

# MEDIA RELEASE



22 November 2013

25 National Circuit  
FORREST ACT 2603  
Tel: (02) 6253 6900  
[www.truck.net.au](http://www.truck.net.au)

## DON'T PARK YOUR TRAILERS ON AIR

- **Trucking operators should check their trucks and prime movers to confirm that applying their park brake activates the spring brakes on any connected trailers. Trucking operators should only purchase vehicles where applying the park brake activates the spring brakes on connected trailers.**
- **The ATA is working with the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development to propose amending ADR35 to require that activating the park brake on a truck activates the spring brakes on its connected trailers.**
- **Trucking operators should consider fitting driver door interlocks that sound an alarm if the door is opened when the transmission is in neutral and the park brake is not applied.**

Trucking operators should check their trucks and prime movers to confirm that applying their park brake activates the spring brakes on any connected trailers, the Policy Manager of the Australian Trucking Association, David Coonan, said today.

The ATA made the call after a number of incidents where operators reported that setting the park brake on a prime mover either applied its trailer's brakes by air or did not apply the trailer brakes at all.

The prime movers involved in the incidents included a Japanese 4x2 prime mover and a European 6x4 prime mover rated for B-doubles.

Mr Coonan said the incidents showed there were problems with trucks and prime movers that were deemed to comply with the Australian heavy vehicle design rules because they met European standards.

"The standard practice in Australia is that trailers with air brakes are parked using the mechanical force of their foundation systems' spring brakes. Applying the park brake in the cab of a prime mover should apply the spring brakes on all its connected trailers," Mr Coonan said.

"In 2006, however, Australian Design Rule 35 was amended so trucks and prime movers that meet the European braking standard, UNECE R13, are deemed to meet the ADR provided they also meet a performance specification.

"The problem is that applying the park brake in some trucks and prime movers that comply with the European brake standard will only apply service air to the brakes on its connected trailers rather than dumping release air to apply the spring brakes.

"It is unsafe to park a trailer on air, because its brakes would release if the air leaked out of its service system. Its brakes could also release if a driver disconnected the air hoses in the wrong order. The trailer could roll away, particularly if was a dog or pig trailer. A semitrailer could also move or its landing legs could be damaged.

"This is a significant safety reduction compared to trailers parked on spring brakes, because these brakes fail to safe.

A safe, professional and viable trucking industry

“The European standard is adequate for Europe because it is common practice there for truck drivers to chock the wheels of their trailers.

“Australian truck drivers do not do this because they have always been able to rely on their park brakes. We should not ask them to do this because chocking trailer wheels on the road or in a busy depot is an extra work health and safety risk.

“The ATA recommends that trucking operators should check their trucks and prime movers to confirm that applying their park brake activates the spring brakes on any connected trailers.

“Trucking operators should only purchase vehicles where applying the park brake activates its trailer spring brakes.

“The ATA is working with the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development to propose amending ADR35 to make this as a legal requirement.

“The best park brake in the world won't stop a truck rolling away if the driver forgets to put it on. We recommend that trucking operators consider fitting driver door interlocks that sound an alarm if the door is opened when the transmission is in neutral and the park brake is not applied,” Mr Coonan said.

**Media contact:**

Bill McKinley

02 6253 6900 / 0488 292 823