FV-032 | Trailer Towing Safety

APPROVED BY THE COMMITTEE
Reviewed November 2026

Scope

Authorised drivers and people loading, coupling or maintaining Fishcare trailers.

Purpose and authorisation

Tow and handle trailers safely using an appropriately licensed, competent and fit driver and a suitable registered vehicle and trailer. Obtain authorisation, verify insurance for the actual use and follow current Victorian road rules, manufacturer instructions and rated limits. This procedure does not replace practical towing training.

Pre-use inspection

Inspect registration/number plate, tyres and pressure, wheel condition, lights, brakes, coupling, safety chains and rated attachment points, electrical plug, jockey wheel, breakaway system where required, load restraints and overall condition. Confirm towing capacity, towbar and coupling limits, gross vehicle and combination masses and permitted towball load; the lowest applicable rating governs. Do not tow with a defect or overload; isolate and report faults.

Coupling and loading

Park on stable level ground where possible and keep people clear. Use a suitable jockey wheel and safe manual handling; never place body parts between moving vehicles or under an unsupported drawbar. A guide stands where visible, uses agreed signals and stays clear; stop if visual contact is lost.

Match and secure the coupling and towball, latch and pin it correctly, connect rated safety chains as specified by the manufacturer and legal requirements, connect electrical and breakaway systems as required, raise and secure the jockey wheel and test lights/brakes. Check secure engagement by the manufacturer's method; do not rely on a casual tug alone.

Distribute and restrain the load according to the trailer and vehicle manufacturer's requirements, within all axle, mass and towball limits. Use the manufacturer's required towball loading; a generic percentage of weight on the front half is not a substitute for actual rated limits. Place heavy items low, secure sharps and equipment and recheck restraints during travel. No passengers in a trailer.

Driving and reversing

Allow extra stopping distance, turning space and time; comply with speed and route restrictions. Avoid fatigue, mobile phone use and unsuitable weather or road

conditions. Stop safely to inspect after initial travel and when conditions or load movement warrant.

Practice reversing in a controlled area before operational use. Exclude children and bystanders. Use a competent guide where available; if solo or uncertain, stop, secure the vehicle, get out and inspect before continuing. Stop immediately if a guide disappears from view. Pull forward to correct an emerging jackknife rather than forcing the turn.

Uncoupling, maintenance and incidents

Choose stable ground, secure the vehicle and trailer, apply brakes/chocks as appropriate and support the drawbar before disconnecting. Release stored tension safely and keep hands and feet clear. Store the trailer secured against movement and unauthorised use. Maintain inspection, service, authorisation and fault records; remove unsafe equipment from use.

For a breakdown or incident, protect people first, call 000 if necessary, notify the EO and follow incident and road reporting obligations. Do not attempt roadside work in an unsafe traffic area.

References and review

Reviewed November 2026. Review again in November 2027, or earlier after a relevant legal, service or risk change.

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic): incident notification
https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/notifiable-incidents-under-occupational-health-and-safety-act-2004

Transport Victoria: securing loads on vehicles and trailers
https://transport.vic.gov.au/road-and-active-transport/road-rules-and-safety/securing-loads