



FAQs on Braking Laws for Light Trailers

RSA

What is a light trailer? A trailer with a design gross vehicle weight (DGWV) of not more than 3,500 kg. i.e. the weight of a vehicle or trailer including the maximum load it can carry according to the manufacturer's design specifications.

What is breakaway or runaway brake? This is a braking device that can automatically stop the trailer if it becomes detached from towing vehicle while in motion.

What is a service brake? A service or running brake is a vehicle's main braking system which is used during normal driving.

What is a parking brake? A parking or hand brake is a mechanism braking system used to stop the vehicle from rolling when parked.

What does braked weight mean? This is what the vehicle can tow when the trailer has brakes and they are functioning properly.

What does un-braked weight mean? This is what the vehicle can tow when the trailer has no brakes and only applies to light trailers up to 750 kg.

How do I know if a trailer is braked or un-braked? You will need to contact the original manufacturer or authorised distributor.

Does a light trailer require brakes?

- All trailers with a DGWV more than 750 kg must have a service or normal running brake, a handbrake and breakaway brake as specified by manufacturer.
- Older trailers that do not have a breakaway cable can have a secondary coupling e.g. a chain or wire rope fitted instead.

For more technical information see our light trailers [booklet](#).

What are the braking laws for light trailers? For more information see:

- RSA booklet on Light Trailers [here](#)
- FAQs on Light Trailers [here](#)
- Our YouTube videos on [Towing light trailers](#).

Does a double-axle O2 trailer sold prior to June 2011 need a service brake on one axle only? Yes.

- Double-axle O2 trailers sold prior to June 2011 need a service or running brake on the rear axle only.
- O2 trailers sold after June 2011 need service or running brakes on both axles.

For further information see our FAQ on Braking Laws for Light Trailers [here](#).

Where breakaway cables are used should they be connected to the tow hitch or the towing structure? It is recommended that the cable be attached to the towing structure. Where designated points are not in place on the towing structure the cable should be put around the towing ball and ensure it is properly secured.

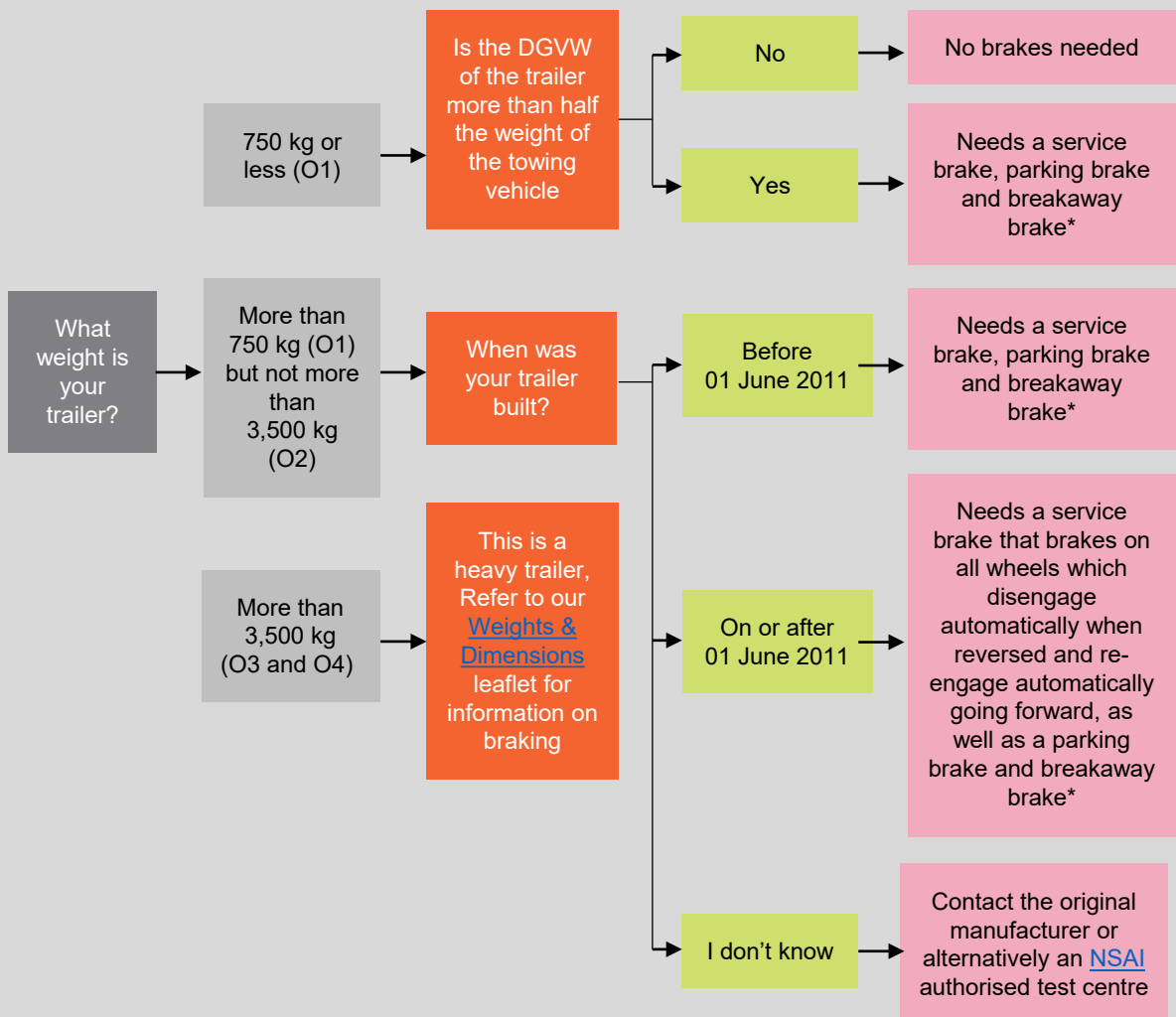
Should I use additional chains between a vehicle and trailers over 750 kg. trailer that is fitted with breakaway cables? No. Once breakaway cables are fitted correctly this is sufficient.

Is a braking mechanism required on a second-hand 10 year old, twin wheel, 8' x 4' cattle trailer? See the following FAQs.

- Braking laws for light trailers [here](#)
- The law on towing light trailers [here](#)

Does my trailer need brakes?

This depends on the design gross vehicle weight (DGVW) of your trailer. The type of brakes required depends on its age or speed. See following diagram:



***Can a secondary coupling be fitted instead of a breakaway brake?** If your trailer's DGVW is 1,500 kg or less, was manufactured before 01 January 2016 a secondary coupling e.g. a wire rope or chain can be fitted instead of a breakaway brake. Otherwise it must be fitted with a breakaway brake. For more information see our Light Trailers booklet [here](#).