

# FAQs on Braking Laws for Agricultural Trailers & Towed Equipment

**What are the revised braking requirements for agricultural trailers?** The following braking laws apply to agricultural trailers or towed equipment:

Max design speed of trailer is 40km/h & DGVM* is less than 5 tonnes	Design speed of trailer is over 40km/h & DGVM* is 5 tonnes or more
Service Brake - min brake efficiency of 25%	Service Brake - min brake efficiency of 45%
Parking Brake - min brake efficiency of 16%	Parking Brake - min brake efficiency of 16%
Breakaway brake - min brake efficiency of 13.5%	Breakaway brake - min brake efficiency of 13.5%

*\*DGVM is the Design Gross Vehicle Weight, also referred to MAM (Maximum Authorised Mass) on the trailer's plate. This is the weight of a vehicle or trailer, including the max load it can carry, as per the manufacturer's design specifications.*

- Trailers with a design speed of over 40km/h that have been manufactured on or after 1 January 2016 must also be equipped with **pneumatic braking systems including load-sensing capability**.
- Trailers with a design speed of over 60km/h that have been manufactured on or after 1 January 2016 must be equipped with **anti-lock braking systems (ABS)**.
- Older trailers, provided they are designed to be drawn at speeds of 40km/h or less, can be fitted with a **secondary coupling** (e.g. a chain or wire rope) instead of a breakaway brake.

**What if my trailer or piece of interchangeable towed equipment cannot be fitted an anti-lock braking system (ABS)?** If your trailer / interchangeable towed equipment was manufactured before 1 January 2016, there is no requirement to retrofit ABS.

**I want to upgrade the brakes on my trailer so that I can operate at speeds over 40km/h. What should I do?** You should contact the original trailer manufacturer or their authorised Irish distributor. If the original manufacturer is no longer in business, you could contact another manufacturer of similar equipment. They may be able to examine the vehicle for you to see what work (if any) needs to be done to achieve compliance for operation at speeds over 40km/h. They may also be able to give you an estimate of how much any work might cost.

**Where can get the braking performance checked on the agricultural trailers I manufacture?** You can take the vehicle to your local [Commercial Vehicle Roadworthiness Test Centre \(CVRT\)](#) and get a brake test done. There will likely be a fee for this and is a private arrangement between yourself and the centre.

**Is it ok for trailers / towed equipment with load sensing devices to display settings on the plate for just two loading conditions i.e. 'unladen' and 'laden'?** Yes. However, a manually set device for adjusting and displaying settings between 'unladen' and 'laden' conditions is not permitted.

**Is it acceptable for trailers (or pieces of interchangeable towed equipment) to be fitted with manual slack adjusters?** Yes, but only for trailers / towed equipment with design speeds of **40km/h** or less. Those with design speeds over 40km/h and with a DGVM of more than 3.5 tonnes must be fitted with a pneumatic braking system and automatic slack adjusters whether or not a hydraulic braking system is also fitted. This is in compliance with the construction and performance requirements of [Directive 71/320/EC](#) (as amended by 98/12/EC).

**My trailer was never equipped with brakes. Even if it had brakes, my tractor has no way of powering them. What do I need to do?** If your tractor is designed to travel at speeds of 40km/h or less, you can draw a trailer with a laden weight of 5 tonnes or less without brakes. This is only the case if, when laden, the trailer does not exceed three times the tractor's unladen weight. For example, a tractor with an unladen weight of 1.4 tonnes is limited to towing a trailer with a laden weight not exceeding 4.2 tonnes (three times the tractor's unladen weight). However, it must be equipped with a secondary coupling consisting of a chain or wire rope, and, if the trailer is not equipped with a handbrake, wheel chocks must be provided.

**If your tractor is designed to travel at speeds over 40km/h, you can only draw a trailer with a laden weight of 3.5 tonnes without brakes.**

*This document is for general information only. It does not, and is not intended to, provide legal or technical advice or to represent a legal interpretation of the matters that it addresses.*