

## TOWING TIPS

Spring's just around the corner and the first bookings for the RYA East Training Fleets are a few weeks away. We want you to get the maximum enjoyment out of the kit and not have problems or, worse still, accidents handling the loaded trailers, not to say being stopped by the Police for a traffic infringement.

To help you the RYA has put together a few basic rules we recommend you follow. This advice is also relevant if you towing smaller sportsboats and RIBs of your own or the clubs, as well as any of our fleets.



*Getting the weight properly distributed, tires inflated to the correct pressure, external load firmly attached, lights all working, and brake check chain firmly attached, and, using the right vehicle, will ensure you safely tow one of our training fleets.*

### **Licence requirements**

First up, you need to know whether you are legally allowed to tow in the first place and requirements differ depending on when you got your licence. If you got it prior to January 1, 1997 you'll be entitled to drive any vehicle/trailer combination up to 8.25 tonnes. After 1997 you are allowed to tow a trailer up to 750kg on a vehicle up to 3.5 tonnes, or you have to take a trailer-handling exam. In addition to this, you can tow a trailer over 750 Kg provided the weight of the trailer and load does not exceed the unladen weight of the towing vehicle.

### **Length restrictions**

A trailer drawn by an ordinary car must not exceed seven metres in length excluding the hitching device. The combined length of vehicle and tow must not exceed 18 metres on vehicles built before June 1 1998 and 18.75 metres on vehicles built after that date. This excludes projections.

### **Width restrictions**

A trailer must not exceed 2.3m in width. In terms of the boat itself, you will need to fit special markers if it projects more than 305 mm from one or both sides of the towing vehicle.

### **Weight restrictions**

If you tow a small trailer without brakes, the weight of the trailer is limited to half the kerb weight of the car, or 750 kg, whichever is less. When towing larger trailers that have brakes fitted, the weight of the vehicle should not exceed 85 per cent of the kerb weight of the towing vehicle as a rule of thumb.

### **Insurance**

We ask that you ensure you have at least third party cover for towing on your vehicle insurance.

### **Safety tips**

When towing you are restricted to a maximum speed of 60 mph on motorways and dual carriageways and 50 mph on single carriageways. Check the trailer wheel bearings and brakes and tyres are all in good condition. This is particularly true if the trailer has been standing a long time or has been immersed in salt water. Ensure the trailer brake-check chain or wire is sound and securely fastened, and that the electrics work properly.

These are just a few basic tips - you can download a full booklet on towing by clicking onto *the RYA main site* under the links page. In the meantime, have a safe trip and hopefully by following these pointers it means the only thing you have to worry about is getting out on the water and having fun.