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 _____

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- [ ] Number plate light
- [ ] Fog light
- [ ] Reversing light where fitted
- [ ] Plug and socket clean, undamaged and clipped

BODY AND LOAD

- [ ] Floor, ramps and side panels sound
- [ ] Load evenly distributed and within plated weight
- [ ] Nose weight within the towing vehicle's limit
- [ ] Load secured with rated straps in good condition
- [ ] Doors, tailgate and ramp latched
- [ ] Number plate present, clean and matching

Signed

Print name

Date

Notes and anything specific to yours

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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

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Time out	From	To	Purpose	Time in	Odometer	Fuel added

End odometer _____ Distance today _____ Defects outstanding _____ Signature _____

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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 _____

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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 _____

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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 _____

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- [ ] 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

Notes and anything specific to yours

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