

## Weights

The maximum weight of a motor tractor and trailer used in connection with agriculture is 24,390kg. However, if the vehicle is not used for this purpose the maximum weight may be similar to that of general goods vehicles provided the braking systems and other additional specifications are met. The maximum penalty for using a tractor and trailer whilst overweight is £5,000.

## Brakes

The regulations covering these vehicles are quite detailed. However, the main areas of non-compliance for tractors and trailers used for commercial purposes are:

- Trailer brakes rendered inoperative by the non-rotation of the engine;
- Non-fitment of secondary braking systems;
- Non-fitment of ABS/EBS systems.

The maximum penalty for using a vehicle with inadequate or faulty brakes is £5000 and 3 penalty points.

## Recording Equipment

If a trailer is being towed by a vehicle where the combined gross weight exceeds 3500kg maximum legal weight and it is being used in connection with any trade or business, you may need to have recording equipment fitted. The maximum

penalty for using a vehicle without recording equipment; with recording equipment that is not functioning properly; or for failing to keep records is £2500.

## Operator Licensing

If a vehicle is over 3500kg gross weight and is used for the carriage of goods for financial gain, the user must hold an Operator's Licence and each motor vehicle must be covered by a road freight vehicle licence.

## Road Fuel

Vehicles used for commercial transport should use duty paid fuel. (For further information on the use of fuel within motor tractors contact HMRC on 028 90 358255/358259 or request a copy of Notice No 75 - Fuel for Road Vehicles.)

For further information, contact:

**Driver and Vehicle Agency**  
[www.dvni.gov.uk](http://www.dvni.gov.uk)

**Enforcement Section**  
**148-158 Corporation Street**  
**Belfast BT1 3DH**  
**Tel: 028 9025 4100**  
**Fax: 028 9025 4111**

**Email: [dvtaenforcements@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:dvtaenforcements@doeni.gov.uk)**



## A Guide to the Use of Motor Tractors and Trailers on the Road



## Our Mission

“To contribute to road safety, law enforcement and a cleaner environment by promoting compliance of drivers, vehicles and transport operators through testing, licensing, enforcement and education.”

## Background

This leaflet is not designed as a statement of law, but to offer guidance on the non-agricultural use of motor tractors and trailers on public roads.

It covers the main issues surrounding the use of these vehicles, including:

- Driving Licence;
- Insurance;
- Weight;
- Brakes;
- Recording Equipment (Tachograph);
- Other Issues.

The use of motor tractors and trailers for non-agricultural work within the transport industry has increased significantly over the last few years.

The majority of these vehicles are primarily designed for agricultural work off-road, and therefore they do not comply with the higher specifications required for lorries.

The increased use of these vehicles places the lorry operator at a distinct disadvantage and, therefore, undermines fair competition. Due to their construction, these vehicles may also pose a greater risk to road safety.

We are committed to investigating the illegal use of these vehicles, educating the industry on the legal requirements and, if appropriate, taking action to prosecute offenders.

For the purposes of this leaflet it is assumed that the vehicles in question are being used for non-agricultural type work, and would require to be tested and obtain a **Goods Vehicle Certificate**.

## Driving Licence

The vehicles in question are mostly in excess of 3500kg unladen and gross vehicle weight. Therefore they will fall within the C+E categories for driving licences.

**From the age of 18**, drivers with a **C1+E** licence are permitted to drive vehicles over 3500kg and under 7500kg maximum authorised mass (MAM), towing a trailer exceeding 750kg gross MAM.

**From the age of 21**, drivers with a **C1+E** licence are permitted to drive vehicles over 3500kg and under 7500kg maximum authorised mass (MAM), towing a trailer exceeding 750kg gross MAM. In these cases, the combination must not exceed 12 tonnes MAM and the laden weight of

the trailer must not exceed the unladen weight of the towing vehicle.

**From the age of 21**, drivers with a **C+E** licence are permitted to drive vehicles over 3500kg MAM, towing a trailer exceeding 750kg MAM.

Drivers of these vehicles **must** hold the appropriate driving licence **and** meet the minimum age requirement as stated above.

The maximum penalty on conviction for not holding an appropriate driving licence is £2500 and 3-6 penalty points.

## Insurance

The vehicle must be covered by appropriate insurance relating to its specific use and, if relevant, for the carriage of goods for hire and reward.

If the insurance policy only specifies agricultural type work, excludes hire and reward, or the driver isn't the holder of the appropriate driving licence, the insurance may be rendered invalid.

If this is the case and the vehicle is involved in an accident, there could be considerable consequences in respect of liability for compensation. The maximum penalty for using a tractor without the right insurance is £5000 and 6-8 penalty points.