

Trailer Brakes – Information

What are the New Zealand laws regarding light trailers?

Within NZTA's 'Guide to Safe Towing', it states that "brakes are not required where the gross laden weight of a trailer is 2,000 Kg or less".

However, Tow-Vehicles fitted with OEM or Certified tow bars will state maximum towing weights; without trailer brakes and with trailer brakes.

These maximum tow weights will be in accordance with the Tow-Vehicle's Manufacturer's maximum limits.

The current NZTA requirement for trailers fitted with brakes is "When towing, the Tow Vehicle and Trailer, travelling at 30 kilometres per hour, must be able to stop within 7 metres".

Eg: A 200 series Toyota VX Land cruiser can tow a braked COF trailer up to 4,000 Kg with upgrades or up to 3,500 Kg with a suitable braked WOF trailer BUT the Manufacturer's Specifications limit towing any trailer **without brakes** to a maximum of 750 Kg.

Insurance Companies may elect not to pay out on claims for accidental damage to either Tow-Vehicle or Trailer/Boat where an unbraked trailer weight is in excess of the manufacturer's specifications, regardless of whether it can stop within 7 metres at 30 kph.

If I fit brakes, what do I need?

Light trailers are defined as trailers not exceeding 3,500 Kg GVM (Gross Vehicle Mass) or in other words **the combined weight** of the; Trailer, Boat, Motor, Fuel and onboard Equipment being towed.

Hydraulic Override brakes or Mechanical (cable) brakes are legal up to 2,500 Kg GVM. These are brakes that are mechanically actuated by tow coupling forward movement when the tow-vehicle brakes. The maximum of 2,500 Kg GVM applies whether one axle or two axles are braked.

For trailers that exceed 2,500 Kg and have a GVM of 3,500 Kg or less must have Electric/Hydraulic brakes (both axles) that have in cab brake controllers/adjusters.

If the GVM of a trailer exceeds 3,500 Kg the trailer must be certified to COF standards and so must the tow vehicle, both as a combination.