

Information sheet No. 6



Purchase of second-hand trailers

What could be worse than waking up to find your trailer has been stolen? Answer: innocently buying a stolen trailer!

If your purchase is found to be stolen, the legal owner is entitled to have it returned to them. You could end up thousands of pounds out of pocket and without a trailer! Don't let this happen to you.

While there is a market for stolen trailers, there will be thieves attempting to steal them, even with the improved security devices now available.

Guidelines for buying a second-hand trailer

These guidelines are similar to those for buying a second-hand car. The sums involved can be similar so why not take the same precautions?

- Second-hand trailers provide good value for money and buying from a recognised dealer provides some peace of mind. All their trailers should have been checked and you will have some recompense if the trailer does turn out to be stolen.
- Buying from a private owner can be cheaper but carries more risk. The golden rule is 'if the deal seems too good to be true - then it probably is!' The market value for trailers is well-known and if someone is offering one at well below the normal price, ask yourself why.
- Always meet the seller at their home address. Don't meet halfway in lay-bys or car parks. If you do have to try to recover your money, you have got somewhere to start.
- The seller should know his way around the trailer, with all its features and small problems. Beware of someone 'selling it for a friend', who does not appear to have an interest in horses.
- Ask to see proof of ownership such as their original sales receipt, owner's manual or ask to see the Certificate of Ownership. Check to ensure all the details refer to that trailer. An honest seller will not be offended!
- The most important physical item to check is the manufacturer's unique registration plate, normally found on the chassis close to the hitch. It is highly unlikely that this will have fallen off during normal use of the trailer. If there is no plate, walk away. There will always be another trailer to look at. Most trailers with missing or damaged plates turn out to be stolen.