

# Centre for Road Safety

## Your vehicle

Before buying a caravan or towing your caravan with a different vehicle, it's important to consider if your towing vehicle is properly equipped to safely tow your caravan. You should know the gross combination mass (GCM) and/or towing capacity of your towing vehicle, as specified by the vehicle manufacturer, and the maximum carrying capacity of your caravan - known as the aggregated trailer mass (ATM) - as specified by the caravan manufacturer.



## The towing vehicle

Towing vehicles must be suited to the caravan they tow. It's important to refer to your vehicle owner's manual for the towing capacity as this must not be exceeded. Always follow the manufacturer's requirements, and if changes to the vehicle's towing capacity are needed, seek advice from a certifier licensed under the [Vehicle Safety Compliance Certification Scheme](#).

Towing vehicles must be properly equipped with:

- Towbars and couplings of a suitable type and capacity
- Electrical sockets for lighting
- Brake connections
- Safety chains for driving in snow and icy areas

You may need extra mirrors for the towing vehicle if towing a large caravan. It is recommended to use a towing vehicle fitted with the electronic safety feature 'trailer sway control' to reduce the risk of the caravan swaying out of control.

All vehicles must comply with all relevant standards for registration and be roadworthy at all times. Rear number plates and lights must be clearly visible and vehicle lights and numberplates must not be obscured by the towbar when no caravan is connected. You can find more information on towing on the [NSW Government website](#).

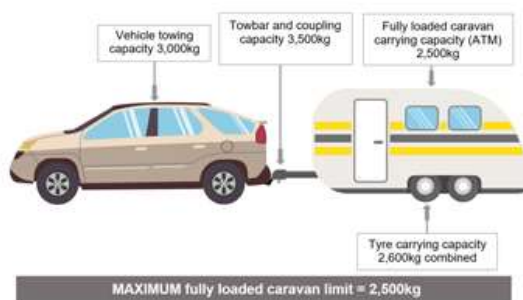
## The caravan

The loaded mass of your caravan must not exceed **any** of the following:

- Rated capacity of the towbar and tow coupling
- Maximum towing capacity of the vehicle (GCM)
- Maximum fully loaded carrying capacity of the caravan (ATM)
- Maximum rated carrying capacity of the tyres.

You must ensure that the **loaded mass** of your caravan stays below the maximum capacity of all four criteria as specified by the towing vehicle manufacturer, towbar manufacturer (if different to the towing vehicle) and the caravan manufacturer. The maximum capacity of each may be different and it is important that you do not exceed the maximum capacity of the lowest figure.

For example, say your vehicle has a maximum towing capacity of 3000 kg, plus a maximum towbar and coupling capacity of 3500 kg, while the maximum loaded caravan carrying capacity (ATM) is only 2500 kg. Even though the towing vehicle is able to tow more, the lowest figure of 2500kg is the maximum capacity this vehicle combination is able to safely tow.



It is important to weigh your caravan each time you make a modification that adds weight, to make sure that comply with your safe towing capacity. Ensure that you understand the maximum carrying capacity for each of these factors as it will determine how much you can pack for your trip.