

Hitting the road with a horse float? Here's what you should know

When you load a horse into a float, you're suddenly towing a couple of tonnes of unstable weight. Every horse behaves differently – some travel calmly while others shift around – which means you'll feel that movement through your vehicle. These tips will help keep your horse safe and ensure everyone arrives relaxed and ready to go.

Choosing the right vehicle and float

Before buying, borrowing, or hiring a horse float or trailer, make sure your vehicle is capable of towing it safely. Check the following:

- **Your vehicle's towing capacity.**
- **Your tow bar rating.**
- **Your tow ball rating.**
- **The float's tare weight and Aggregate Trailer Mass (ATM).**
- **Whether the float has the correct safety chains.**
- **If an electric breakaway system is required.**
- **Whether all lights work properly.**
- **Whether the float or trailer is registered.**

Understanding towing capacity

Your vehicle's towing capacity – along with the rating of the tow bar – sets the limits for what you can tow safely. Keep these points in mind:

- The **total loaded weight** of the trailer (including horses, gear, feed, and water) must **not exceed** the towing capacity of the vehicle or tow bar.
- Always follow the conditions set by your vehicle manufacturer.
- Added items such as passengers, roof racks, canopies, and bull bars can reduce your available towing capacity.
- Ensure you stay within the **weight limit allowed for your licence class** (C-class allows up to 4.5 tonnes).

You can find your vehicle's towing capacity in the owner's handbook or by contacting the manufacturer.



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ROAD SAFETY



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Horse float and trailer safety

Always check the horse float manufacturer's information before use. Make sure:

- The float isn't overloaded.
- The combined weight of the float **plus everything inside it** does not exceed your vehicle's towing limits or the ATM of the trailer.

Trailer equipment requirements

- Trailers with a **Gross Trailer Mass (GTM) over 750 kg** must have brakes.
- Trailers **over 2,000 kg** must have an **electric breakaway system** (and it's recommended for all floats, regardless of weight).
- All trailers must be secured to the towing vehicle with a **safety chain or cable**.
 - The chain must be rated correctly for the trailer's ATM.
 - Use appropriately rated '**D**' **shackles**.
 - Chains should be **crossed** for added safety.

For more details, refer to the National Vehicle Standards or visit www.mylicence.sa.gov.au

About the SA Police Road Safety Centre

The SA Police Road Safety Centre leads the way in road safety education across South Australia. Our programs help reduce road trauma by building the awareness, knowledge, and skills of all road users – supporting safer journeys through lifelong learning.

Want to learn more?

Explore our full range of programs and resources:

www.police.sa.gov.au/road-safety

Or simply **scan the QR code** in this fact sheet to go straight to our road safety page.

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We offer engaging, practical sessions for schools, community groups, and organisations.

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