

# Quick guide to towing small trailers



## Driving licence Requirements

Refer to leaflet DVLA INF30 - Driving Licensing Requirements for Towing Trailers in Great Britain. This is available from: [www.direct.gov.uk/Motoring](http://www.direct.gov.uk/Motoring). For further info on driving licensing issues contact DVLA Customer Enquires - **0300 790 6801**

## Do I need a Tachograph?

If you are using the vehicle in connection with any trade or business, or are carrying goods for hire and reward you may need to fit and use a tachograph.

The VOSA publication Rules on Drivers' Hours and Tachographs (GV262), is a free publication available from [www.dft.gov.uk/vosa/publications/manualsandguides](http://www.dft.gov.uk/vosa/publications/manualsandguides) or by phoning the VOSA National Enquiry number: **0300 123 9000**. It explains further when and how to use a Tachograph.

## Operator Licensing

Some types of vehicle (e.g a dual purpose vehicle and any trailer drawn by it) are identified as exempt from goods vehicle operator licensing. However, where the combined gross plated weights of the drawing vehicle and trailer exceed 3.5 tonnes, and the vehicle is being used for hire or reward, then an operator's licence will be required. In this context, hire or reward means carrying other people's goods in return for payment.

For further information on exemptions from goods vehicle operator licensing, see the "Operator licensing for goods vehicles" section on Business Link's Website: [www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk)

## Weights

The vehicle manufacturer's plate will give you the following information about weights for your vehicle:

(If no plate is fitted refer to drivers' handbook)

### Example:

#### Manufacturer's name chassis number

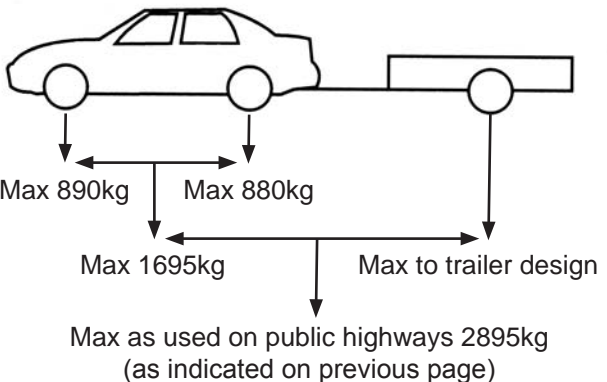
GVW/GVM 169  
GTW/GTM 2895  
AXLE 1-0890  
AXLE 2-0880

The first weight (1695) is the maximum weight of the vehicle on its own. The second weight (2895) is the maximum weight for the vehicle and any trailer that is attached. The third weight (890) is the maximum for the front axle of the vehicle and the final weight (880) is the maximum weight for the rear axle of the vehicle.

These weights must not be exceeded on public roads. Do not forget these weights include all passengers, other loads, and fuel.

The trailer may also display similar information showing the capacity of the axles and the maximum weight it can carry.

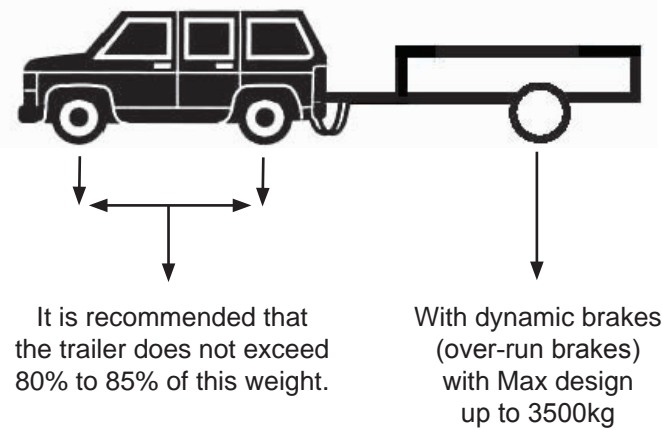
**This is how the manufacturer's plate is interpreted for our example**



**Trailer type**

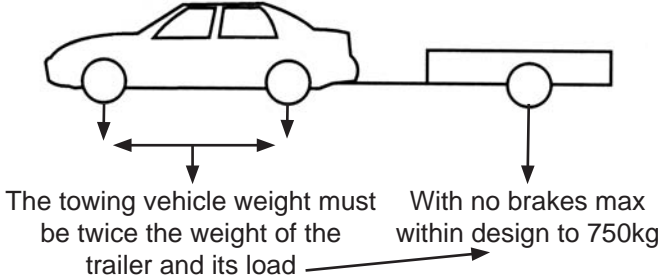
**1. Trailer with braking system**

Where the trailer has a braking system, it is recommended that the trailer and load does not exceed 80-85% of the weight of the towing vehicle.



**2. Trailer with no braking system**

Where the trailer does not have its own braking system the trailer and load should not be over 1/2 the kerbside weight of the motor vehicle it is being towed by to a maximum weight of 750kg



**Trailer Checks**

Before the start of any journey, the driver of the towing vehicle needs to ensure that:

- ▶ the load is distributed evenly
- ▶ the trailer is not overloaded
- ▶ the load is secure
- ▶ the lights are undamaged and working correctly
- ▶ the 7 or 13 core cable and plug is undamaged
- ▶ a breakaway cable or secondary coupling is used. Make sure this is undamaged and correctly connected (refer to manufacturer's advice)
- ▶ the tyre pressures are correct and the tyres are undamaged and the tread depth is legal (remember to also check the towing vehicle)
- ▶ the wheel nuts/bolts are tightened to the correct torque (remember to also check the towing vehicle)
- ▶ the trailer is correctly coupled to the towball or pin (refer to manufacturer's advice)
- ▶ the coupling height is correct
- ▶ there are secure mudguards on the trailer

**Further Advice**

For further advice on connecting and towing a trailer, you may want to refer to "Towing and the law" published by SMMT, available to order from [www.smmt.co.uk](http://www.smmt.co.uk) or ring **0207 235 7000**.

You can also contact the National Trailer & Towing Association at [www.ntta.co.uk](http://www.ntta.co.uk) or ring **01926 335445**.

**On The Road**

Always keep within the legal speed limits, your capabilities and the road and weather conditions at the time.

If the trailer starts to snake or swerve, ease off the accelerator and reduce speed gently. This is an indication that you are going too fast or the trailer is wrongly loaded.

Do not brake harshly on a bend as this will make the trailer unstable. Reduce speed in plenty of time when approaching any hazard.

**Contact us**

E-mail [enquiries@vosa.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@vosa.gov.uk)

National Number: **0300 123 9000\***  
Monday to Friday - 7.30am until 6.00pm (normal working hours)

*\*Calls provided by BT are charged at a low rate. Charges from other providers may vary.*