

## Towing

Before towing, seek advice from a four wheel drive equipment dealer. It may be necessary, depending on the load being carried, to have the suspension and chassis of a caravan or trailer adapted for off-road driving.

If planning to tow a caravan off-road, select the smallest van possible. If towing more than five metres in length, it may become difficult to negotiate the terrain.

The driver should also expect and be prepared for a 10 to 20 percent increase in fuel consumption when towing.

## Remain vigilant

The driver should always keep to formed tracks.

When approaching unfamiliar terrain, be sure to get out and check it. This particularly applies to water, mud, sand and snow where the vehicle is at higher risk of becoming bogged.

If driving over sand, follow existing wheel tracks, as they already will have compacted the sand. If the sand is soft, tyre pressure should be reduced to gain better flotation.

The four wheel drive should be driven up and down slopes using a "square on" approach. Travelling across the face of a slope creates a higher risk of rolling the vehicle.

If in any doubt about the correct gear to use for a particular surface, always choose the lower one.

When travelling in a convoy on sealed roads, the distance between vehicles should not be less than three seconds of time or five seconds on unsealed roads.

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# superior driving techniques



going four  
wheel driving?

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The following information provides an outline for the planning and preparation required to safely take your four wheel drive off-road. It details a number of factors that should be considered in the lead up to and during your four wheel drive adventure.

The below tips will assist you in your planning and will hopefully provide you with the important information you need to have an enjoyable four wheel driving experience.

## Planning and preparation

### Four wheel drive safety check

Before embarking on an off road adventure, a full inspection of the four wheel drive should be undertaken. The driver should check that the following are mechanically sound and in good working condition:

- tyres and tyre pressure (including the spare tyre)
- brakes
- oil level
- water level
- windscreen wipers and washers.

The inspection should take place at least two days before departure. That way, if repairs are needed, they can be completed well before you leave.

### Training

If you are new to 4wd vehicles and planning to use your vehicle off road we recommend you attend a formal training course. These types of courses show the driver how to use the vehicle safely on varying terrains. Lumley Insurance claims data shows many claims occur in 4wd vehicles due to driver inexperience.

## Loading the vehicle

The four wheel drive's centre of gravity can rise dramatically. Therefore, all heavy equipment should be placed low in the vehicle and the lighter things up top.

The driver should also avoid using the vehicle's roof-racks as loading them may lead to vehicle instability.

If the vehicle is overloaded, non-essential items should be given to other vehicles travelling with the party or left behind.

### Plan ahead

The driver should plan their journey carefully allowing adequate time to arrive safely at their destination. A four wheel drive is more like driving a truck than a car so speed will need to be reduced.

The following supplies should be taken on all four wheel driving trips:

- satisfactory fuel reserves
- water
- food
- first aid kit
- fire extinguisher
- tyre gauge and pump
- four wheel driving permits
- CB radio (or similar)
- local maps.

Before leaving, trip details should be lodged with a responsible relative or friend and advice on track closures and fire bans, in and around the area they plan to drive, obtained.

As most States have legislation restricting the use of vehicles in certain areas, the driver should check with the relevant Government department before heading off-road.

They should also gain permission from owners of private property if they plan to use their land.

## While four wheel driving

### Speed

The speed limit must always be adhered to.

If a speed limit is not available, a fully laden 4WD should not be driven more than 90 km per hour on sealed roads, or 75 to 80 km per hour on gravel roads or similar surfaces.

The faster a vehicle is travelling, the longer the stopping distance required. For example, a vehicle travelling at 120 km per hour, (with all things equal) will need four times the stopping distance required than a vehicle travelling at 60 km per hour. This distance increases with a full load.

### Alcohol and drugs

If planning to drive, the driver should avoid alcohol and drugs.

Drugs, including prescription drugs, can affect one's driving. The driver should seek medical advice on whether their medication will adversely affect their motor vehicle driving skills.

### The environment

All drivers have a duty of care when it comes to the environment. They should respect flora and fauna – stopping to look but never to disturb.

Gates and fences are there to keep livestock off the road. If the driver opens a gate, they must ensure it is closed behind them.

Burning or burying rubbish also disturbs the environment, therefore drivers should always take their rubbish with them.

In dry areas, always check for flammable material underneath the vehicle. Ensure sticks have not become wedged in and around the chassis and remove insects and other matter from the radiator.

On terrain where there are no defined tracks, it is better for vehicles to travel side-by-side rather than in single file. Doing so may reduce damage to vegetation that can tolerate only light traffic.