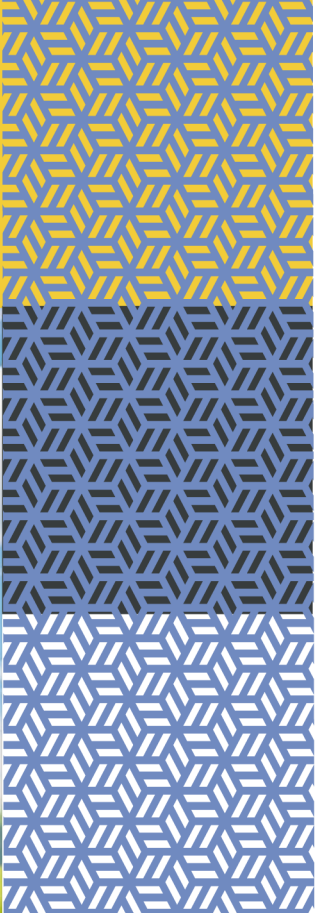
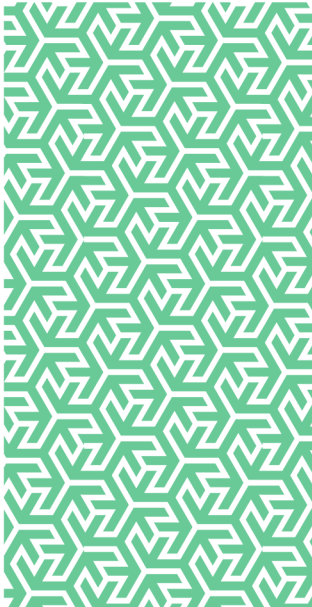


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Risk control
Towing Legislation



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New Rules on Towing

The rules around towing a trailer with a car are undoubtedly confusing and have, until now, been dependent on when the car test was taken. This guidance document clarifies the new rules and provides further advice to ensure safety standards are maintained and drivers remain compliant.

Driving Licence issued before 1st January 1997

A car test passed before this date is not affected by any changes and drivers can usually tow a trailer combination (car and trailer) up to 8250kg MAM providing the train weight is not exceeded.

The driving licence category for towing is shown as BE.

To find out when a test was passed the information is located on the back of the photocard driving licence against the respective category (cars – category B) and is shown in Column 10. It is also possible to check using the government 'view your driving licence information' portal.

Changes

From 16th December 2021 any driver, passing a test after 1st January 1997, with a full car licence can now tow a trailer legally up to 3500kg. It should be noted however that the vehicle must not tow a trailer that exceeds its gross train weight (GTW). GTW is the total allowable weight of the vehicle plus the trailer. This information can be found in the manufacturer handbook or on the VIN plate in the engine.

For those drivers who are now able to tow a trailer the driving licence record will be automatically updated and can be accessed online. To do so the driver can access their record through the DVLA portal <https://www.gov.uk/view-driving-licence>. The driver will need to have their driving licence number, National Insurance number and postcode as shown on the Licence. When the photocard is due for renewal category BE will be added.

The rules around towing with larger vehicles (Category C1, C, D1 and D) have not changed but tests for cars and trailers are no longer available to be booked.

Safety

For a large majority of drivers towing is a new experience and, whilst a test is not required, company and organisation responsibility for safety does not change. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 clearly states that '*employers also have responsibility under Health and Safety legislation to*

ensure so far as reasonably practicable the health and safety of their employees and others who may be affected

by their work activities. This includes the activity of driving on public roads.'. This includes company or hired vehicles and even an employee's own vehicle.

To remain compliant, it is recommended that drivers receive additional training to ensure they are competent, and safe. This should include hitching, handling, reversing, and recommended safety checks. Training can be found from individual Approved Driving Instructors (ADI's), and driver training companies through internet searches and recommendations.

References

1 Government Legislation

<https://www.gov.uk/towing-with-car/weight-and-width-limits>

2 HSE Driving for work

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/roadsafety/index.htm>

Further information

For access to further RMP Resources you may find helpful in reducing your organisation's cost of risk, please access the RMP Resources or RMP Articles pages on our website. To join the debate follow us on our LinkedIn page.

Get in touch

For more information, please contact your broker, RMP risk control consultant or account director.

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