

Trailer Brake Requirements

State Equipment and Road Use Law Summaries

State/Cite	Required Gross Vehicle Weight	Wheel/Axle Brake Requirement	Requirements And/Or Exemptions	Performance Ability Service Brake Stopping Distance For Trailer Combinations ⁺	Automatic Brake Application Upon Breakaway		Permits Surge Brakes ¹
					Gross Vehicle Weight	Hold Time (Min.)	
Alabama AL ADC 760-X-1-.09	GVWR >3,000	All wheels	Braking system so arranged that one control device can be used to operate all service brakes. Does not prohibit vehicles from being equipped w/additional control device to operate brakes on towed vehicle. Trailers ≤3000 GVW: the GVW, on and including wheels of trailer, shall not exceed 40% of GVW of tow vehicle when connected to trailer. Combination must meet state's performance requirements.	2-axle tow vehicle w/ trailer ≤3,000 GVW: 40 ft at 20 mph All other combinations: 50 ft at 20 mph	3001	15	
Alaska 13 AK ADC 04.205	GVWR >5,000	2 wheels on each side of a 3-axle vehicle; or 1 wheel on each side of a 1 or 2 axle vehicle	Tow vehicle must be of sufficient size and weight to safely control towed vehicle.	All combinations: 40 ft at 20 mph	5001		
Arizona A.R.S. § 28-952	>3,000 - <6,000	All wheels on 1 axle	Designed to either be applied by driver of tow vehicle or of a type that operates automatically when service brakes of tow vehicle are applied.	Brakes on all wheels: 30 ft at 20 mph	3000		
	≥6,000	All wheels	Means shall be provided for applying rearmost trailer brakes of a trailer equipped w/brakes in approximate synchronism w/brakes on tow vehicle and developing required braking effort on rearmost wheels at fastest rate; and/or applying braking effort first on rearmost trailer equipped w/brakes.	Brakes not on all wheels: 40 ft at 20 mph			

ADC = administrative code

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					Gross Vehicle Weight	Hold Time (Min.)	
Arkansas A.C.A. § 27-37-501 § 27-37-502	>3,000	All wheels	Brakes on trailers >3,000 must be designed to be applied by driver of tow vehicle. Semitrailers <1,500 lb GVW do not need brakes.	Combinations ≥10,000 lb GVW: 50 ft at 20 mph	3000		
California West's Ann. Cal. Vehicle Code § 26303 West's Ann. Cal. Vehicle Code § 26454	>1,499	At least 2 wheels	RV trailers are trailer coaches and camp trailers.	Tow vehicle w/ GVWR <10,000 lb towing a trailer coach: 40 ft at 20 mph All other combinations: 50 ft at 20 mph			
Colorado C.R.S.A. § 42-4-223 8 CO ADC 1507- 18	>2,999	All wheels* *Excludes horse trailers of a capacity of 2 horses or less	Designed to be operated by the driver of the towing motor vehicle from the cab.	All combinations: 40 ft at 20 mph	3000		X
Connecticut C.G.S.A. § 14-81 CT ADC § 14-1-2	>2,999	All wheels	Designed to be operated by driver of tow vehicle either by hand or foot. Brakes on trailers ≤8,000 lb GVW need not be controlled by operator of tow vehicle.				

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Delaware 21 Del.C. § 4304 21 Del.C. § 4305	>4,000		Designed to be applied by operator of tow vehicle.	All combinations: 30 ft at 20 mph			
FloridaWest's F.S.A. § 316.261 F.S.A. § 316.262	>3,000	All wheels	One control device that can be used to operate all service brakes. Does not prohibit vehicles from being equipped w/additional control device to operate brakes on towed vehicle. Trailers ≤3,000 lb GVW: GVW shall not exceed 40% of GVW of tow vehicle when connected to trailer. Combination must meet performance requirements.	2-axle vehicle w/a trailer ≤3,000 lb GVW: 40 ft at 20 mph All other combinations: 50 ft at 20 mph	3001	15	
Georgia Ga. Code Ann., § 40-8-50 § 40-8-53	>2,999	All wheels		Brakes on all wheels: 30 ft at 20 mph Brakes not on all wheels: 40 ft at 20 mph			X
Hawaii 49 C.F.R. § 393.42	>3,000		Each county may have additional requirements. Trailers <3,000 lb GVW: GVW shall not exceed 40% of GVWR tow vehicle when connected to trailer.	All combinations: 40 ft at 20 mph			
Idaho I.C. § 49-933	>1,499 UW	All wheels	Designed to be applied by driver of tow vehicle.	Combinations ≥10,000 lb GVWR: 50 ft at 20 mph	1,500 UW		

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Illinois 625 ILCS 5/12-301	>3,000 - <5,001 >5,000	1 wheel each side All wheels	Designed to be applied by driver of tow vehicle.	All combinations: 30 ft at 20 mph	5001		
Indiana IC 9-19-3-3 IC 9-19-3-4IC 9-19-3-7	>2,999	All wheels	Designed to be applied by driver of tow vehicle.	Combinations ≥10,000 lb GCW: 50 ft at 20 mph	3000		
Iowa I.C.A. § 321.430 I.C.A. § 321.431	>2,999	All wheels	Designed to be applied by driver of tow vehicle, or w/self-actualizing brakes and weight equalizing hitch w/sway control. Must be equipped w/separate, auxiliary means of applying brakes from tow vehicle.	Combinations <5,000 lb GCW: 30 ft at 20 mph Combinations >5,000 lb GCW: 45 ft at 20 mph			
Kansas K.S.A. 8-1734				All combinations: 40 ft at 20 mph			X
Kentucky KRS § 189.090				All combinations: 40 ft at 20 mph			
Louisiana LSA-R.S. 32:341 LSA-R.S. 32:342	>3,001 - <5,001 >5,000	All wheels on 1 axle All wheels	Designed to be applied by driver of tow vehicle. Not required on semitrailers <1,500 lb GVW & nonagricultural trailers and semitrailers of <3,000 GVW.	Combinations ≥10,000 lb GVWR: 50 ft at 20 mph	3000		
Maine 29-A M.R.S.A. § 1902	>3,000	All wheels					

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					Gross Vehicle Weight	Hold Time (Min.)	
Maryland MD Code, Transportation, § 22-301§ 22-302	≥3,001 - ≤10,000 ≥10,001	2 axles: all wheels on 1 axle All wheels	Arranged so that control device can be used to operate all service brakes. Does not prohibit vehicles from being equipped w/additional control device to operate brakes on towed vehicle. Trailers <3,000 lb GVW: the GVW shall not exceed 40% of GVW of tow vehicle when connected to trailer. Combination must meet performance requirements.	2-axle tow vehicle w/a trailer ≤3,000 lb GVW: 40 ft at 20 mph All other combinations: 50 ft at 20 mph	≤3,001 - ≥10,000: all wheels of 1 axle ≤10,000 all wheels	1515	X
Massachusetts M.G.L.A. 90 § 7			Trailers >10,000 lb UW must have air or electric brakes.				
Michigan M.C.L.A. 257.705	≥3,000	All wheels	Designed to be applied by driver of tow vehicle. Means shall be provided for applying rearmost trailer brakes, for a trailer equipped w/brakes, in approximate synchronism w/brakes on tow vehicle and developing required braking effort on rearmost wheels at fastest rate; or means shall be provided for applying braking effort first on rearmost trailer equipped w/brakes; or both of the above means capable of being used alternatively may be employed. Trailers <3,000 lb GVW: brakes not required if the GVW of the trailer does not exceed 40% of GVW of the tow vehicle when connected to trailer. Combination must meet performance requirements.	Brakes on all wheels: 30 ft at 20 mph Brakes not on all wheels: 40 ft at 20 mph			
Minnesota M.S.A. § 169.67	>2,999	All wheels	Trailers ≤3,000 lb GVW: brakes required if trailer GVW exceeds empty weight of tow vehicle.	Combinations ≥10,000 lb GVWR: 50 ft at 20 mph	6001		X

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					Gross Vehicle Weight	Hold Time (Min.)	
Mississippi Miss. Code Ann. § 63-7-51 § 63-7-53	>2,000	All wheels	Designed to be applied by driver of tow vehicle.	All combinations: 30 ft at 20 mph	2001		
Missouri V.A.M.S. 307.170			No requirements.				
Montana MCA 61-9-301 MCA 61-9-304 M CA 61-9-305 MCA 61-9-309 MCA 61-9-312	>3,000	All wheels	Must have one control device that can be used to operate all service brakes. Does not prohibit vehicles from being equipped w/additional control device to operate brakes on towed vehicle. Trailers ≤3,000 lb GVW: the GVW shall not exceed 40% of GVW of tow vehicle when connected to trailer. Combination must meet performance requirements.	All combinations: 40 ft at 20 mph	3001	15	
Nebraska Neb.Rev.St. § 60-6,246	≥3,000 - ≤6,500 >6,500	2 wheels All wheels	Designed to be applied by driver of tow vehicle.		3000		
Nevada N.R.S. 484.593	>1,499	All wheels	<1,500 no brake requirement.	2 axle vehicle w/trailer ≤3,000 GVW: 40 ft at 20 mph All other combinations: 50 ft at 20 mph	3000	15	

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					Gross Vehicle Weight	Hold Time (Min.)	
New Hampshire N.H. Rev. Stat. § 266:30 § 266:28 NH ADC SAF-C 3229.03	>1,500*		*House trailer is undefined.	All combinations: 30 ft at 20 mph	3000		
New Jersey N.J.S.A. 39:3-67 N.J.S.A. 39:3-68	>3,000	All wheels	Trailers ≤3,000 lb: the GVW shall not exceed 40% of GVW of tow vehicle when connected to trailer. All brakes on a combination shall be controlled by driver. Means shall be provided for applying trailer or semitrailer brakes, in approximate synchronism with brakes on towing vehicle and developing required braking effort on wheels of rearmost vehicle at fastest rate; or means shall be provided for applying braking effort first on rearmost vehicle equipped with brakes; or both of the above means capable of being used alternatively may be employed.	Brakes on all wheels: 30 ft at 20 mph Brakes not on all wheels: 45 ft at 20 mph	3000	Adequate	
New Mexico N. M. S. A. 1978, § 66-3-840	>2,999	All wheels	Means shall be provided for applying rearmost trailer brakes, of any trailer equipped w/brakes, in approximate synchronism w/brakes on tow vehicle and developing required braking effort on rearmost wheels at fastest rate; or means shall be provided for applying braking effort first on rearmost trailer equipped w/brakes; or both of the above means capable of being used alternatively may be employed.	Brakes on all wheels: 30 ft at 20 mph Brakes not on all wheels: 40 ft at 20 mph			

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					Gross Vehicle Weight	Hold Time (Min.)	
New York McKinney's Statutes § 375 15 NY ADC 41.1	>3,000						
North Carolina N.C.G.S.A. § 20-124	>1,000		Designed to be applied by driver of tow vehicle.				
North Dakota NDCC, 39-21-32 ND ADC 37-06-03-02	Safety chains or brakes		Designed to be applied by driver of tow vehicle. 3-vehicle combination: if GVW of second drawn vehicle is ≤3,000 lb, brakes are not required on second vehicle.		All		
Ohio R.C. § 4513.20	≥2,000 empty weight		Designed to be applied by driver of tow vehicle. Means shall be provided for applying rearmost brakes in approximate synchronism w/brakes on tow vehicle and developing required braking effort on rearmost wheels at faster rate; or means shall be provided for applying braking effort first on rearmost brakes. Both of the above means capable of being used alternatively may be employed.	Brakes on all wheels: 30 ft at 20 mph Brakes not on all wheels: 40 ft at 20 mph	2000		
Oklahoma 47 Okl.St. Ann. § 12-301 § 12-302	>2,999	All wheels	Designed to be applied by driver of tow vehicle.	Combinations of property carrying vehicles: 40 ft at 20 mph	3000	15	

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					Gross Vehicle Weight	Hold Time (Min.)	
Oregon O.R.S. § 815.125			Combinations must have a brake system on one or more of the vehicles.	All combinations: 35 ft at 20 mph			
Pennsylvania 75 Pa.C.S.A. § 450267 PA ADC § 175.123	>3,000	All wheels* *Interconnected dual wheels, brakes may act upon only 1 wheel.	Trailers ≤3,000 lb GVW: the GVW shall not exceed 40 % of GVW of tow vehicle. Combination must comply w/performance requirements.	2-axle tow vehicle w/ trailer ≤3,000 lb GVW: 35 ft at 20 mph All other combinations: 40 ft at 20 mph	3001		X
Rhode Island Gen.Laws 1956, § 31-23-4 § 31-23-5	>3,999	All wheels	Designed to be applied by driver of tow vehicle. Means shall be provided for applying rearmost trailer brakes, of any trailer equipped w/brakes, in approximate synchronism w/brakes on tow vehicle and developing required braking effort on rearmost wheels at fastest rate; or braking effort first on rearmost trailer equipped w/brakes; or both of the above means capable of being used alternatively may be employed.	Combination of vehicles having brakes on all wheels 30 ft at 20 mph Combination of vehicles not having brakes on all wheels 40 ft at 20 mph	4000		

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					Gross Vehicle Weight	Hold Time (Min.)	
South Carolina Code 1976 § 56-5-4850 § 56-5-4860	>3,000	All wheels	One control device that can operate all service brakes. Does not prohibit vehicles from being equipped w/additional control device to operate brakes on towed vehicle. Trailers equipped w/automatic braking systems actuated by forward pressure on towing hitch when tow vehicle is braked are permitted. Combination must meet performance requirements. Trailers ≤3,000 lb GVW: total GVW shall not exceed 40% of GVW of tow vehicle when connected to trailer. Combination must meet performance requirements.	2-axle tow vehicle w/ trailer ≤3,000 GVW: 40 ft at 20 mph All other combinations: 50 ft at 20 mph	3000	15	X
South Dakota SDCL § 32-18-1 SDCL § 32-18-3 SDCL § 32-18-8 SDCL § 32-18-10 SDCL § 32-18-17 SDCL § 32-18-18	All	All wheels	Must have one control device that can operate all service brakes. Does not prohibit vehicles from being equipped w/additional control device to operate brakes on towed vehicle. Trailers ≤3,000 lb: the total weight on and including the wheels of the trailer or trailers does not exceed 40% of GW of towing vehicle when connected to trailer and combination of vehicles. Combination must meet performance requirements.	2-axle tow vehicle w/ trailer ≤3,000 lb GVW: 40 ft at 20 mph All other combinations: 50 ft at 20 mph	3000	15	
Tennessee T. C. A. § 55-9-204 T. C. A. § 55-9-205	>3,000	All wheels	Brakes on vehicle >2,999 must be designed to be operated by driver of tow vehicle. Semitrailers <1,500 lb GVW do not need brakes.	All combinations: 30 ft at 20 mph	3000		

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Texas Trans Code V.T.C.A., Transportation Code § 547.401 Code § 547.402 Code § 547.403 Code § 547.405 Code § 547.408	>4,500 4,501 - 15,000 speed not more than 30 mph	All wheels Both wheels on rear axle	Must have one control device that can operate all service brakes. Does not prohibit vehicles from being equipped w/additional control device to operate brakes on towed vehicle.	2-axle tow vehicle w/a trailer ≤3,000 lb GVW: 40 ft at 20 mph	3000	15	X
Utah U.C.A. 1953 § 41-6a-1623 U.C.A. 1953 § 41-6-145 UT ADC R714 300			Utah adopts the motor vehicle braking standards set forth in 49 CFR 393.49 - 393.50, 571.105 and 571.122 (1996 edition).	All combinations: 40 ft at 20 mph			
Vermont 23 V.S.A. § 1307 23 V.S.A. § 1308	≥3,001 - <6,000 ≥6,000	All wheels on 1 axle All wheels	Designed to be applied by driver of tow vehicle. Trailers ≤3,000 lb GVW: the GVW shall not exceed 40% of GVW of tow vehicle when connected to trailer. Combination must meet performance requirements.	All combinations: 30 ft at 20 mph	3001	15	
Virginia Va. Code Ann. § 46.2-1067 § 46.2-107019 VA ADC 30-70-1	>2,999		Designed to be applied by driver of tow vehicle. Trailer registered for or having an actual gross weight of 3,000 lbs or more but with a manufacturer's gross weight rating of less than 10,000 lbs need not be equipped with brakes on all wheels.	All combinations: 40 ft at 20 mph	3000	15	X

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Washington West's RCWA 46.37.340 46.37.351	>3,000	All wheels	Must have one control device that can operate all service brakes. Does not prohibit vehicles from being equipped w/additional control device to operate brakes on towed vehicle. Trailers ≤3,000 lb GVW: the GVW shall not exceed 40% of GVW of tow vehicle when connected to trailer. Combination must meet performance requirements.	2-axle tow vehicle w/ trailer ≤3,000 lb GVW: 40 ft at 20 mph All other combinations: 50 ft at 20 mph	3001	15	
West Virginia W. Va. Code, § 17C-15-31	>3,000	All wheels	Brakes on vehicles >2,999 must be designed to be applied by driver of tow vehicle. Means shall be provided for applying rearmost trailer brakes, of any trailer equipped w/brakes, in approximate synchronism w/brakes on tow vehicle and developing required braking effort on rearmost wheels at fastest rate; or means shall be provided for applying braking effort first on rearmost trailer equipped w/brakes; or both of the above means capable of being used alternatively may be employed. Semitrailers <1,500 lb GVW need not be equipped w/brakes.	Brakes on all wheels: 30 ft at 20 mph Brakes not on all wheels: 40 ft at 20 mph	3000		
Wisconsin W.S.A. 347.35 W.S.A. 347.36	All		RV trailers (other than folding camping trailers) fall under mobile home definition. Folding camping trailers ≤3,000 lb GVW need not be equipped w/brakes.	All combinations: 50 ft at 20 mph			
Wyoming W.S.1977 § 31-5-950				All combinations: 40 ft at 20 mph			

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District of Columbia 18 DC ADC § 720 18 DC ADC § 724	>3,000	All wheels	One control device to operate all brakes. Does not prohibit vehicle from being equipped w/additional device used to operate brakes on towed vehicle. Trailers ≤3,000 lb GVW: the GVW shall not exceed 40% of GVW of tow vehicle when connected to the trailer. Combination must meet performance requirements.	2-axle tow vehicle w/ trailer ≤3,000 GVW: 40 ft at 20 mph. All other combinations: 50 ft at 20mph.			

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