

# Homemade/Unidentifiable Trailer Inspection Guide

## APPOINTMENTS ARE REQUIRED FOR ALL INSPECTIONS (No walk-ins please)

Please refer to the WSP web page [www.wsp.wa.gov](http://www.wsp.wa.gov) for further information, or call your local VIN Officer if you have any questions (contact information is available on the same web page.)

### Why the Inspection and What Will be Inspected?

[RCW 46.12.560](#) authorizes the Washington State Patrol to inspect certain vehicles for titling purposes. These inspections serve to prevent the trafficking of stolen vehicles and stolen parts.

The Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) Officer will inspect all major component parts used to construct your vehicle. Documentation must be presented at the time of the inspection to show legal ownership of the vehicle and parts used. Also, your vehicle must comply with all of the equipment requirements of [WAC Title 204](#) and [RCW 46.37](#) to pass inspection and for a VIN to be assigned.

### What Documents Are Required for a Complete Inspection?

Documents presented at time of inspection must be original (*meaning: Being the first form or occurrence.*) **Faxes or copies will not be accepted.**

- Washington State Patrol Inspection Request form completed by the licensing agent. (*The WSP will not be able to conduct an inspection without this **fully completed** form*)
- Valid Picture Identification
- Weight Slip from a certified scale.
- Receipts for Major Component Parts. All receipts must be made out to you, the trailer owner, your immediate family member, or the licensed shop that built the trailer. Major component parts purchased from a third party require a notarized bill of sale from the original purchaser to you and the original parts receipts—or, in the case of a licensed business, a letterhead statement of transfer to you and the original parts receipts.

Parts purchased from a **licensed business** must be presented with an original sales receipt. The receipt must show the name and address of the business, a description of the parts sold, the date of sale, and the purchase price.

Parts purchased from a **licensed vehicle wrecker** must be presented with an original sales receipt to include the wrecking yard name and address, a description of the parts sold, the date of sale, the amount of sale, and the stock number and/or VIN of the vehicle the parts came from.

Parts from a **private party** must be presented with a signed and released title to the vehicle the parts came off of, or a notarized bill of sale. The notarized bill of sale/gift/trade must include the name, address, phone number of the seller and purchaser, a description of the parts sold, vehicle information the parts came off of (to include year, make, model, VIN), the date of sale, and the purchase price.

Parts purchased from the **Internet or electronically** will only be accepted for new, aftermarket components. The Internet or electronic receipt must be accompanied by the original packing slip/shipping invoice. You must print out a copy of the receipt to present to the VIN Officer at the time of inspection. The printed receipt must include the business name, address, phone number, date of purchase, description of part, purchase price, and tax paid.

# Homemade/Unidentifiable Trailer Inspection Guide

## Additional Requirement for Homemade Camp Trailers

[RCW 43.22.390](#) requires that if you build a camp trailer and want to license it as a Recreational Vehicle (RV) camp trailer, at the time of inspection you must present a completed Labor & Industries (L&I) RV inspection with the L&I inspection insignia applied to your camp trailer. Please contact your local L&I office for information on their inspection process. In addition to the L&I inspection, you must also present valid release documents for the trailer and/or parts used.

## What If I Purchased a Completed Homemade Trailer?

If you purchase a completed homemade trailer, you need to present a notarized bill of sale/gift/trade from the person you purchased the completed homemade trailer from along with all of their original parts documentation as required above.

## What If I Am Unable to Provide an Acceptable Release of Interest or Proof of Ownership?

If you are unable to provide an acceptable release of interest or proof of ownership for the vehicle or major component parts as described above, [RCW 46.12.560 \(3\)](#) requires an inspection for ownership-in-doubt as described in [RCW 46.12.680](#) and [WAC 308-56A-210](#). Ownership-in-doubt means applying for a three-year registration without title; after three years, a Washington title can be requested.

### **WARNING**

**Please refer to RCW Chapter 46 for [Rules of The Road](#) when towing a trailer. Speed limits, lane restrictions, times of operation, carrying of passengers may be different when you are towing a trailer.**

## TRAILER SIZE AND WEIGHT REQUIREMENTS

### [RCW 46.44](#)

**Maximum Length Allowed**  
[RCW 46.44.030](#)

53 feet; 56 feet with special permits

**Maximum Overall Length of Trailer and Towing Vehicle**  
[RCW 46.44.030](#)

Truck and trailer combination – 75 feet  
Two trailing units – 61 feet; 68 feet with special permit

**Maximum Width Allowed**  
[RCW 46.44.010](#)

102 inches (8 feet, 6 inches)

**Maximum Height Allowed**  
[RCW 46.44.020](#)

14 feet

If the length, width, and/or height exceed the maximum limits, applications for permits to move such vehicles should be addressed to:

Department of Transportation  
Motor Carrier Services  
PO Box 47367  
Olympia WA 98504-7367  
Telephone: (360) 704-6340

**Maximum Weight Allowed**  
[RCW 46.44.041](#), [042](#)

20,000 pounds on one axle  
34,000 pounds on tandem axles

**Tire Factor**  
[RCW 46.44.041](#), [042](#)

600 pounds per inch width of tire

Axles manufactured after July 31, 1993, carrying more than 10,000 pounds and equipped with single tires may carry tire size x 500 pounds per inch width of tire.

Axles manufactured prior to August 1, 1993, carrying more than 10,000 pounds and equipped with single tires may carry tire size x 600 pounds per inch tire width. Effective January 1, 1997, the allowance is reduced to 500 pounds per inch.

# Homemade/Unidentifiable Trailer Inspection Guide

## TRAILER HITCHES – LIGHT SERVICE DEVICES BREAKING STRENGTH FOR COUPLINGS AND BALLS

[WAC 204-70-99001](#) Table 1.

Trailer Classification	Trailer Couplings Designation	Minimum Ball Diameter-Inches (where Ball-type hitch is used)	Minimum Breaking Point Requirements	Pounds
Class 1 (2,000 lbs. or less MGTW)	No. 1	1 7/8	Longitudinal tension: Longitudinal compression: Transverse thrust: Vertical tension: Vertical compression:	6,000 6,000 2,000 2,500 2,500
Class 2 (2,001 thru 3,500 lbs. MGTW)	No. 2	2	Longitudinal tension: Longitudinal compression: Transverse thrust: Vertical tension: Vertical compression:	10,500 10,500 3,000 4,500 4,500
Class 3 (3,501 thru 5,000 lbs. MGTW)	No. 3	2	Longitudinal tension: Longitudinal compression: Transverse thrust: Vertical tension: Vertical compression:	15,000 15,000 4,000 7,000 7,000
Class 4 (5,001 thru 10,000 lbs. MGTW)	No. 4	Ball & bolt shall be of such size and <b>strength</b> as to conform to the minimum <b>breaking strength</b> requirements of the mating <b>coupling</b> required for the specific load of Class 4 trailer	Longitudinal tension: Longitudinal compression: Transverse thrust: Vertical tension: Vertical compression:	MGTW x 3 MGTW x 3 MGTW x 1 MGTW x 1.3 MGTW x 1.4

\*\*\*MGTW-MAXIMUM GROSS TRAILER WEIGHT

## SAFETY CHAINS AND ATTACHING MEANS REQUIRED

### [WAC 204-70-070](#)

#### Strength Requirements

Each safety chain and each attaching means shall meet strength requirements as shown in the chart below.

#### Installation and Connections

The means of attachment of **safety chains** shall be located **equally distant** from and on **opposite sides** of the longitudinal **centerline of the towing vehicle and of the trailer**. Each means of **attachment shall not be common with or utilize fasteners common with a ball or coupling**.

**No welding operation shall be performed on a safety chain subsequent to its manufacture**, including the direct welding of safety chain link to the towed and towing vehicles. **Safety chains** shall be so connected that the **slack for each length** of chain between trailer and towing vehicle is the same and is **not more than necessary to permit the proper turning of the vehicles**. When passing forward to the towing vehicle, **safety chains must be crossed** in such a manner as to prevent the tongue from dropping to the ground and to maintain connection in the event of failure of the primary connecting system.

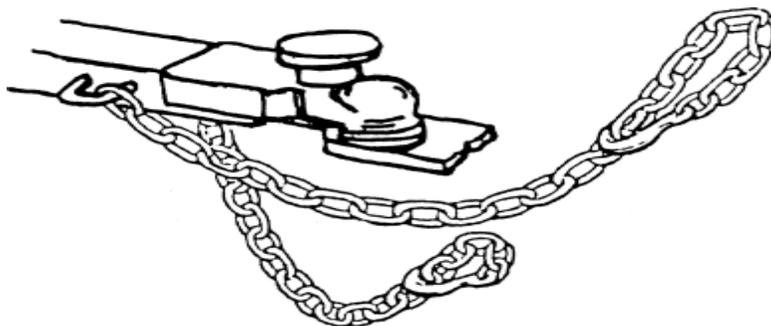
## MINIMUM STRENGTHS OF SAFETY CHAINS AND ATTACHING MEANS

### Minimum Longitudinal Load, Tension, Pounds

Trailer Classification (See classification table on page 4)	Breaking Force Minimum
Class 1	2,000
Class 2	3,500
Class 3	5,000
Class 4	MGTW

**\*\*MGTW - MAXIMUM GROSS TRAILER WEIGHT**

#### Typical Safety Chain Installation



# Homemade/Unidentifiable Trailer Inspection Guide

## BRAKES AND LIGHTING

### Brakes [RCW 46.37.340](#)

Every trailer having a **gross weight exceeding 3,000 pounds must be equipped with brakes on all wheels and capable of being applied from the towing vehicle.** Any trailer whose **gross weight is over 3,000 pounds must be equipped with a device which will automatically apply the brakes in case of a breakaway.**

Trailers with a **gross weight of 3,000 pounds or less must be equipped with brakes if the weight of the trailer(s) exceeds 40 percent of the weight of the towing vehicle.** Trailers manufactured and assembled prior to July 1, 1965, having a **gross weight less than 2,000 pounds need not be equipped with brakes.**

### Tail Lights License Plate Light [RCW 46.37.050](#)

After January 1, 1964, every motor vehicle, trailer, semitrailer, and pole trailer, and any other vehicle which is being drawn at the end of a combination of vehicles, shall be equipped with at least **two tail lamps mounted on the rear**, which, when lighted as required in [RCW 46.37.020](#), shall emit a red light plainly visible from a distance of one thousand feet to the rear. On a combination of vehicles only the tail lamps on the rearmost vehicle need actually be seen from the distance specified. On vehicles equipped with more than one tail lamp, the lamps shall be mounted on the same level and as **widely spaced laterally as practicable.** Every tail lamp upon every vehicle shall be located at a height of not more than seventy-two inches nor less than fifteen inches.

Either a tail lamp or a separate lamp shall be so constructed and placed as to **illuminate with a white light the rear registration plate** and render it clearly legible from a distance of fifty feet to the rear. Any tail lamp or tail lamps, together with any separate lamp or lamps for illuminating the rear registration plate, shall be so wired as to be lighted whenever the head lamps or auxiliary driving lamps are lighted.

### Stop Lamps/Electric Turn Signals [RCW 46.37.070](#)

After January 1, 1964, every motor vehicle, trailer, semitrailer, and pole trailer shall be equipped with **two or more stop lamps** meeting the requirements of [RCW 46.37.200](#). On a combination of vehicles, only the stop lamps on the rearmost vehicle need actually be seen from the distance specified in [RCW 46.37.200\(1\)](#).

After January 1, 1960, every motor vehicle, trailer, semitrailer, and pole trailer shall be equipped with **electric turn signal lamps** meeting the requirements of [RCW 46.37.200\(2\)](#).

### Reflectors [RCW 46.37.060](#)

Every motor vehicle, trailer, semitrailer, and pole trailer shall carry on the rear, either as a part of the tail lamps or separately, **two or more red reflectors** meeting the requirements of this section: PROVIDED, HOWEVER, That vehicles of the types mentioned in [RCW 46.37.090](#) shall be equipped with reflectors meeting the requirements of [RCW 46.37.110](#) and [46.37.120](#).

Every such reflector shall be mounted on the vehicle at a **height not less than fifteen inches nor more than seventy-two inches** measured as set forth in [RCW 46.37.030\(2\)](#), and shall be of such size and characteristics and so mounted as to be visible at night from all distances within six hundred feet to one hundred feet from such vehicle when directly in front of lawful upper beams of head lamps, except that reflectors on vehicles manufactured or assembled prior to January 1, 1970, shall be visible at night from all distances within three hundred and fifty feet to one hundred feet when directly in front of lawful upper beams of head lamps.

## ADDITIONAL LIGHTING REQUIRED

### [RCW 46.37.090](#)

Trailers and semitrailers **eighty inches or more in over-all width:**  
 On the **front, two clearance lamps, one at each side;**  
 On the **rear, two clearance lamps, one at each side,** and after January 1, 1964, **three identification lamps** meeting the specifications of subdivision (6) [(7)] of this section; On **each side, two side marker lamps, one at or near the front and one at or near the rear; on each side, two reflectors, one at or near the front and one at or near the rear:**  
 PROVIDED, That a mobile home as defined by [RCW 46.04.302](#) need not be equipped with two side marker lamps or two side reflectors as required by subsection (2) (c) and (d) of this section while operated under the terms of a special permit authorized by [RCW 46.44.090](#).

#### **Pole trailers:**

On each side, one amber side marker lamp at or near the front of the load; One amber reflector at or near the front of the load;  
 On the rearmost support for the load, one combination marker lamp showing amber to the front and red to the rear and side, mounted to indicate maximum width of the pole trailer.

#### **Boat trailers eighty inches or more in overall width:**

One on each side, at or near the midpoint, one clearance lamp performing the function of both a front and rear clearance lamp;  
 On the rear, after June 1, 1978, three identification lamps meeting the specifications of subsection (7) of this section;  
 One on each side, two side marker lamps, one at or near the front and one at or near the rear; On each side, two reflectors, one at or near the front and one at or near the rear.

Whenever required or permitted by this chapter, **identification lamps shall be grouped in a horizontal row, with lamp centers spaced not less than six nor more than twelve inches apart, and mounted on the permanent structure of the vehicle as close as practicable to the vertical centerline:** PROVIDED, HOWEVER, That where the cab of a vehicle is not more than forty-two inches wide at the front roof line, a single identification lamp at the center of the cab shall be deemed to comply with the requirements for front identification lamps.

## MOUNTING REFLECTORS, CLEARANCE, IDENTIFICATION AND SIDE MARKER

# Homemade/Unidentifiable Trailer Inspection Guide

## LAMPS

### RCW 46.37.110

(1) Reflectors when required by [RCW 46.37.090](#) shall be mounted at a height not less than twenty-four inches and not higher than sixty inches above the ground on which the vehicle stands, except that if the highest part of the permanent structure of the vehicle is less than twenty-four inches the reflector at such point shall be mounted as high as that part of the permanent structure will permit.

The rear reflectors on a pole trailer may be mounted on each side of the bolster or load.

Any required red reflector on the rear of a vehicle may be incorporated with the tail lamp, but such reflector shall meet all the other reflector requirements of this chapter.

(2) Clearance lamps shall be mounted on the permanent structure of the vehicle in such a manner as to indicate the **extreme height and width of the vehicle**. When rear identification lamps are required and are mounted as high as is practicable, rear clearance lamps may be mounted at optional height, and when the mounting of front clearance lamps results in such lamps failing to indicate the extreme width of the trailer, such lamps may be mounted at optional height but must indicate, as near as practicable, the extreme width of the trailer. Clearance lamps on truck tractors shall be located so as to indicate the extreme width of the truck tractor cab. Clearance lamps and side marker lamps may be mounted in combination provided illumination is given as required herein with reference to both: PROVIDED that no rear clearance lamp may be combined in any shell or housing with any tail lamp or identification lamp.

## LIGHTING VISIBILITY AND COLOR REQUIREMENTS

### RCW 46.37.200

Any vehicle may be equipped and when required under this chapter shall be equipped with a stop lamp or lamps on the rear of the vehicle which shall display a red or amber light, or any shade of color between red and amber, visible from a distance of not less than one hundred feet and on any vehicle manufactured or assembled after January 1, 1964, three hundred feet to the rear in normal sunlight, and which shall be actuated upon application of a service brake, and which may, but need not, be incorporated with one or more other rear lamps.

Any vehicle may be equipped and when required under [RCW 46.37.070\(2\)](#) shall be equipped with electric turn signals which shall indicate an intention to turn by flashing lights showing to the front and rear of a vehicle or on a combination of vehicles on the side of the vehicle or combination toward which the turn is to be made. The lamps showing to the front shall be mounted on the same level and as widely spaced laterally as practicable and, when signaling, shall emit amber light: PROVIDED, That on any vehicle manufactured prior to January 1, 1969, the lamps showing to the front may emit white or amber light, or any shade of light between white and amber. The lamp showing to the rear shall be mounted on the same level and as widely spaced laterally as practicable, and, when signaling, shall emit a red or amber light, or any shade of color between red and amber. Turn signal lamps shall be visible from a distance of not less than five hundred feet to the front and rear in normal sunlight.

# Homemade/Unidentifiable Trailer Inspection Guide

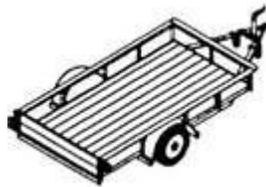
Turn signal lamps may, but need not be, incorporated in other lamps on the vehicle.

Any vehicle may be equipped and when required under this chapter shall be equipped with a center high-mounted stop lamp mounted on the center line of the rear of the vehicle. These stop lamps shall display a red light visible from a distance of not less than three hundred feet to the rear in normal sunlight, and shall be actuated upon application of a service brake, and may not be incorporated with any other rear lamps.

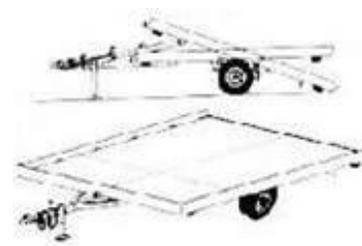
## OTHER REQUIREMENTS

### Splash Guards [RCW 46.37.500](#)

No person may operate any motor vehicle, trailer, or semitrailer that is not equipped with fenders, covers, flaps, or splash aprons adequate for minimizing the spray or splash of water or mud from the roadway to the rear of the vehicle. All such devices shall be as wide as the tires behind which they are mounted and extend downward at least to the center of the axle. **\*see examples below**



**Figure 1**



**Figure 2**

**Figure 1** shows an example of a trailer with fenders. The tires sit outside of the frame and therefore would need full fenders to cover the tread of the tire. The fenders must extend downward behind the tire to the center of the axle, or must be in combination with a mud flap extending down to the center of the axle.

**Figure 2** shows an example of a trailer with only mud flaps. The tires sit under the frame/decking and therefore only a mud flap is needed behind the tire and extended down to the center of the axle.

### Tires [RCW 46.37.425](#)

Any tire marked “for mobile home use only,” “mobile home only,” “not street legal,” or any marking indicating the tire is not legal on the vehicle presented for inspection will not pass inspection.

### License Plates [RCW 46.16A.200](#)

Required on all trailers regardless of size.

### Certificate of Registration [RCW 46.16A.030](#)

Issued to trailers registered in Washington.

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