



Coupling Up a Caravan to a Car

Coupling a caravan to a car is quite simple if you follow the right advice. It is essential that you get it right.

A Few Basic Rules for Coupling Up!

- ✓ Always work carefully, safely and methodically. Always **double check** and **DO NOT RUSH**. Adopt a routine.
- ✓ Always ensure that both the caravan and the tow car are under control to prevent unexpected movement, with the car handbrake applied. Carefully consider your health and safety and of those around you.
- ✓ The driver should always check that “Coupling Up” has been completed successfully. You are responsible for taking the caravan onto the public highway.
- ✓ If in doubt **ASK** your Dealer. **READ** the manufacturer’s instructions.

Seven steps to correct Coupling Up!

1 Understanding what to do.

It is important that you have been correctly advised and shown by your dealer how to couple a caravan to a tow vehicle. This is important for new **and** experienced people, because equipment changes over time. Complacency is DANGEROUS.

2 Positioning of the vehicles.

Whenever possible, get someone to help. It is easier if the coupling is higher than the tow ball before reversing the car. Use the jockey wheel to adjust the height. Avoid manoeuvring a caravan by yourself, especially if the ground is uneven.

3 Coupling to the tow ball.

Always follow the manufacturer's instructions. There are various types of coupling heads, each with their own method of attachment. Many feature a coloured visual indicator, this **MUST** be checked to confirm successful attachment. Coupling heads with an integral stabiliser are now also common. Some require a second handle to be operated and may give an audible click on correct location. Check the instructions. If in doubt, ASK.

This advice is supported by



4 ALWAYS CHECK THAT THE COUPLING IS FULLY ENGAGED OVER THE TOW BALL, WITH HANDLES CORRECTLY LOCATED.

5 Stowing the jockey wheel.

After successfully coupling the vehicles, the jockey wheel must be fully retracted. First, fully wind up the wheel forks into the slots of the outer tube. Loosen the clamp, lift the entire assembly, ensuring the wheel is as high as possible, and retighten the clamp. Important - the clamp and handle are designed for hand use - DO NOT OVER TIGHTEN - deformation of the clamp or damage to the threads may result. Alternatively, the jockey wheel assembly may be removed from the clamp and stored in the car or the caravan.

6 Correct attachment of Breakaway Cable - Read industry advice sheet.

7 Connecting the electrics. (Follow the handbook.)

CHECK LIST

- 1 Is the hitch fully down over the tow ball ?**
- 2 Is the hitch head lever fully closed (down) ?**
- 3 Are the visual indicators (if fitted) showing the right colour ?**
- 4 Wind down the jockey wheel until it raises the back of the car by 25-50mm to confirm that a secure coupling has been achieved.**
- 5 Is the breakaway cable correctly attached, passing through the cable guide, loose but not dragging, and will not snag on full lock ?**
- 6 If fitted, is the stabiliser correctly attached, with the stabilising mechanism engaged and any visual indicator showing correct operation?**
- 7 Is the jockey wheel fully retracted and stowed away securely ?**
- 8 Are the electrics correctly attached and free from dragging or snagging on full lock ?**
- 9 Now check it all again.**

HAVE A HAPPY & SAFE TOW

THIS ADVICE ONLY APPLIES TO CARAVANS AND NOT OTHER TYPES OF TRAILERS.

The advice set out in this leaflet is provided for general guidance purposes only.

This document has been produced by the National Caravan Council on behalf of the supporting organisations overleaf.

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Ref: AS002 – Date of issue 19/07/04