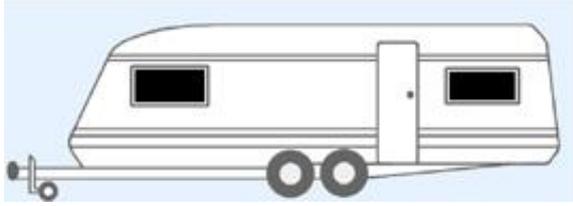


# Northern Towing Services



*If there's a hitch  
we can pull it*

## Care of your caravan

Your caravan is a major investment so by having it serviced regularly you'll receive greater reliability and improved resale value.

But there are important safety and legal issues too. Every vehicle or trailer must, by law, be in a condition as not to cause anyone danger. If your caravan is not in legal and good condition, Northern Towing Services may not be able to tow it for you, but our call-out will still be chargeable.

Braking systems and the electrical and gas installations inside the caravan need regular checking by experts to ensure they are safe. But you can easily check some things for yourself, such as tyres and lights.

The main elements to keep your caravan in first-class condition are:

1. An annual service
2. Timings
3. Regular maintenance
4. Expert stuff
5. Preparation and maintenance for winter

## Annual service

It is recommended that annual servicing should be carried out by qualified experts, ideally an independently assessed member of the Approved Workshop Scheme (AWS). The AWS was set up jointly by The Camping and Caravanning Club, the Caravan Club and the National Caravan Council (NCC) to guarantee consistent standards and good practice in the caravan repair industry.

Full details of the service and guarantees can be found at [www.approvedworkshops.co.uk](http://www.approvedworkshops.co.uk). It is worth checking with the terms and conditions as laid out by the manufacturer of your caravan for any warranty implications.

Not all items in your caravan will be covered by an annual service. You need to check with your manufacturer regarding, for example, fridges, cookers, hobs, showers, toilets and heating.

You must ensure that a damp check is carried out, with a moisture readings report. The workshop can help if resultant moisture readings are too high.

## Timings

In keeping with any manufacturer warranty requirements, think about having your service during the winter when workshops aren't as busy. Definitely avoid early spring because everyone wants

their service or repair then in time for the new season. Remember, if you caravan all year, tell the workshop or they may automatically drain down your water system during for winter.

Under the UK's wiring regulations, mains electrical systems will probably have to be checked (at additional cost) at least every three years and must be undertaken by qualified personnel. It is also something that some sites require.

### **Routine maintenance**

There are things you can do during the year to help maintain your caravan, although there are certain technical checks and repairs you mustn't do yourself. You can and should check:

- Road lights
- Electrical connections between car and caravan
- Tyre condition and pressures, including spare. Replace tyres more than seven years old regardless of wear
- Wheel nut tightness (50 miles after servicing or wheel removal and before every trip)
- Wheel rims for damage that might result in deflation
- Coupling head grease (if without stabiliser hitch)
- Stabiliser friction pads wear indicator on the hitch (if a stabiliser hitch head is fitted)
- Condition of breakaway cable and clip
- Battery charge state
- Flexible gas hoses and regulator connections
- Flame colour from cooker and gas appliances (should be blue –if yellow, consult an expert)
- 12N, 12S (7-pin) or 13-pin connection cables, plugs and sockets for signs of wear or looseness
- The RCD cut-out test switch works (check each time you hook up).
- Water hoses and connection tightness
- Ensure all ventilation and gas drop-out vents to are clear

Anything you discover during the year that doesn't work or is not right, get it fixed as soon as possible, otherwise you may either cause further problems or forget later, for example, if you discover a damp spot.

### **Expert stuff**

You really need to leave the following things to the experts, unless you are qualified yourself. Even then, some aspects may require certification, so only ever attempt things within your ability and with the correct equipment so as to be safe. Do not drill the chassis.

- Gas equipment and connections
- Mains electricity supply
- Chassis or brakes and certainly not dismantling
- Damp checking; while you won't be able to cure it yourself, you will certainly be able to detect signs of damp ingress. However, if none is visible, get it checked professionally
- Warranty work (you can invalidate claims)
- Floor delamination (spongy floor)
- Repairs to exterior bodywork
- Fitting items directly to the chassis (for example a trailer control system)
- Removal and refitting of brake drums

## **Winter preparation**

Do prepare your caravan before the winter. When placing your caravan in storage, ensure all liquids have been drained down and removed and tanks and containers cleaned as appropriate and relevant – drinking and washing water, toilets, showers, sinks. You have to ensure that any water systems don't freeze, as expansion can cause very expensive damage, especially if it occurs in places with difficult access.

Fridge doors should be left open (with no food therein!), and don't forget to remove and dry any ice trays filled with water and disconnect any gas bottles.

When in storage, you should try and visit your caravan now and again to see that all is OK. Check for any damp patches that may have manifested in the intervening time. Hopefully your sense of smell will also help here.

Consider a moisture trap (cheap, plastic, silica gel-filled humidifier) placed in storage spaces where you will eventually keep clothing and bedding when your caravan is back use.

Bedding, cushioning and clothing really shouldn't be stored in your caravan when it is not in use, as these will act as a damp trap. Bring them into the house if you can, or failing that, if you haven't the storage, consider using those vacuum packing bags for bedding and blankets that takes up far less room.

Leave the handbrake off as this prevents the drums rusting and binding to the linings – a very expensive job to repair.

It might be worthwhile removing your leisure battery and storing it at home so you can regularly charge it with a proper leisure battery charger to keep it in top condition. If it does drain out, you won't be able to charge it to full capacity again.

And don't forget to remove any portable valuables!