

Media release
Thursday, 23rd January 2025
Tow safety advice this long weekend

With increased traffic expected on Tasmanian roads this long weekend, RACT is reminding drivers to prioritise safety, particularly when towing boats or caravans.

RACT Head of Roadside Service Delivery, Josh Dobie, said there was a heightened risk when towing a boat or caravan during increased traffic on the state's roads.

"Getting out on the boat is a great Tasmanian tradition, but it is important to remember to stay safe in both the water and while towing on the road," Mr Dobie said.

"RACT urges all Tasmanians to practice safety over speed and asking them to prioritise careful planning and adherence to road safety guidelines, especially during this busy long weekend.

"We all want to reach our destination quickly, but safety should never be compromised.

"If you're towing a caravan or boat, don't overload it and ensure any weight you add is evenly distributed across the axle.

"Understand your vehicle's braked towing capacity and payload, as every vehicle has a limit on braked towing capacity, and boats and caravans have a limit on their aggregate trailer mass.

"When calculating your maximum load capacity, consider the combined weight of the boat, engine, fuel, and belongings while adhering to road legal limits."

Mr Dobie encouraged Tasmanians to follow the following tips for a safer journey.

"Towing caravans or boats requires careful preparation to ensure safety on the road," he said.

"Start by properly preparing your boat - remove loose items, secure all belongings, and close windows, hatches and doors to prevent water or debris from entering.

"Drain water from the bilge, disconnect fuel lines, batteries and electrical connections.

"Secure your boat firmly to the trailer using straps or winches.

"When connecting the boat trailer, use the appropriate hitch for your tow vehicle, cross safety chains under the trailer tongue ensure safety chains are coupled to the vehicle using approved shackles. Mountain climbing carabiner's are not acceptable"

“Maintain wheel bearings and check your tyre side walls for cracking or damage as these are common fail points and a leading cause of breakdowns”

“It’s also essential to check electrical connections for brake lights and turn signals and test the trailer brakes manually before setting off.

RACT also recommends the following road safety tips for general road users, particularly when travelling longer distances:

- Prioritise safety over speed, the quickest route may not always be the safest.
- Before starting, inspect your vehicle’s oil, coolant fluid, battery, lights, and tyre pressure.
- Be vigilant on winding roads and in changing weather conditions, exercise extra caution on hidden bends with limited visibility.
- Schedule regular breaks to combat fatigue and stretch your legs, avoid driving for more than two hours continuously.
- Adhere to speed limits and show courtesy to other road users.

ENDS