

## Rated D shackle requirements: Debunking the myth

This is taken from an article that was emailed to the Editor from the Website of 'What's up Down Under — Without a Hitch' – passed on by the Ballarat Caravan Club.

There have been rumours circulating about police enforcing specific requirements for D shackles, with reports on social media claiming that police were issuing infringement notices for non-load-rated D shackles being used to tow caravans, boats and trailers.

In this article, we take a look at the current Australian Standards and their official application, so you know exactly what the regulations around Rated D Shackles are.

### **How are D & Bow shackles used?**

Australia-wide, safety chains are required as part of the towing mechanism on your trailer.

They connect the trailer's A-frame, or drawbar, to the main tow-bar framework of the towing vehicle using D or bow shackles.

As a safety device, the chains, and consequently the shackles, must be strong enough to keep the trailer connected to the towing vehicle and prevent the drawbar from touching the ground if the coupling should break or become disconnected from the tow ball.

The only instance in which safety chains are not required is if you have a break-away-system controlling the brakes on your trailer or caravan.

### **What are the regulations?**

According to the Caravan Industry Association of Australia (CIAA), police and state departments have denied the rumours and have advised that there aren't any specific requirements for D shackles.

In a recent media release, the CIAA stated that the current standard for shackles is AS 2741-2002, but noted that the standard doesn't specifically cover the use of rated shackles in attaching a trailer to a tow bar. Instead, this standard covers the use of shackles for the purpose of lifting items.

“Our understanding is that there is currently no regulations requiring shackles used on trailer safety chains to comply with the Australian Standard. However, some state authorities provide guidelines or advice for selecting suitable shackles.”

### **What's the conclusion?**

Although there do not appear to be any specific requirements for shackles, the CIAA recommends shackles meeting the AS 2741-2002 standard be used to secure rated safety

chains up to 3500kg capacity. In addition, they recommend that shackles should also have the following characteristics:

- The shackle grade is “S” or “6”.
- The working load limit is 1000kg.
- The shackle diameter is 10mm.
- Either a bow or D shackle may be used.

So there you have it. Although there aren't any specific requirements for the use of a rated D shackle when towing your trailer, boat or caravan, it's still advisable to adhere to guidelines. After all, you want to make sure the components are up to the task.