



SAFETY ALERT



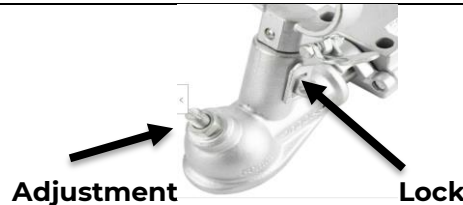
Trailer Hitching Safety

Whilst driving downhill, some distance into the journey, and after roadwork sections, a DRA driver experienced significant side-to-side sway of the trailer being towed. When the vehicle stopped the trailer hitch was resting on the bumper and still connected by the safety chains.

The sudden swaying event is typical of a sudden uncoupling of the trailer at the tow ball. This is usually a mechanical failure where the coupling lock may not have seated properly, or the adjustment nut loosened, and the hitch 'rattled' off the ball. This alert therefore presents the opportunity to highlight some of the essential checks for hitching trailers to a vehicle:

Know and check the equipment:

1.If you don't know how the hitch and trailer brakes work, find someone who does know.

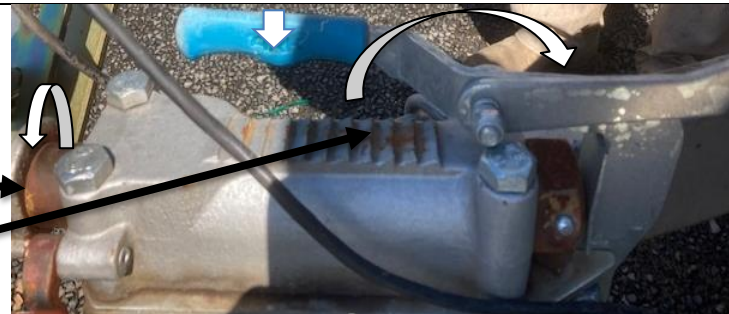


2.When placing the hitch on the tow ball check that it is seated down, locked on and a snug fit. This can be tested by attempting to raise the locked hitch off the ball, lower the jockey wheel to lift the front of the trailer. Without the jockey wheel, simply manually lift the front of the trailer. The locked hitch should not lift off and raising it will lift the back of the towing vehicle.

This simple connection test saves lives and damage

3. For the trailer brakes to work the rod in the cylinder must move backwards to press against the base of the brake handle and tension the brake cables. Therefore:

- the reversing latch must be open
- the handbrake released



4. Check the D-shackle rating



(1.5Ton)

5. Check that the chains are rated as well.



When there are two chains cross them over so that an unhitched trailer is supported.

26 April 2022

