

REAL Torque

April 2025

Contact maintenance for any questions on 0800 80 80 69

Trailers without ABS or EBS braking systems.



Have you ever heard of the term “Dumb Trailer” when referring to its braking system?

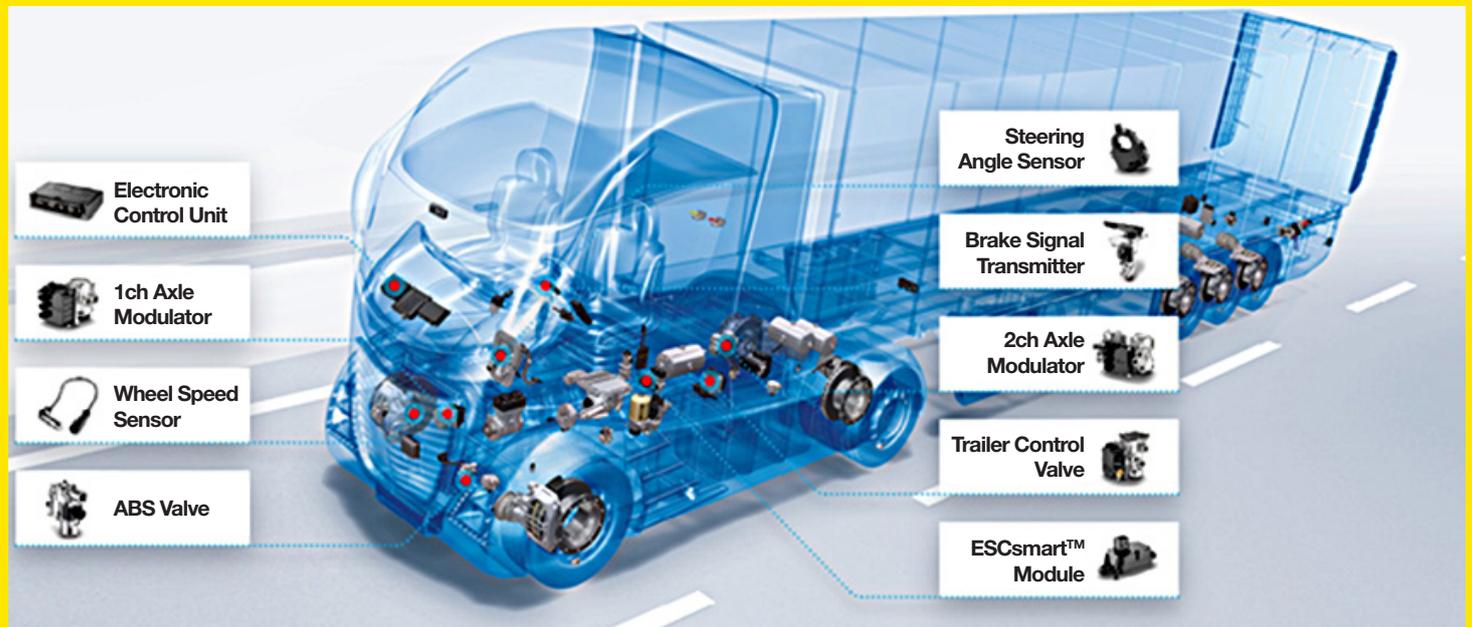
Dumb trailer is a term often used to describe trailers that have an air operated, fully mechanical braking system fitted to them. This means they do not have ABS or EBS installed. It just means it is a trailer that does not have ABS or EBS installed, it is a term often used to describe trailers that have simple air operated, fully mechanical braking system fitted to them.

What is ABS/EBS?

ABS (antilock braking system) and EBS (electronic braking system) are complex braking systems fitted to heavy and light vehicles.

ABS is a braking system designed to prevent wheel lock-up when hard braking has occurred. ABS uses sensors and valves on the wheels to detect when it is about to lock and rapidly adjusts brake pressure to prevent lock-up from happening.

EBS uses similar technology with the addition of a computer to control the braking pressures of each wheel. This ensures precise stability and braking control during emergency braking on slippery road surfaces.



Precautions to be aware of when towing a non-ABS/EBS trailer with a truck that has ABS/EBS fitted.

When a truck with ABS/EBS tows a trailer without it, the braking performance is different. The truck brakes smoothly and precisely, adjusting pressure per wheel for stability. The trailer, using mechanical air brakes, applies force uniformly and can react more abruptly or with a slight delay. This mismatch can affect how the combination behaves—especially in slippery or emergency braking situations.

Sometimes, trucks with ABS/EBS towing a non ABS/EBS trailer can have fault lights on the dash, warning the driver that the trailer's function is not working.

These fault lights can also affect other systems in the truck (cruise control, active brake assist and transmission operation), so in some cases, the combination simply will not work.



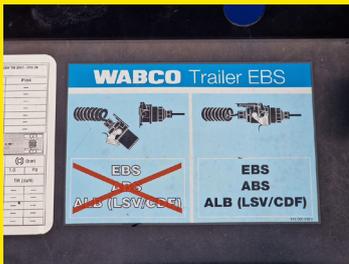
At TR Group, we still have close to 100 “dumb trailers” in the fleet. Many of our customers have late-model trucks, and this situation still regularly occurs.

When we hire out a combination like this, the rental team ensures the drivers are fully aware that the trailers are not fitted with ABS/EBS and that attention needs to be paid when braking. TR Group has also fitted stickers to the front of every affected trailer in our fleet.



Advantages of having ABS/EBS compatibility:

- Shorter stopping distances.
- Reduction of wear on mechanical components such as pads and rotors.
- Reduce the risk of accidents.
- Vehicle telematics and diagnostics.
- Smoother and balance braking.
- Better stability control.



EBS/ABS Plug and Socket



- ▶ Check if it's a multi-volt system.
- ▶ Know the limitations of the trailer if it is non-ABS/EBS
- ▶ Check the electrical connector is plugged in correctly.
- ▶ When towing a non-ABS/EBS trailer it is normal for the trailer's ABS warning light to stay on, but don't ignore it blindly. It confirms there is no ABS signal from the trailer. If you are towing a trailer that should have ABS/EBS, then it's a problem.
- ▶ Adjust your braking style, using gentle and predictive braking to avoid trailer lock-up.

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Making heavy vehicle fleet
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