

Trailer Pre-Tow Inspection Checklist

Run the same walk-around every time, in the same order, so nothing gets skipped because you were in a hurry.

A pre-tow inspection for a trailer, horsebox, plant trailer or caravan. Runs top to bottom in the order you would walk around it.

KNOW YOUR OWN LIMITS

Load security and towing limits are legal duties in most countries, and the limits depend on your vehicle, your licence and the trailer's plated weights. Check what applies to you — this sheet records the walk-around, it does not set the rules.

Trailer / unit	Registration or ID	Date
Towing vehicle	Checked by	

COUPLING

☐ Coupling head fully seated and locked on the ball	
☐ Safety chain or breakaway cable connected correctly	
☐ Jockey wheel raised, clamped and secure	
☐ Handbrake released; damper and linkage sound	

RUNNING GEAR

☐ Tyre pressures correct, including the spare	
☐ Tyre tread, sidewalls and age	
☐ Wheel nuts tight to torque	
☐ Hubs not running hot after a short run	
☐ Suspension and axle visually sound	

LIGHTS AND ELECTRICS

☐ Side and tail lights	
☐ Brake lights	
☐ Indicators both sides	

Daily Vehicle Check and Driver Log

Record the check before driving and the journeys after it on one sheet per day.

The walk-round check before driving and the journeys made after it, on one sheet per day.

CHECK FIRST, THEN DRIVE

Two records that belong together: what you found when you looked at the vehicle, and where it then went. What a driver is legally required to check and record depends on the vehicle and the country — the check items are blank for you to write in your own.

Vehicle

Registration

Driver

Date

Start odometer

WALK-ROUND CHECK

What you checked	OK	Defect found	Reported to

JOURNEYS

Time out	From	To	Purpose	Time in	Odometer	Fuel added

End odometer

Distance today

Defects outstanding

Signature

Horsebox and Livestock Trailer Check

Check the floor properly before every trip, and run the same pre-travel routine each time so the animal side is not left to memory.

A pre-travel check for a horsebox or livestock trailer, starting with the floor — which is what actually fails on these — and ending with the walk-around before you pull away.

ANIMAL TRANSPORT RULES ARE LOCAL

Rules on transporting animals differ by country, and often by whether the journey is connected with a business: journey times, vehicle and trailer standards, and any authorisation or certificate of competence are all set locally. Check what applies to your journey before you load.

Trailer / horsebox		Registration or ID	Date
Towing vehicle	Journey	Checked by	

FLOOR — CHECK THIS ONE PROPERLY

☐ Mats lifted and the whole floor seen dry, in daylight	
☐ Floor probed for soft spots, especially at the back and along the sides	
☐ Underside inspected from below for rot, corrosion and failed sealant	
☐ Cross-members, bearers and floor fixings sound	
☐ Rubber matting flat, with no lifting edges or exposed fixings	

RAMP AND DOORS

☐ Ramp boards, hinges, springs and any lifting aid	
☐ Ramp catches and jump flaps engage positively on both sides	
☐ Groom's door opens from inside as well as out	
☐ Rear doors, breeching gates and their hinges and pins	

PARTITIONS AND THE INSIDE

- ☐ Partitions, breast bars and breeching bars secure and quick to release
- ☐ Tie rings and their fixings sound — a tie ring should hold, or break safely
- ☐ No sharp edges, protruding bolts, splinters or torn lining anywhere
- ☐ Interior lights work and are protected
- ☐ Bedding down as you intend to travel, and the surface not slippery

VENTILATION, WATER AND THE JOURNEY

- ☐ Vents and roof lights open, and set for the weather on the day
- ☐ Airflow not blowing directly onto a travelling animal
- ☐ Water containers filled, secured and reachable at a stop
- ☐ Hay nets tied high enough that they cannot be trodden on when empty
- ☐ Journey time, rest stops and a breakdown plan agreed before loading

BEFORE YOU PULL AWAY

- ☐ Coupling seated and locked; breakaway cable or safety chain connected
- ☐ Jockey wheel raised and clamped; handbrake released
- ☐ Tyre pressures, condition and age, including the spare
- ☐ Wheel nuts tight; hubs not running hot after a short run
- ☐ All lights and indicators checked with someone watching

Signed

Print name

Date

Utility Trailer Inspection Checklist

Catch deck rot, a seized ramp hinge or a chafed cable before it fails on the road, with a walk-round that goes further than a same-day pre-tow glance.

A walk-round for an open utility or general-purpose trailer — the deck, the sides, the ramp or tailgate, the lights and the running gear — between the quick pre-tow glance and the annual service.

A RECORD OF WHAT YOU CHECKED, NOT A CERTIFICATE

This records what was looked at and what was found. It is not a roadworthiness certificate and names no standard. What your trailer must be checked for, and how often, is set by your own regulator, your insurer and the trailer's manufacturer, and that differs by country — check what applies to yours.

Trailer make & model	ID / registration	Date
Typical load	Unladen weight	Checked by

DECK AND FLOOR

☐ Deck boards or floor sound, with no rot, rust-through or soft spots

☐ Floor clear of debris that could hide damage or shift a load

☐ Load-securing points — rings, rails or hooks — intact and firmly fixed

☐ Mesh or drop sides close and latch properly

RAMP AND TAILGATE

☐ Ramp or tailgate hinges free and not seized

☐ Ramp springs or gas struts holding it under control, not dropping

☐ Locking pins and catches engage fully on both sides

☐ Ramp surface not slippery — grip strips or tread intact

COUPLING AND RUNNING GEAR

☐ Coupling head clean, greased and closing fully onto the ball

☐ Safety chain or breakaway cable fitted and not stretched

- ☐ Jockey wheel winds freely and locks up clear of the ground
- ☐ Handbrake, where fitted, holds and releases fully

LIGHTS AND ELECTRICS

- ☐ Plug and socket clean and making a full connection
- ☐ Indicators, brake lights, tail lights and number plate light all work
- ☐ Cable run clear of the coupling and not chafing anywhere

TYRES AND WHEELS

- ☐ Tyre pressures checked cold, both sides
- ☐ Tread and sidewalls checked for cuts, bulges and cracking with age
- ☐ Wheel nuts checked for tightness, re-torqued after new wheels bed in

Signed	Print name	Date