

Some notes on towing the rowing boat trailers.

Introduction

These notes are intended to provide some guidance to enable you to safely tow the TBC boat trailers. In addition to them it is worth looking at the Towing Guidance on the [British Rowing website](#).

Do remember that as the person in charge of the towing vehicle responsibility for the safety of the exercise rests solely with you. Whilst Trentham Boat club will cover damage to boats and the trailers themselves through its insurance policies, it bears no responsibility for any damage or injury to any third party when a trailer is 'on the road'. It is, therefore, of crucial importance that as the driver you make sure that you are happy that the trailer is in good condition and has been loaded properly.

Am I qualified to tow a trailer?

This will depend on your age and experience. Check the [gov.uk website](#) for details.

Is my vehicle suitable for towing?

The manufacturers handbook supplied with your vehicle will provide data on this, in particular, the maximum weight you can tow. Our trailers weigh 600kg unladen and must not exceed 1200kg fully loaded.

Even if we carried three quads and six doubles plus associated paraphernalia then that's a load of about 400kg, so there's plenty in hand.

Your vehicle must be fitted with a good quality tow hook. Having one put on as an aftermarket fitment is regarded as a 'modification' and will affect your insurance premium and so must be declared to your insurer, along with the fact that you will be towing.

Checking over the trailer

Tyres

These must be inflated to the correct pressure: 50 psi for both our trailers. Check that the tyres have adequate tread: the legal minimum is 1.6mm but it is recommended that it should be 3mm or above. Check the side walls of the tyres for cuts, gouges and bulges as it's fairly easy for them to get caught on sharp curbs. If you notice this, get the tyre replaced.

Tow hitch

This must be adequately greased and the locking mechanism open and close smoothly and easily.

Breakaway cable

These cables are fitted to braked trailers such as ours to pull on the trailer brake if it becomes unhooked from the towing vehicle. The cable can become caught between the tow ball and tow hitch and damaged as a result. If it is damaged, replace it.

Mudguards

These must be securely fixed on and not rubbing on the tyres.

Supporting chains

The construction of the trailers is a bit like a bridge turned upside down. The chains over the racks and down to the chassis at the front and rear ends are there to stop it bending in the middle. They must be fixed at their ends and under some tension. If you have any doubts, ask for advice.

Hitching up and setting off

You can do all this by yourself - but it is not to be recommended. Reversing the trailer and doing final checks is much better done with help of another person.

1. Reverse up to the trailer and connect the hitch. Make sure that the locking lever has properly locked down onto the tow ball.
2. Raise the jockey wheel and ensure that its locking lever is done up very tight.
3. Attach the breakaway cable to the towing vehicle ensuring that it cannot become snagged between the trailer frame and the tow hook.
4. Plug in the electrics. Ask your helper to check the function of all the lights.
5. Attach the number plate. This must be a proper reflective one. Your number written with a Sharpie on a bit of old cardboard won't do! If you are going to be towing for the Club, get a number plate made and the cost will be reimbursed to you.
6. Check that the boats are properly tied down. Don't rely on anybody else's say so for this. Hold a boat at its end and try moving it. The trailer should move a bit and the boat should not move on the trailer. If it does, tighten the straps.
7. Attach about four feet of hazard tape to the stern of each boat.
8. Make sure that the items carried in the bottom of the trailer are roped over and cannot bounce out.

Whilst travelling keep an eye on the boats using your door mirrors. If one appears to be shifting pull over when safe to do so and check its tie-down straps.

After any more than 90 minutes of travel stop and check things over; you'll probably want a coffee anyway.

At your destination don't allow the organisers to rush you. Make sure that if you have to reverse the trailer to park it that someone can direct you and that you can hear their instructions.