

Light Vehicle Inspection Manual

Section 3 Towing Attachments

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Australian Design Rules relevant to this section

ADR 42/...	General safety requirements
ADR 62/...	Mechanical connections between vehicles
Further information	Appendix T – Light Trailer Requirements – Compliance with VSB1

OBJECTIVE: To ensure that all tow couplings and associated components are in a serviceable condition and that they provide the necessary load carrying capacity.

3.1. Visually inspect the drawbar and its mounting on the vehicle body

Reasons for rejection

- a) Any towing attachment fitted to a vehicle, is not operational, not secure, or cracked, excessively worn, deformed or damaged in a way likely to cause failure.
- b) Towbars, tow hooks, automatic pin type couplings and their attachments, if fitted to a vehicle, are not operational, not secure, or are cracked, excessively worn, deformed or damaged in a way likely to cause failure.
- c) Any mounting bolts, fasteners or weld beads have advanced corrosion or are missing.
- d) Where ADR 62/... applies (vehicles manufactured from 1st July 1991), the towbar does not display the 'name' or 'trademark' of the manufacturer, the 'make' and 'model' shown on the identity plate of the vehicle for which the towbar is designed, and the towbars 'maximum rated capacity'.

The 'maximum rated capacity' must be the 'ATM' (specified in "kg" for towbar not more than 3500kg ATM or specified in "tonnes" for towbar over 3500kg ATM) or maximum 'coupling 'D-value' in kN for which the towbar is designed and must not exceed the vehicle manufacturers rated towing capacity.

Note: i. *Aggregate Trailer Mass (ATM) is the total mass of the laden trailer when carrying the maximum load recommended by the manufacturer. This includes any mass imposed onto the drawing vehicle when the combination vehicle is resting on a horizontal supporting plane.*

- e) Where any part of the coupling or towbar is removable, the bolts, studs, nuts etc, fastening those parts do not have a locking device such as a U-clip, split pin, spring washer, or nylon lock nut.
- f) Tow coupling tongue assemblies are not securely mounted to the towbar assembly.
- g) The tow ball (if fitted) is not secure, is cracked or is excessively worn.
- h) The tow ball assembly (50 mm type) is not legibly and indelibly marked with the mark '50' in characters not less than 5 mm high.

Note: ii. *50 mm ball couplings meeting the requirements of AS 4277.3 (Caravan and light trailer towing components - 50 mm tow balls) are suitable for motor vehicles towing light trailers of up to 3.5 tonnes ATM.*

- i) Safety chain/s or cables are not able to be connected or affixed in such a way that the safety chains/cables are not liable to accidental disconnection and are not readily detachable from the towing vehicle.
- j) Safety chain attachments are not affixed to a part of the towbar that is permanently attached to the vehicle.
- k) All electrical wiring, connectors, couplings, flexible pipes etc. associated with a device for coupling a trailer to a motor vehicle are not securely mounted and operational.