravan combination, it will have a tendency to sway.

Before the trip

1. Check oil, water, brake fluid, the battery and so on of you towing vehicle.
2. Inspect all tyres carefully and remember, when towing heavily loaded trailers your vehicle's tyre pressures should be increased to the level recommended. If in doubt, contact your local tyre dealer.
3. Check that your vehicle and trailer's wheel nuts have been tightened.
4. Check that axle nuts are tighten.
5. Ensure the coupling socket and ball match in size.
6. Check that the coupling is correctly and securely fastened.
7. Ensure that handbrake cable is hooked correctly onto tow ball.
8. Check to ensure that the trailer light connections are secure and that all lights work.
9. Check that the towing lights, number plates and registration labels of your camper are clearly visible.
10. Make one or two test stops to check that the brakes are working properly.

11. Ensure that your load on roof rack is properly secured.
12. Limit the amount of load in the boot of the tow vehicle.
13. Ensure that the rear vision mirrors on the tow vehicle are properly adjusted.
14. Ensure that the gas cylinders are properly secured.
15. While you are travelling ensure that the gas cylinders, lights and water pump are turned off.
16. Ensure the jockey wheel is locked in the travelling position.
17. Ensure that the hand brake of the trailer has been correctly released.
18. Check that the lid latches, doors and spare wheel arm are closed and secure.
19. Ensure to lock everything to stop the grab thieves on the road.

During the trip

Soon after beginning each trip, stop in a safe location and make sure:

1. Couplings and handbrake cable are still fastened
2. Brakes and wheel-bearings are not overheating
3. Towbar welding still intact.
4. Light connections are secure and lights are still working
5. Tyres are still inflated correctly and are not rubbing on the mudguards, suspension,
6. trailer body and so on
7. Doors, latches, locks and so on, are still properly secured
8. Jockey wheel is secure in traveling position.

On long trips, repeat these checks every two to three hours when taking a rest stop.