

Agricultural vehicles and the law



Always **call 999** if you think a crime is in progress

Call 101 if it's not an emergency

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Agricultural vehicles and the law

Agricultural and farm vehicles, like all other vehicles, should be road legal and in a good state of repair. This applies to all agricultural vehicles, including tractors, tractor equipment, cattle trailers and horse boxes. To avoid fines, points or, worse, an accident, please ensure your vehicles are well maintained, legal and only used for their proper purpose.

Brakes, wheels and general maintenance

- **Brakes** should be in a good state of repair, connected between any trailer and towing vehicle and properly adjusted.
- **Hitches** should not be bent or excessively worn.
- **Tyres** should be fit for purpose and legal. They must have the correct depth of tread and the inner cords should not be exposed.
- **Wheels** should be in a good state of repair and not cracked. Wheel nuts should be regularly checked and tightened.
- **Leaf springs** should not be broken or worn, and the **handbrake** on your trailer(s) should be in good working order.
- **Cabins** should be free of any equipment or rubbish to ensure nothing gets in the way of the driver's pedals. Make sure pedals are clear of excessive amounts of mud which could make them slippery in wet conditions.

Visibility

- **Number plates** should be visible and clear of dirt and must be displayed by any vehicle travelling on the road, including trailers.
 - If your vehicle should display an **amber beacon** when travelling on the road, such as on unrestricted dual carriageways, make sure it is lit up and working.
 - **Lights** should be working, clearly visible and free from dirt when travelling on the roads. This also applies to any trailers or trailed appliances with lights.
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Weight limits

- Ensure you are not over your weight limit when using **tractor hitches**. There is usually a three tonne capacity on a pick-up hitch. Being overladen could cause the hitch to fail and can be extremely dangerous.
- Ensure that any **trailers** are not overladen, as this could significantly affect braking. Ensure that any load cannot spill on to the road.

Trailer Safety

- Air-braked trailers will automatically apply the brakes if the tractor and trailer part company. There are also after-market devices to do the same with hydraulically-braked trailers. If you have neither, think about a “secondary coupling” - this could be a chain or cable and will maintain control of your trailer if the hitch fails.

Permitted Uses

Please make sure your vehicle is confined to its lawfully permitted use and not beyond the three primary exemptions from the Construction and Use regulations.

1. If your vehicle is not permitted to travel more than 25mph, please ensure that you do not exceed that speed regardless of the vehicle’s suggested capability.
2. With a few exceptions, agricultural vehicles are generally only allowed to be used for farm work, travelling to and from your land or collecting items for your farm. Avoid using inappropriate vehicles for haulage purposes over long distances. It might be more appropriate to use a large goods vehicle in these situations.
3. The gross “train weight” for an agricultural combination, such as a tractor towing a trailer, is 31 tonnes. Newer tractors tend to be larger which means they take up much of the capacity, leaving less for the load. Please take this into consideration.

Make a note - record your vehicle checks here:

Check	Date	Checked by	Type of check	Comments	Repair Date	Date for next check
Brakes						
Lights						
Hitches						
Wheels						
Tyres						
Springs/ suspension						
Handbrake						

Make a note of any suspicious vehicles you have seen or that get circulated through Farm or Neighbourhood Watch if you see them in your area:

Make/Model	Colour	Registration number	Date	Place seen

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Avon and Somerset Constabulary

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