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No rusty bars, please!

Rameder offers advice on care and maintenance of towbars

A towbar can last a (vehicle) lifetime. Mechanical influences, environmental influences, dirt and rust, however, can spell an early end for the normally rather robust steel component. To prevent this, Rameder – Europe's largest supplier for car transport solutions – has a few tips on the care and maintenance of these indispensable helpers.

First of all, the right care is crucial for a long service life of the towbar. On rigid and retractable models, this is a simple process – regular application of a little grease is enough. Detachable models are a little more demanding. The bar and the mounting tube should always be kept clean and the lock should only be lubricated with graphite. It is also helpful to treat bearing points, gliding surfaces and balls with resin-free grease or oil, which also serves as corrosion protection. When the vehicle is cleaned with a pressure washer, the bar has to be removed and the blanking plug inserted. Greasing the mounting tube first ensures a more secure fit of the plug. The bar, no matter which model or version, must never be steam-cleaned.

In addition to these fundamental care tips, all car owners can carry out a quick visual check every now and then: Strong corrosion or other visible damage can already be a first indication that the towbar is no longer suitable for use in road traffic. When a towbar has come into contact with salt, it requires some special attention. This happens in winter when the roads are gritted or at the seaside, when the towbar is dipped into the water to launch a boat. The mineral itself corrodes even the best steel quality. This can only be prevented with regular checks, whereby detachable towbars have to be removed and inspected separately.

The most important and most straightforward criterion for whether a towbar is still serviceable can only be verified with a caliper. Because towbars – whether rigid, detachable or retractable – have a standardized ball diameter of 50 mm. Caution! The ball must not fall short of this dimension by more than 1 mm, as this presents an increased accident risk: The trailer could become detached from the vehicle. Regular checks – by a specialist if necessary – are therefore crucial for preventing serious accidents.

Depending on the type of use, the ball also has to be prepared in different ways. For operation with a trailer, it has to be greased – unless it is used with a trailer model with friction stabilizer. In those cases, the grease has to be removed first. The same applies to bike carriers. And don't forget the protective cap when the ball is not in use! And finally, a look at the socket – if everything is clean there, the next journey can begin. And thanks to the correct care and maintenance, it will not be the last with the towbar! And when the towbar does come to the end of its service life, **Rameder** offers reasonably priced replacements at www.rameder.eu.

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Press contact: Rameder; Jens Waldmann, Am Eichberg Flauer 1; D-07338 Leutenberg OT Munschwitz
Phone: +49 36734 35 750; fax: +49 36734 35-753; email: j.waldmann@kupplung.de

Press contact: IKmedia GmbH; Oliver Schielein; Andreas Hempfling; Friedenstrasse 33;
D-90571 Schwaig b. Nürnberg; phone: +49 911 570320-0; fax: +49 911 570320-69; email: ah@ikmedia.de