





FAQs on Couplings / Secondary Couplings for Agricultural Vehicles

What are the legal limits for the various types of couplings?

Coupling Types	Image	Explanation
Hook and Ring		<p>Commonly used on agricultural vehicles in Ireland, usually limited to vertical loads $\leq 3,000\text{kg}$ (i.e. downward force placed on the hitch by the coupling at the point of connection).</p>
Pin and Eye		<p>Usually used when drawing pieces of interchangeable towed equipment. Limited to vertical loads $\leq 3,000\text{ kg}$.</p>
Ball and Hitch		<p>Usually limited to vertical loads of $\leq 3,000\text{kg}$ but may be approved for a $4,000\text{kg}$ load (while complying with ISO 24347 and approved under ECE Reg. 55). Refer to plate on rear of tractor or contact original manufacturer for more information.</p>
Secondary Coupling for agricultural trailers		<p>An additional coupling to any of the above consisting of a safety chain or wire rope ensuring trailer remains attached to its towing vehicle if the primary coupling fails or becomes detached. Such couplings should be appropriately approved and rated.</p>

What is a Coupling? A device used to connect an agricultural tractor to a trailer or piece of interchangeable towed equipment.

Coupling/Uncoupling a trailer? This means connecting/disconnecting a trailer to or from a towing vehicle.

What is meant by de-coupling? Where any of the coupling types (Hook and Ring, Pin and Eye or Ball and Hitch) on a trailer become detached from the towing vehicle.

What coupling is best for my vehicle trailer? The RSA does not provide advice on a case by case basis. Please contact the original manufacturer / authorised distributor for the most appropriate coupling for your vehicle/trailer.

What is my coupling rated for? Most tractors will be fitted with a plate near the coupling device detailing the maximum load the coupling can carry. This plate illustrates that this particular coupling, when the towing hook is used, has been rated for a max. load of 3,000daN (3,059kg) and 2300 daN (2,345kg) when the drawbar is used at speeds under 40km/hr.

	UNDER 40km/hr	OVER 40km/hr
HOOK	S=3000daN D=91.3 KN	S=3000daN D=66.3 KN
DRAWBAR	S=2300 daN D=77.3 KN	S=2300 daN D=77.3 KN

SPEEDS \geq 40KM/hr
M9836

Dromone part No.: 405-00130-00

What is a Breakaway Brake? Is a braking device fitted to a trailer capable of automatically stopping the trailer if it becomes detached from the drawing vehicle whilst still in motion.

How high should a single ball hitch and pin be from the ground? Every vehicle is different and there is no specified minimum or maximum height in Road Traffic law. Please contact the original manufacturer / authorised distributor for advice specific to your vehicle. A coupling device should be mounted at the appropriate height to ensure the attached trailer remains level, as this helps with proper load distribution which ultimately improves stability.

Is there any restriction on changing a trailers coupling from a standard 'ball and hitch' to a towing 'eye and pin'? This work should be carried out or approved by the trailer manufacturer/authorised distributor. It is also important to ensure that the strength of the coupling is correct for the towing vehicle and trailer loads.

What are the braking laws for agricultural trailers? Please Refer to our FAQs on [Braking Laws for agricultural trailers and towed equipment](#).

