

Requirements for towing trailers in Great Britain

For more information go to www.direct.gov.uk/driving



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Important note

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



1 Introduction

This leaflet contains information about entitlement to tow trailers.

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) with a 'Medical Examination Report' (D4) filled in and signed by an optometrist/optician and a doctor, 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

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.

Descriptions of vehicle categories before 19 January 2013

Category	Description	Minimum age	Notes
B	<p>Cars</p>  <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	17	See note 1
B auto	<p>Automatic cars</p> <p>As category B with automatic transmission.</p>	17	See note 1
B+E	<p>Cars with trailers</p>  <p>As category B but with a heavier trailer that isn't covered in the descriptions for category B.</p>	17	See note 6
C1	<p>Medium-sized vehicles</p>  <p>Vehicles weighing between 3,500kg and 7,500kg, with or without a trailer weighing no more than 750kg.</p>	18	See note 6

Category	Description	Minimum age	Notes
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 2, 3 and 6
C	Large vehicles  Vehicles over 3,500kg, with a trailer up to 750kg.	21	See note 3
C+E	Large vehicles with trailers  As category C but with a trailer over 750kg.	21	See note 3
D1	Minibuses  Vehicles with a minimum of nine and a maximum of 16 passenger seats, with or without a trailer – weighing no more than 750kg.	21	See notes 4 and 6
D1+E	Minibuses with trailers  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.	21	See notes 4 and 6
D	Buses  Any bus with more than eight passenger seats, with a trailer up to 750kg.	21	See notes 4 and 5
D+E	Buses with trailers  As category D but with a trailer over 750kg.	21	See note 4 and 5

Note 1

Age 16 if you are getting Disability Living Allowance (mobility component) at the higher rate.

Note 2

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 3

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 4

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 5

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 6

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.

Descriptions of vehicle categories On or after 19 January 2013

The table below shows only the vehicle categories that have changed since 19 January 2013, for the vehicle categories that have not changed see table 'Descriptions of vehicle categories before 19 January 2013'.

Category	Description	Minimum age	Notes
D1	Minibuses  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicles with no more than 16 passenger seats in addition to the driver and with a maximum length not exceeding eight metres with a trailer up to 750kg. 	21	See note 1 and note 2
D	Buses  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any bus designed and constructed for the carriage of more than eight passengers in addition to the driver, with a trailer up to 750kg. 	24	See note 1
D1E	Minibuses with trailers  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicles with no more than 16 passenger seats in addition to the driver and with a maximum length not exceeding 8 metres with a trailer over 750kg, provided that the MAM of the combination formed does not exceed 12000kg. 	21	See note 1 and note 2
DE	Buses with trailers  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any bus designed and constructed for the carriage of more than eight passengers in addition to the driver, with a trailer over 750kg. 	24	See note 1

Note 1

You can drive at age 17 if you are a member of the armed forces.

You can drive these vehicles at age 18 if one of the following apply:

- (1) You are learning to drive or taking a PCV test or Driver CPC initial qualification

(2) 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
- driving a vehicle of a class included in sub-category D1.

(3) 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
- driving a vehicle of a class included in sub-category D1.

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.

Age 21 if:

- the vehicle is being used by the fire service or for maintaining public order
- undergoing road tests for repair or maintenance purposes, or
- if you were entitled to drive the vehicle before 19 January 2013.

Note 2

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

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.

8 Further information

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.

Find out about DVLA's online services

Go to: www.direct.gov.uk/onlinemotoringservices



Driver and Vehicle
Licensing Agency

www.direct.gov.uk/driving