

MEDIA RELEASE



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PEAK BODY ISSUES HEAVY VEHICLE PARK BRAKE SAFETY ADVICE

The Australian Trucking Association has published a new [technical advisory procedure](#) that provides trucking operators with essential checks to make sure the park brakes on their trucks restrain their trailers safely.

Australian trucks should have park brakes that activate the spring brakes on their trailers. However, the Australian Design Rules allow some overseas models to be imported that park 'on air', a less secure method.

The ATA first issued a warning about the problem in 2013.

"In Australia, the standard practice is that trailers are parked using the mechanical force of their spring brakes. Applying the park brake in the cab of a prime mover should apply these spring brakes on all connected trailers," ATA Senior Adviser Engineering Chris Loose said.

"Under the Australian Design Rules, trucks and prime movers that meet the European brake standard, UNECE R13, are deemed to meet the Australian standard as long as they also meet a performance specification. However, some of these units use park brakes that only apply service air to the brakes on connected trailers, rather than spring brakes.

"This is less safe, because the brakes would release if the air leaked out or a driver accidentally disconnected the air lines in the wrong order. If a trailer is parked on spring brakes, the brakes remain on even if air pressure is lost – the brakes fail to safe.

"The European standard only requires the brakes to maintain pressure for 15 minutes, because their drivers routinely fit wheel chocks. Because Australian operating practices don't include the use of wheel chocks in these situations, there's a real danger that these braking systems could contribute to a trailer rolling away, or its landing legs being damaged."

Mr Loose said the advisory procedure, developed by the ATA's Industry Technical Council, provided operators with procedures to help them find out what kind of park brakes were installed in their vehicles.

"If your heavy vehicle park brake parks trailers 'on air', it is important to get advice from a suitably qualified engineering consultant," Mr Loose said.

"Similarly, the ATA recommends that trucking operators should only purchase vehicles where applying the park brake activates its trailers' spring brakes."

This is the latest in the ATA's series of technical advisory procedures, which provide best practice guidance for trucking operators, maintainers and suppliers about key technical issues. The procedures are available for free from the ATA's [online resource library](#).

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