

Correct as at 14th May 2026. It may be superseded at any time.

Extract taken from: In-service certification (WoF and CoF) > General vehicles > Towing connections > Light vehicle towbar and fifth wheel

12-1 Light vehicle towbar and fifth wheel

Reasons for rejection

Mandatory equipment

1. A towbar fitted to a vehicle does not have provision for securely fitting the safety chain (Note 1) from a trailer coupling, except for:

- a) New Zealand Defence Force vehicles
- b) fire-fighting vehicles.

Condition

2. The towbar or towbar mounting (or fifth wheel or fifth-wheel mounting):

- a) is not securely attached, or
- b) has a bolt or nut that is missing or significantly corroded, or
- c) has corrosion damage (Note 2) within 150mm of the mounting points, or
- d) is cracked or distorted, or
- e) jaws are worn beyond manufacturer's specifications or out of adjustment, or
- f) pivot is seized, worn beyond manufacturer's specifications, or insecure, or
- g) has any other damage that the vehicle inspector considers has affected the structural integrity of the towbar or its attachment (Note 3) to the vehicle.

3. The towbar coupling (towball):

- a) is not securely attached, or
- b) is worn beyond the manufacturer's specifications, or
- c) is significantly corroded, distorted or cracked, or
- d) has a nut that is missing or significantly corroded.

Note 1

For vehicles fitted with a towbar that has a removable ball mount, such as the one shown on the right-hand side Figure 12-1-1, if the safety chain attaches to the removable part, the security of the removable part should be verified (eg retention clip should be of sufficient strength and in good condition).

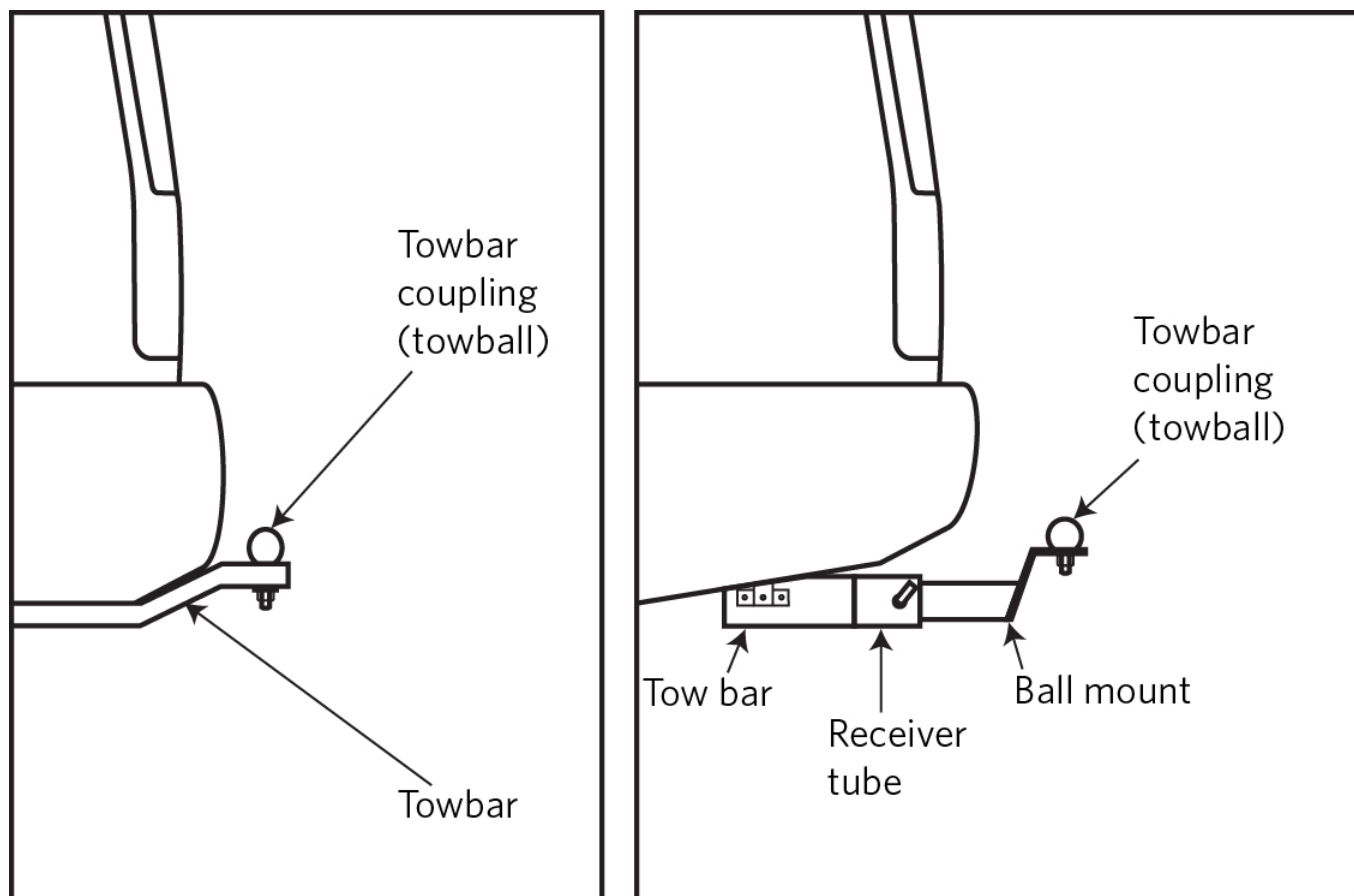
Note 2

Corrosion damage is where the metal has been eaten away, which is evident by pitting. The outward signs of such corrosion damage is typically displayed by the lifting or bubbling of paint. In extreme cases, the area affected by the corrosion damage will fall out and leave a hole.

Note 3

A towbar attachment is a modification to the vehicle structure (which never requires LVV certification), refer to section 3-1 Structure for structure requirements around the towbar attachments.

Figure 12-1-1. Towbar and towbar coupling (Note 1)



Summary of legislation

Applicable legislation

- [Land Transport Rule: Vehicle Standards Compliance 2002](#), section 7.4
- [Land Transport Rule: Light-vehicle Brakes 2002](#).

Mandatory equipment

1. A towbar, if fitted to a vehicle, must have provision for securing the safety chain (Note 1) or cable from a trailer coupling, except if the vehicle is likely to tow any of the following trailers:

- a) a trailer designed for armament purposes by the New Zealand Defence Forces
- b) a trailer pump for fire-fighting purposes.

Condition

- 2. A trailer must be securely attached to the towing vehicle by an adequate coupling.
- 3. A vehicle must:
 - a) be safe to be operated, and
 - b) have been constructed using components and materials that are fit for the purpose, and
 - c) be within safe tolerance of its state when manufactured or modified.

Page amended **1 November 2017** (see [amendment details](#)).