Requirements for towing trailers in Great Britain

For more information go to www.direct.gov.uk/driving
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1 Introduction
This leaflet contains information about entitlement to tow trailers.

Important note
This leaflet relates only to driver licensing. For details relating to weights and dimensions of trailers please phone 0300 330 3000

2 Car driving licences held before 1 January 1997
If you passed your car test before 1 January 1997 you will normally keep your existing entitlements to drive a vehicle with a trailer, with a combined weight of 8.25 tonnes (showing on your licence as C1E (107)) until your licence runs out at age 70. You are also entitled to drive a minibus with a trailer weighing more than 750kg. If you want to keep these entitlements after age 70 you will need to submit an application for lorry, bus or minibus driving licence (D2) and fill in a Medical Examination Report D4, and meet the higher medical standards required of bus and lorry drivers.

If you have subcategory C1E (107) on your driving licence and wish to drive a vehicle and trailer with a combined weight of up to 12 tonnes you can apply for provisional subcategory C1+E in order to take the test. You do not need to get subcategory C1 first, but you have to meet higher medical standards and pass both the category C theory test and the subcategory C1+E practical test.
3 Lorry and bus licences held since 1 January 1997

Since 1 January 1997, if you hold category C or D entitlement you have been limited to trailers weighing up to 750kg. You must hold Category C+E or D+E to tow trailers weighing more than this.

4 Driving licences issued on or after 1 January 1997

If you passed a car test on or after 1 January 1997 you **must pass an extra driving test** to get entitlement to drive category B+E and all larger vehicles (If you hold subcategories C1, C1+E, D1 and D1+E you have to meet the higher medical standards for drivers of larger vehicles).

5 Descriptions of vehicle categories

Except for category B1, all weights quoted for the relevant vehicles relate to the ‘Maximum Authorised Mass’ (MAM). This is the total weight of the vehicle when ‘laden’ (loaded). Where we refer to an ‘unladen weight’, this means the weight when not carrying a load.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Minimum age</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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| B1       | Three, or four-wheeled light vehicles  
Motor tricycles, quadricycles and three or four wheeled vehicles with an unladen weight no more than 550kg. | 17 | |
| B        | Cars  
Motor vehicle with a MAM of up to 3,500kg, no more than eight passenger seats with or without a trailer – weighing no more than 750kg.  
As category B but with a trailer weighing more than 750kg. The total weight of the vehicle and trailer together can’t weigh more than 3500kg. The weight of the trailer, when fully loaded, can’t weigh more than the unladen weight of the vehicle. | 17 | |
| B auto   | Automatic cars  
As category B with automatic transmission. | 17 | |
| B+E      | Cars with trailers  
As category B but with a heavier trailer that isn’t covered in the descriptions for category B. | 17 | See note 7 |
| C1       | Medium-sized vehicles  
Vehicles weighing between 3,500kg and 7,500kg, with or without a trailer weighing no more than 750kg. | 18 | See note 7 |
| C1+E     | Medium-sized vehicles with trailers  
As category C1 but with a trailer weighing more than 750kg. The total weight of the vehicle and trailer can’t weigh more than 12,000kg. The weight of the trailer, when fully loaded, can’t weigh more than the unladen weight of the vehicle. | 21 | See notes 1, 2 and 7 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Minimum age</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Large vehicles</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>See note 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vehicles over 3,500kg, with a trailer up to 750kg.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+E</td>
<td>Large vehicles with trailers</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>See note 2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As category C but with a trailer over 750kg.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>Minibuses</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>See notes 3 and 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Vehicles with a minimum of nine and a maximum of 16 passenger seats, with or without a trailer – weighing no more than 750kg.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D1+E</td>
<td>Minibuses with trailers</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>See notes 3 and 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As category D1 but with a trailer over 750kg. The total weight of the vehicle and the trailer together can’t weigh more than 12,000kg. The weight of the trailer, when fully loaded, can’t weigh more than the unladen weight of the vehicle.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Buses</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>See notes 3 and 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any bus with more than eight passenger seats, with a trailer up to 750kg.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>D+E</td>
<td>Buses with trailers</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>See note 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As category D but with a trailer over 750kg.</td>
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</table>
Note 1
You can drive at age 18 if you got your driving licence before 10 September 2009 and the weight of the vehicle and trailer together is under 7,500kg.

Note 2
You can drive at 17 if a member of the armed services.
You can drive at age 18 if one of the following apply:

• you passed your driving test and Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (Driver CPC) Initial Qualification
• you are learning to drive or taking a driving test for this category or Driver CPC Initial Qualification
• you are taking a national vocational training course to get a Driver CPC Initial Qualification, or
• you had your driving licence before 10 September 2009, you must take the CPC periodic training within 5 years of this date.

Note 3
You can drive at age 17 if you are a member of the armed services.
You can drive these vehicles at age 18 if one of the following apply:

(i) You are learning to drive or taking a PCV test or Driver CPC initial qualification.
(ii) Having passed a PCV driving test and Driver CPC initial qualification, you can drive under any of the following conditions:
    • driving on a regular service where the route doesn’t exceed 50km
    • not engaged in the carriage of passengers, or
    • driving a vehicle of a class included in sub-category D1.
(iii) Having passed a PCV test before 10 September 2008 and driving under a bus operator’s licence, or minibus permit, or community bus permit and any of the following conditions:
    • driving on a regular service where the route doesn’t exceed 50km
    • not engaged in the carriage of passengers, or
    • driving a vehicle of a class included in sub-category D1.
You can drive at age 20 after passing a PCV driving test and Driver CPC initial qualification. For further advice you can contact the Driving Standards Agency by phoning 0300 200 1122 or by email at drivercpc@dsa.gsi.gov.uk

Note 4
At 16 you can drive tractors less than 2.45m wide. It must only pull trailers less than 2.45m wide with two wheels, or four wheels that are close together.

Note 5
At 17 you can drive small roadrollers with metal or hard rollers. They must not be steam powered, weigh more than 11.69 tonnes or be made for carrying loads.

Note 6
You need category D entitlement to drive an articulated bus (for example, a ‘bendibus’). You can get more details by phoning us on 0300 790 6801.

Note 7
If you passed your test for category B or B automatic before 1 January 1997 your licence will already show C1, C1E (8.25 tonnes), D1, D1E (not for hire or reward) as entitlement.

• If you want to drive medium or large vehicles, minibuses or buses in the EC or EEA, you must apply for the appropriate provisional entitlement.
• You must not apply for theory or practical tests until the provisional entitlement is shown on your licence.

6 Upgrading entitlement for trailers
In general, drivers need to take an extra driving test for each category or subcategory of entitlement. But there are certain exceptions to this if drivers have already passed a test which gives entitlement for a larger or equivalent-sized vehicle.

This means that passing a test for subcategory C1+E or D1+E upgrades category B entitlement to B+E.
A test pass for subcategory C1+E upgrades subcategory D1 (if held) to D1+E. But a test pass for subcategory D1+E does not upgrade subcategory C1 to C1+E because the trailer size for subcategory D1+E is smaller than that for a subcategory C1+E test.

Passing a test for category C+E upgrades category B entitlement to B+E and also gives entitlement to subcategory C1 and C1+E and, if category D or subcategory D1 is held, these are upgraded to category D+E or subcategory D1+E.

A test passed for category D+E upgrades category B and subcategory D1 to category B+E and subcategory D1+E. But it does not upgrade category C or subcategory C1 entitlements because the trailer size for a category D+E test is smaller than that for a category C+E or subcategory C1+E.

For details of driving tests please contact the Driving Standards Agency. Their phone number is given at the end of this booklet.

7 Provisional trailer entitlement

Since 1 January 1997, you can no longer take a test in a heavy vehicle with a trailer (for example, category C+E or D+E) unless you have first passed a test in the relevant vehicle (for example, category C or D).

This means that although you may have been driving a vehicle and trailer combination with ‘L’ plates, you cannot take a trailer test with that vehicle until you have passed a test in the required category without a trailer attached.

Other information leaflets are available to download from www.direct.gov.uk/motoringleaflets

INF28 – Driving a minibus
INF38 – Driving in Great Britain (GB) as a Visitor or New Resident
INF45 – Your Photocard Driving Licence explained
INF52 – Large vehicles you can drive using your car or lorry licence
If you have any questions
You can get more information on driving licences by phoning Customer Enquiries on 0300 790 6801. The lines are open between 8am and 7pm Monday to Friday, and between 8am and 2pm on Saturdays. You will be answered by an automatic system but will be able to speak to an operator during office hours. We monitor or record some calls for quality purposes.

If you want to send us an email, go to www.direct.gov.uk/emaildvla
If you are deaf or hard of hearing and have a textphone you should phone 0300 123 1278.

You can get more information on driving tests by phoning the DSA on 0300 200 1122.

If you have changed your name, address or vehicle, please tell us immediately.
If you don’t you may have to pay a £1000 fine.