

Correct as at 6th June 2026. It may be superseded at any time.

Extract taken from: In-service certification (WoF and CoF) > Heavy trailers > Towing connections > Towbar

8-2 Towbar

Reasons for rejection

Mandatory requirement

1. A towbar fitted to a heavy vehicle does not have evidence of certification, ie:
 - a) the towbar was fitted before the last CoF inspection, and after 1 January 1997, and no LANDATA record has been entered (**Note** Before 1 January 1997 certification was required but for inspection purposes the LANDATA record need not be checked), or
 - b) the towbar was fitted after the last CoF inspection and
 - i. a valid LT400 form has not been presented, or
 - ii. the HVS certifier was not of category HVET or HMTD or
 - c) there is no valid certification plate or label attached to the vehicle as required in Table 8-2-1.
2. A towbar fitted to a heavy vehicle before 1 April 2006 for towing a light trailer has not been certified as complying with at least one of the following:
 - a) NZS 5467: 1993, or
 - b) NZS 5446: 1987, or
 - c) NZS 5446: 1987, amended by Appendix A to Policy Statement 5 for towbars rated for a maximum towed mass of 2000kg or less.
3. A towbar fitted to a heavy vehicle on or after 1 April 2006 for towing a light trailer has not been certified as complying with NZS 5467: 1993.
4. The certification label or plate:
 - a) is not indelible, or
 - b) is illegible, or
 - c) is not complete, or
 - d) has expired (where expiry date is required under Table 8-2-1), or
 - e) is not attached to the drawbeam in an easily visible position, or
 - f) does not match the vehicle, or
 - g) has obvious signs of tampering.
5. A 50mm or 1 7/8 inch diameter tow ball for towing a light trailer is not marked with:
 - a) the ball size, that is 50mm or 1 7/8 inch, or

b) the ball rating in kilograms.

Mandatory equipment

6. A towbar does not have provision for securely fitting the safety chain from a trailer coupling, except for:

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

Condition

7. The towbar or towbar mounting:

- a) is not securely attached, or
- b) has a bolt or nut that is missing or significantly corroded, or
- c) has corrosion damage within 150mm of the mounting points, or
- d) is cracked or distorted.

8. The towbar coupling (tow ball):

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

Revoked certifications

9. A towbar fitted to a heavy vehicle was last certified by Peter Wastney (PW) of Peter Wastney Engineering Ltd (for sample certification plates see Figure 8-2-1).

10. A towbar fitted to a heavy vehicle was last certified by Patrick Chu (ZC) of Transport and Structure Ltd (for sample certification plates see Figure 8-2-1).

Modification and repair

11. A modification or repair affects the towbar and:

- a) is not excluded from the requirements for HVS certification (Table 8-2-2), or
- b) the modification is not for the purpose of law enforcement or the provision of emergency services, or
- c) is missing proof of HVS certification, ie **the vehicle has been modified or repaired, and:**
 - i. no LANDATA record has been entered, or
 - ii. no valid LT400 form from an HVS certifier of category HVET or HMTD has been presented.

Note 1

Towbar means that part of the towing vehicle to which a coupling for a light trailer is connected.

Coupling means that part of a vehicle that is specifically designed to enable it to be connected to another vehicle; does not include a structural member of the towing or towed vehicle (examples: fifth wheel, hook, pin, ball or socket type).

Light trailer means a trailer that has a gross vehicle mass of 3500kg or less.

Table 8-2-1. Minimum information on towbar certification label/plate

NZS 5467	NZS 5446	NZS 5446 as amended by Appendix A to Policy Statement 5
<p>Manufacturer's name or trademark</p> <p>Maximum towed mass (braked and unbraked)</p> <p>Model (vehicle make, model or part number)</p> <p>Maximum vertical load</p>	<p>Company or agency name</p> <p>Certifying engineer</p> <p>Vehicle VIN or chassis number</p> <p>Maximum towed mass (kg)</p> <p>Expiry date (if certified after August 1991)</p>	<p>Manufacturer's name</p> <p>Towbar model number or part number</p> <p>Rating – maximum towed mass (MTM) inkg (maximum of 2000 kg)</p>

Table 8-2-2. Requirements for HVS certification

HVS certification is required	HVS certification is not required
<p>1. Fitting of a towbar</p>	<p>1. Replacement bolt-on 50mm or 1 7/8 inch diameter tow ball</p> <p>2. Any modification or repair likely to have been carried out before 1 January 1997 (modifications and repairs before this date generally required certification but for inspection purposes the LANDATA record need not be checked).</p> <p>3. Any repair or modification not listed in the left-hand column unless the vehicle inspector considers that certification is required because the modification or repair has affected the vehicle's safety performance (a second opinion from an expert may be needed, eg the manufacturer's representative, or a reputable workshop).</p>

Figure 8-2-1. Sample certification plates (Peter Wastney Ltd and Patrick Chu (ZC) of Transport and Structure Ltd)



Summary of legislation

Applicable legislation

- [Land Transport Rule: Heavy Vehicles 2004](#)
- New Zealand Standard 5467: 1993, Code of Practice for Light Trailers
- New Zealand Standard 5446: 1987, Code of Practice for Heavy Motor Vehicle Towing Connections: Drawbar Trailers
- Policy Statement 5, Appendix A
- New Zealand Standard 5232: 1993, Specifications for Ball-and-Socket Type Trailer Couplings.

Mandatory requirement

1. A towbar fitted to a heavy trailer before 1 April 2006 must comply with and be certified to:

a) NZS 5467: 1993, or

b) NZS 5446: 1987, or

c) NZS 5446: 1987, amended by appendix A to Policy Statement 5 for towbars rated for a maximum towed mass of 2000kg or less.

2. A towbar fitted to a heavy trailer on or after 1 April 2006 for towing a light trailer must comply with and be certified to NZS 5467: 1993.

Mandatory equipment

3. A towbar, if fitted to a vehicle, must have provision for securing the safety chain 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 Force.

b) a trailer pump for fire-fighting purposes.

Condition

4. Towing connection components fitted to a vehicle must ensure that a secure connection can be maintained between the towing and towed vehicles under all conditions of loading and operation for which the vehicle was constructed.

Modification and repair

5. A modification or repair that affects the towbar must be inspected and certified by an HVS certifier of category HVET or HMTD unless the vehicle:

a) is excluded from the requirement for HVS certification (Table 8-2-2), and

b) has been inspected in accordance with the requirements in this manual, including those for equipment, condition and performance.

Page amended **1 April 2023** (see [amendment details](#)).