



How to maintain and keep your caravan safe

Your caravan is a road vehicle so you are legally obliged to keep it roadworthy. The best way to do this is to have it serviced annually. The service will cover running gear, brakes, and lights.

The service will also include the habitation side of the caravan. The water, gas, electrical and heating systems will all be checked and maintained. The dealer who does the service should also check for any damp or leaks in the basic structure of your caravan.

If possible, it's worth getting your annual service done at an Approved Workshop. This scheme is run by the Camping and Caravanning Club, the Caravan Club and the National Caravan Council (NCC) and Approved Workshops are required to have certain standards of facilities and appropriately-trained technicians.

The NCC now runs the scheme on a day-to-day basis and it has a list of [Approved Workshops](#) on its website. If you want a service before your first outing of the season, it's worth calling early in the year as workshops get booked up quickly in spring.

Some people enjoy their caravans all year round. However, if you decide to store your caravan during the winter months, it's worth taking the time to do a few jobs before leaving it.

When you leave home the first couple of points may already be covered, but you'll need to remember them when you leave a campsite.

- Turn off the gas at the cylinder
- Empty the fresh- and waste-water containers and clean out any toilet cassette in an appropriate place
- Check the caravan's windows and roof lights are closed, internal doors and cupboards are closed, loads are safely secured and the external door is locked
- Check the caravan handbrake is on and chock the wheels if you are on a slope
- Lower the jockey wheel and lock in place
- Raise the corner steadies
- Check the caravan's noseweight
- Adjust the hitch height so it goes above the car's towball
- Remove the towball cover on the car's towball
- Reverse your car to the caravan

- Secure the hitch on the towball
- Check the link by using the jockey wheel to raise the car by about an inch to make sure it is properly coupled
- Stow the jockey wheel
- Connect the electrical plug(s) and the stabiliser system, if it's fitted, making sure the cables will not drag or pull as the car turns
- Attach the breakaway cable or secondary coupling
- Release the caravan handbrake and remove any chocks
- Check the road lights and indicators are working
- Pull clear of the pitch and check the area for anything left behind

Once you've reached your destination you'll need to unhitch. Again, you can print this out to take with you on holiday.

- Release the stabiliser if you have one
- Position your caravan on the pitch, using a ramp under the wheel(s) on one side if it needs levelling
- Apply your caravan handbrake
- Chock the caravan wheels if you are on a slope
- Lower the jockey wheel and lock it in position
- Disconnect the electrical plug(s) and breakaway cable or secondary coupling from the car
- Pull up the hitch-head lever and use the jockey wheel to raise the caravan hitch from the towball
- Drive your towcar away
- Replace the cover on your car's towball
- Adjust the level of your caravan front and rear with the jockey wheel
- Lower the corner steadies

You're now ready to climb inside your caravan, but there are some final preparations you may want to make before you can really relax.

Depending on the complexity of your unit, they may include:

- Connecting the mains power cable to the caravan and on to the hook-up point, checking the residual current device (RCD) is working correctly
- Turning on the fridge
- Collecting fresh water
- Positioning the waste water collector
- Adding toilet fluids
- Turning on the gas
- Turning on the water heater when you're sure it's full of water

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The Camping and Caravanning Club

