

Brakes

for Light- and Mid-Weight Trailers



Georgia Law, as well as Federal and Georgia Regulations, requires most trailers to have brakes. These laws and regulations generally apply to trailers above 3,000 lbs. Gross Weight or Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR).

Georgia Law (§40-8-50(d)) requires brakes on all wheels of trailers over 3,000 lbs. Gross Weight (actual loaded weight).

Georgia and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (49 CFR §393.41, 393.42, 393.43, and 393.48) require vehicles and combinations over 10,000 lbs. GVWR with trailers over 3,000 lbs. GVWR to have:

- A parking brake system (§393.41);
- Operative brakes on all wheels (§393.42);
- A brake which will apply automatically in case of trailer breakaway* (§393.43); and,
- Brakes that operate correctly and are properly maintained (§393.48).

Brakes may be hydraulic, air, electric, vacuum, or some combination of these systems.



IMPORTANT: Surge brakes are **NOT** allowed on vehicles used for business purposes that cross state lines, according to official guidance published by the U.S. DOT. Such trailers must use air, electric, vacuum, or non-surge hydraulic brakes.

Surge brakes are legal in Georgia, under the following circumstances:

- The vehicle or combination does not require a commercial driver's license;
 - A CDL is required when:
 - The vehicle or combination is designed to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver; or
 - The vehicle or combination exceeds 26,000 lbs. GVWR; or
 - The vehicle or combination has a "Registered Gross Weight" in excess of 26,000 lbs.; or
 - The vehicle or combination transports hazardous materials in a quantity requiring the display of hazardous material placards.
- The trailer does not exceed 12,000 lbs. GVWR;
- The actual load does not exceed the Trailer GVWR;
- No liquid or gases in packages over 119 gallons capacity; and,
- The trailer is equipped with a breakaway** device to automatically apply the trailer brakes.

*Breakaway devices for air or vacuum brakes must apply automatically if they sense a loss of air or vacuum. Breakaway devices for electric brakes will generally require a battery and relay system on the trailer.

**Breakaway devices on surge brakes generally require a cable or pin that is pulled in case of breakaway that will automatically apply the surge brakes.



Safety Message from Project P.I.E.
(Public Information and Education)
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