

DID YOU KNOW?

MANY DO WORK ON THEIR OWN VANS & CAMPER TRAILERS.
BUT ARE THEY DOING IT CORRECTLY, SAFELY AND LEGALLY?

A Friendly caution to all 'Handymen and women' and businesses. - For example: -

GAS BOTTLES – Many mount boxes on their van 'A' Frames to enclose the gas bottles without consideration for the legal and safety aspects. Your insurance can be voided in the case of a van fire if the box is not vented and has other items stored in them.

They also need to be labelled and apart from basic standard connections all other work must be done by a licensed gas fitter and certified.

We often see people posting photos of their 'illegal' set ups on social media with gas bottle storage boxes filled with other 'stuff', blocking the venting and in contradiction to the regulations. PLEASE DO NOT DO THAT. You are showing others your lack of knowledge, and regard for safety.

One Caravanning Facebook page has recently banned all posting of illegal activities and photos of illegal set ups in an attempt to help educate social media readers.

They are to be commended for taking a proactive approach on this issue. All social media should follow this lead as the legal implications will be known once the lawyers get involved or lives are lost by people blindly following 'stupid and illegal' advice from some social media.

SOLAR PANELS – Many try and install their own 12volt solar set ups on their car, van or motorhome. There have been people killed, windscreens broken, and cars damaged from solar panels flying off the roof of caravans and motorhomes.

Please get a professional to attach them so that they last in the cyclonic conditions that exist at highway speeds, buffeting and with passing heavy vehicles.

At least if you use a professional you will have some comeback if people are killed if / when they come loose. Always check solar panels before each trip.

STONE GUARDS – you will notice all new caravans have reflectors of different colours on them at the front and sides. These reflectors are a legal requirement and not just to look pretty. It is also a legal requirement for these reflectors to be visible at certain angles.

Therefore, if you fit a stone guard or other equipment like boxes, to the front of your caravan it may block the visibility of the front reflectors. You will need to purchase new reflectors and attach them to the similar locations on your new stone guard or boxes to remain compliant.

CAN YOU STORE FUEL ON THE REAR OF YOUR CARAVAN OR MOTORHOME? Yes, A Jerry can carrying petrol or diesel may be carried on the rear bumper of a caravan assuming that the jerry can is mounted securely, does not obscure the number plate or any lighting. Additionally there are rear overhang and projection limitations.

STORAGE BOXES ON THE REAR – Many 'handymen' and businesses, illegally fit storage boxes to the rear of caravans and motorhomes. While some may pass, the vast majority would be in breach of Australian Design Rules – overhang laws and make your vehicle unroadworthy and also unsafe.

Any heavy weights on the rear of a caravan can also make it unstable and more prone to dangerous caravan sway and rollover.

If a business, (The perceived professional) does it, who is responsible when someone is killed and the lawyers get involved and want your public liability insurance money, if you have any. Only time will tell.

NUMBER PLATES NEED TO BE VISIBLE. Do not fit anything to the rear of your van, or vehicle that obscures the visibility of your number plate or lights. The top of the number plates must be not be more than 1,300mm off the ground.

Many older vans were manufactured illegally, with high mounted number plates despite this rule being around for many years.

Number plates also must be visible from an angle of 45 degrees in any direction for up to 20 meters.

So has the box, bike rack, fuel storage or other 'stuff' that you or some unethical business has just placed on the rear of your caravan just made you and your van illegal and fineable by authorities as well as a danger on the roads at speed due to caravan sway instability. They have your money now so do they really care..

ELECTRICAL WORK – Many home handy men / women try and save money doing 240 volt electrical work on their caravan or motorhome. Replacing or installing new power points etc. This is illegal in all states, and very dangerous.

ALL 240volt electrical work on extension leads, caravans and motorhomes MUST be done by a licensed electrical contractor and tested to ensure it is safe. 240volt electrical can kill.

People have been killed or received electrical shocks in the past. The power points and switches for 240volt electrical in a caravan or motorhome are different to those in your home. So don't just run to a hardware store to get a replacement.

All switches and power outlets used in a caravan or motorhome must be double pole and switch both active and neutral wires. Other regulations are specific to mobile situations.

TYRES – always check on the vehicle compliance plate to ensure that any new tyres fitted to your van or motorhome are compliant with the manufacturers specifications as noted on the vehicle trailer plate. It can also be a reason for refusal of issuing a road worthiness certificate.

Fitting the wrong tyres and pressures will also affect under and over steer of the caravan and contribute to caravan sway and rollover.

OTHER 'STUFF' – many also add other 'stuff' to their vans that will often overload the vans or tow vehicles ATM, GTM, Tow ball weight, GVM, GCM and all axle loadings making the rig unstable and illegal.

This can include pole storage tubes, boxes, barbeques, wood storage, tool boxes and other 'stuff'.

It is recommend to have your van weighted regularly as it can be very surprising how adding a weight to one end of a caravan can dramatically affect the weights at the other end.

For example, just opening and closing the door on my 20ft caravan will change the tow ball weight by 2 kgs, despite the door still being attached at all times. Imagine the shift in weight from a large storage box, pole tube or heavy annex etc. attached at the front or rear.

Stay safe and PLEASE get expert advice before attempting any alterations or additions to your camper or caravan that may cause instability, safety issues or injury or death to yourself or others.