



VanBestPractice

Driver Essentials

Top Tips and Advice for Van Drivers



Driver Essentials **Top Tips and Advice for Van Drivers**

Introduction

This Driver Essentials pack has been produced by the Department for Transport's Van Best Practice programme. It contains a variety of Top-Tip cards covering a wide range of topics aimed at you, the van driver.

There are many things that you can do to adapt your driving style and working practices to maximise your vehicle's efficiency and ensure your safety. This pack aims to inform and assist you to do this by providing concise, user-friendly information.

To ensure you always have the most up-to-date and relevant information, these cards will be periodically updated. These will be available as downloadable PDF files and as printed cards that can be sent to you.

Benefits

Top-Tip cards are designed to benefit you, whether you are an owner-driver or a driver in a company with a large fleet.

The type of benefits you can expect to enjoy include:

- Fuel savings
- Reduced chance of being involved in an incident
- Less damage to your vehicle through incidents
- Less downtime as a result of incidents or vehicle repair
- Potential for reduced insurance premiums and claims
- Less stressful loading and unloading

The Van Best Practice programme is funded by the Department for Transport and managed by AEA to promote and improve operational efficiency within van operations in England.

The Van Best Practice programme offers FREE essential information and advice for van users, covering topics such as operational efficiency, driver management, safety, saving fuel and performance management.

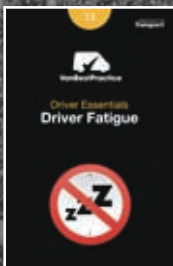
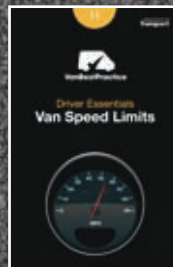
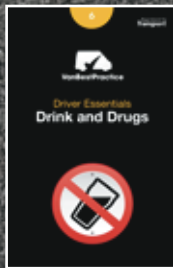
All FREE materials are available to download from www.businesslink.gov.uk/vanbestpractice or can be ordered through the Hotline on **0300 123 1133**.

While the DfT has made every effort to ensure the information in this document is accurate, it does not guarantee the accuracy, completeness or usefulness of that information; and it cannot accept liability for any loss or damages of any kind resulting from reliance on the information or guidance this document contains.



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Department for
Transport



Driver Essentials

Top Tips and Advice for Van Drivers



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or can be ordered through the Hotline on **0300 123 1133**.

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Driver Essentials

Driving Licences



Driver Essentials **Driving Licences**

Did you know?

You can now renew the photograph on your driving licence at post offices across the country.

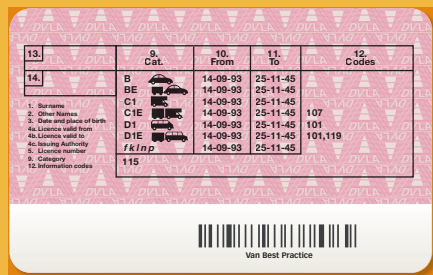
Application	Licence Category Requirement
Vans up to 3.5 tonnes maximum authorised mass	Category B (car) licence obtained after 01/01/1997
Vans up to 7.5 tonnes maximum authorised mass	Category B (car) licence obtained before 01/01/1997
Vans up to 7.5 tonnes maximum authorised mass	Category C1 licence (minimum age 21) post 01/01/1997
Vans over 3.5 tonnes maximum authorised mass	Certificate of Professional Competence – from September 2009 for new drivers and before 2014 for existing drivers

From September 2009, new drivers will need to complete a Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) to drive a van over 3.5 tonnes. Existing drivers will have until 2014 to undergo 35 hours extra training. (See Joint Approval Unit for Periodic Training JAUPPT for training centres – www.drivercpc.org/).

Maximum authorised mass is defined as the total weight of the vehicle and the maximum weight that it can carry, also known as GVW. A plate giving the maximum authorised mass can be found either on the inside of the

driver's door or under the bonnet (if it cannot be located consult the manufacturer's handbook).

Rental companies usually require drivers to be over 25 before they will allow them to drive a 7.5 tonne van.





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Driver Essentials Van Taxation

HM Revenue & Customs

Please ensure your entries are clear on both sides of the form.

Employer name _____

Employer PAYE reference _____

Employee name _____

Work number/department _____

National Insurance number _____

Date of birth in figures (if known)

Gender M - Male F - Female ☐

HM Revenue & Customs

P11D EXPENSES AND BENEFITS 2008-09

Note to employer
Complete this return for a director, or an employee who earned at a rate of £8,500 or more a year during the year to 5 April 2009. Send the completed form to your HM Revenue & Customs office by 6 July 2009.

Note to employee
Your employer has filled in this form, keep it in a safe place. You will need it to complete your 2008-09 Tax Return if you get one. The box numberings on this P11D are the same as on the Employment Page of the Tax Return, for example, 13.

Employer pays Class 1A National Insurance contributions on most benefits. These are shown in boxes which are brown and have a 1A indicator

A Assets transferred (cars, property, goods or other assets)

Description of asset	Cash/Market value	Amount made good or from which tax deducted	Cash equivalent
	£	£	1.1 £

B Payments made on behalf of employee

Description of payment	Cash equivalent
	1.5 £

C Vouchers or credit cards

Value of vouchers and payments made using credit cards or tokens (for qualifying children's vouchers the excess over £55 a week)	Cash equivalent
£	1.2 £

D Living accommodation

Cash equivalent of accommodation provided for employee, or his/her family or household	Cash equivalent
	1.4 £

E Mileage allowance and passenger payments

Amount of car and mileage allowances paid to employee for business travel in employee's own vehicle, and passenger payments, in excess of maximum exempt amounts (See P11D Guide for 2008-09 exempt rates)	Excess amount
	1.2 £

F Cars and car fuel If more than two cars were made available, either at the same time or in succession, please give details on a separate sheet

Car 1	Car 2
Make and Model	
Date first registered	
Approved CO ₂ emissions figures for cars registered on or after 1 January 1998 (tick box if the car does not have an approved CO ₂ figure)	
Engine size	
Type of fuel or power used (Please use the key letter shown at the P11D Guide)	
Dates car was available (Do not complete the 'From' box if the car was available on 5 April 2008 or the 'To' box if it continued to be available on 6 April 2009)	

Driver Essentials **Van Taxation**

You will have to pay tax on a company van that is made available to you for private use only, if you actually use it for private journeys other than journeys between home and work.

If you do make other private journeys in the van, you are likely to incur income tax liability for this. However, if this private travel is insignificant (such as going to the tip a couple of times a year) then you will not have to pay any tax.

If you are charged tax, the amounts you will have to pay tax on are:

Amount included in your tax code: £3,000

Tax at 20% basic rate: £660

This amount is reduced if you do not have the van for the whole tax year, if someone else also uses it for private travel or if you pay something for using it privately.

If your employer lets you have free or subsidised fuel for private use, you will have to pay extra tax:

Amount included in your tax code: £500

Tax at 22% basic rate: £110

For further information, please go to **www.hmrc.gov.uk/vans**

Image used courtesy of HMRC



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Driver Essentials **Van Security**



Driver Essentials **Van Security**

Did you know?

Over 47,000 vans are stolen each year.

Unfortunately, we all have to be more security conscious these days as more and more thieves are targeting vans and their contents.

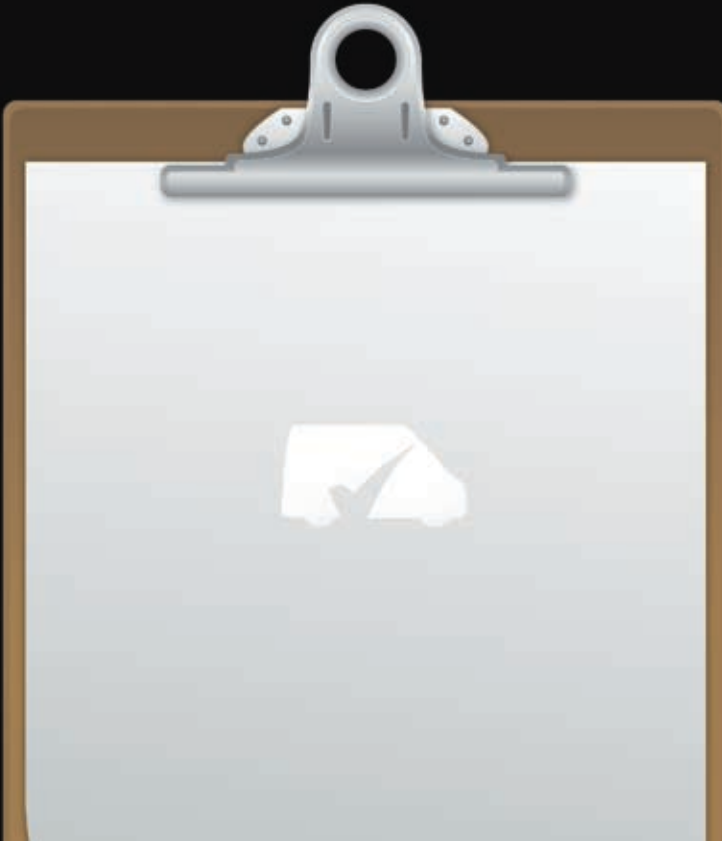
Top Tips for Keeping Your Van and Load Secure

- Remove ignition key when leaving the vehicle
- Keep the keys with you
- Lock the doors and vehicle's load space when leaving the van unattended
- Do not leave the windows open when away from the vehicle
- Plan your journey carefully and avoid spontaneous stops
- Use the anti-theft device on your vehicle
- Do not carry unauthorised passengers
- Never leave valuable items on display
- Ensure nothing valuable is left in the van if it is unattended overnight
- When carrying a high-value load, travel in convoy with other trusted drivers. Beware of bogus officials or staff and, if in doubt, ask for identification and call your traffic/despatch office
- If your loads are valuable then it is wise to alternate your routes occasionally so that would-be criminals are unable to predict a valuable load's position at any one time
- Always verify with your transport office any requests to redeliver to alternative locations when you arrive at your drop address
- Keep the load documentation in a secure place



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Driver Essentials **Vehicle Checks**



Top Tips for Ensuring Your Vehicle is Roadworthy

Daily checklist

In the office:

- 1** Current MOT test certificate
- 2** Valid insurance
- 3** Correct plating for particular loads (if required)

Round the outside:

- 4** Clean windscreen
- 5** Proper licensing and valid vehicle tax disc displayed
- 6** Number plates clean and undamaged
- 7** Doors working and closing properly
- 8** Tyres in good condition
- 9** Mirrors are clean and intact
- 10** Exhaust system secure and leak free
- 11** Reflectors and reflective plates clean and in good condition
- 12** Load secured adequately
- 13** Fuel cap provides a good seal and does not leak
- 14** No oil or other fluid leaks

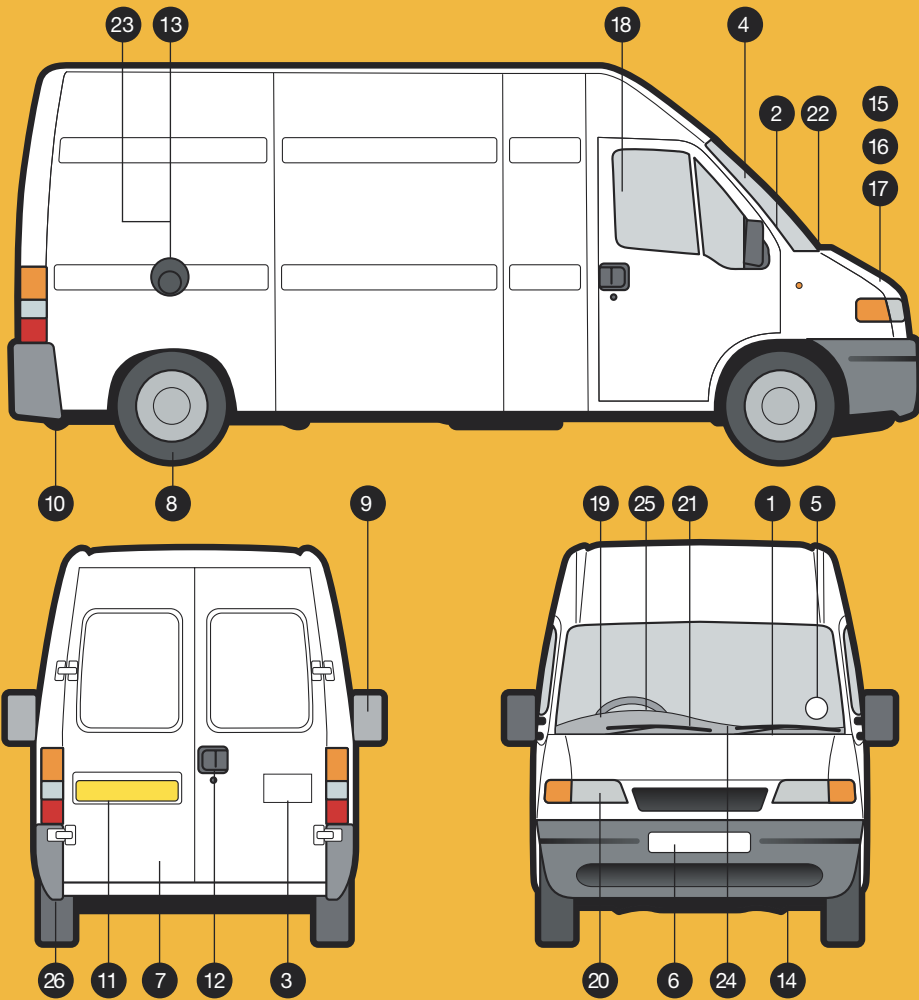
Under the bonnet:

- 15** Battery is clean and properly secured in tray
- 16** Leads in good condition and properly attached
- 17** Check fluid levels

From the driver's seat:

- 18** Seat belts in good condition
- 19** Horn working
- 20** Lights and indicators working
- 21** Windscreen wipers and washers working
- 22** Gauges and warning systems working
- 23** Sufficient fuel for journey
- 24** Tachograph (if GVW is over 3.5 tonnes)
- 25** Speedometer working
- 26** Brakes in good working condition
(they should not be spongy or slack, or pull the van to one side)

It is advisable that you always spend some time at the start of your shift checking the van you are about to drive, particularly if it is not your usual vehicle.



Driver Essentials **Vehicle Checks**

Did you know?

As a driver **you** are legally responsible for the roadworthiness of your vehicle.





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Driver Essentials Vehicle Familiarisation and Set Up



Driver Essentials **Vehicle Familiarisation and Set Up**

It is vital that you familiarise yourself with your van and set the seating position properly before you start driving.

Top Tips for Familiarisation and Set Up

- Make any adjustments to the driver's seat, head restraint and steering wheel before you turn the ignition key
- Obtain additional support for your lower back if needed by using a lumbar support pad
- Ensure the seatbelt is tight, but comfortable
- Get your posture right – keep your back straight
- Ensure that you are not too near to the dashboard and that your legs are comfortably positioned
- Use the tilt and reach mechanism on the steering wheel to find your preferred position
- Adjust mirrors only **after** the seat and steering wheel are set
- For further information, please see www.drivingergonomics.com



- Ensure that you are aware of the length, height and weight of the van
- Ensure you are aware of the location of important equipment, including:
 - Lights
 - Indicators
 - Fuel filler cap release
 - Bonnet release
 - Hazard lights



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Driver Essentials **Drink and Drugs**





Did you know?

In 2008, some 2,060 people were killed or seriously injured on our roads in drink-related crashes and nearly one in six of all deaths on the road involve drivers over the legal limit.*

Many employers now have a 'zero tolerance' approach to drink and drugs.

- The legal alcohol limit for driving in the UK is 80 milligrammes of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood (80mg/100ml), or 35 microgrammes of alcohol in 100 millilitres of breath (35µg/100ml)
- It is not possible to calculate how much you can drink without exceeding the legal limit or becoming unfit to drive because of the wide range of factors involved
- Anyone trying to 'drink up to the limit' therefore runs a serious risk of exceeding it
- Any amount of alcohol affects your ability to drive safely, by reducing your awareness of hazards, impairing your judgement and slowing your reaction times and thus increasing the likelihood of being involved in an accident



* Statistics as per Reported Road Casualties Great Britain: 2008, Department for Transport, 2009

Driver Essentials **Drink and Drugs**

- Beware of the ‘morning after’ effect. Nearly one in five people convicted of drink driving are caught the morning after drinking alcohol because of the time it takes for alcohol to be eliminated from the bloodstream
- The use of drugs, whether prescribed medication or illegal substances, can also seriously impair your ability to drive safely
- Be aware that many prescribed drugs have side effects like drowsiness or sleepiness
- Driving under the influence of drugs, whether prescribed medication or illegal substances, may be just as dangerous as driving when drunk
- It is an offence to drive while unfit through drink or drugs. If you are charged with **any** driving related offence, you must notify your employer immediately or it could invalidate the company’s insurance policy

If you are convicted of driving while under the influence of drink or drugs:

- You will have a criminal record
 - You will be banned from driving for at least 12 months and for at least 3 years for a second offence, if there has been a previous drink driving conviction within 10 years
 - You could go to prison for up to 14 years if someone is killed as a result of your driving
 - You could be fined heavily
 - You could lose your job
 - You could find increases of any private motor insurance that you carry
- The penalties for driving whilst under the influence of drugs, are exactly the same as for drink driving (www.dft.gov.uk/think/drinkdrive/).



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Driver Essentials Carrying Goods Safely



Did you know?

In 2007, the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency reported that out of 6,050 vans weighed, more than 55% were overloaded.

Top Tips for Carrying Goods Safely

- Understand the load you are carrying and the hazards associated with it
- All vehicles with an overall travelling height above 10 feet (3 metres) must have the maximum height of the vehicle in feet and inches displayed inside the cab so that it is clearly visible to the driver
- Spread the load to give an even distribution of weight over the whole floor area
- When stacking a load, place larger and heavier items at the bottom where they can support others
- Place heavier items nearer to the centre line of the vehicle and lighter items towards the sides
- Secure loads using clamps, bolts, steel wires and ropes, webbing or harnesses or other equipment as required
- Be aware of the total loaded height and length of your vehicle, prior to starting your journey

Safe Stacking

Good stacking or packing practice will avoid the risk of goods moving around in the back of the van and being damaged or falling out when the rear doors are opened. Uneven or unrestrained loads will affect the vehicle's stability, in particular, steering, braking and handling.

- Use racking properly and appropriately
- Don't accumulate unnecessary items
- Load-restraining systems must be able to handle any forces and pressure likely to be encountered while driving
- The load should be stable and you should keep its centre of gravity (heaviest part) as low as practicable and near to the van's centre line
- Put heavy items at the centre of the vehicle, at the bottom of the load, stacked, and in front of lighter items



- Ensure the different items of the load cannot move separately
- Pay special attention to dangerous goods. Ensure they are carried safely
- Ensure there are no unsecured items in the vehicle

It is a legal requirement that loads in a vehicle or on a trailer must be secured in such a way that they are not a danger to the vehicle's occupants or other road users.

Driver Essentials **Carrying Goods Safely**



For more information, please refer to the Van Best Practice Carrying Goods Safely guide.



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Driver Essentials Loading and Unloading





Top Tips for Loading and Unloading

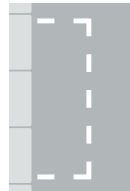


Do...

- Use dedicated loading bays where you can usually park for up to 20 minutes while making a delivery
- Load/unload from roads marked with single and double yellow lines, unless there are loading restrictions. Put a delivery sign in the windscreen though and check the display plate for restrictions



- Load/unload from residential parking bays, meters and residents' parking bays (if you have to)
- Load/unload on Red Routes and other specialist thoroughfares (specially marked bays and signs indicate when and where loading or unloading is permitted)



Driver Essentials **Loading and Unloading**

Don't...

- Load/unload where there are yellow stripes on the kerb, which indicate that loading is prohibited at the times shown on the nearby plates – two stripes mean the loading restrictions apply during every working day and one stripe means no loading or unloading at the times shown
- Load/unload from disabled parking bays, diplomatic parking bays or suspended parking bays, including those where a meter is covered with an 'out of order' bag
- Load/unload within 10 metres of a junction or from within zig-zag white lines

Tips for Trolley Use

- Ensure the trolley you choose is suitable for the job and that the load is within the marked capacity of the trolley
- Ensure the trolley is stowed safely in the back of your van and is easily accessible

Tips for Unloading a Vehicle

- If you don't need to work at height to unload a vehicle, then don't!
- If you can't unload the vehicle from the ground, can you drive it to a raised unloading point?
- Try and make pre-delivery arrangements for tricky sites to avoid delay and work with people who are trained and know what they're doing
- Use safety equipment such as guard rails and work restraints when available
- Don't walk backwards when in a vehicle and don't jump off
- Use your hazard lights if parked in a busy spot



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Driver Essentials Manual Handling



Manual handling is defined as ‘the transporting or supporting of loads by hand or by bodily force’ (Health and Safety Executive).



Did you know?

Over 54 million working days are lost each year because of pain, strain and back injuries.

Top Tips for Safe Manual Handling

- Make use of lifting aids such as trolleys, lift trucks, hoists and roll cages whenever possible
- Think about the load risk – ask for assistance if you are unsure that you can do it alone
- Stand close to the load and centre yourself over it with your feet shoulder width apart
- Tighten your abdominal muscles
- Keep your back straight; bend your knees and squat down to the floor
- Get a good grasp on the load with both hands
- Keep the load close to your body and use your leg muscles to stand up, lifting the load off the floor
- Your back should remain straight throughout lifting, using only the muscles in the legs to lift the load
- Do not twist your body when moving the load. Instead, take small steps with your feet turning until you are in the correct position
- Bend at the knees using only your leg muscles and place the load in the appropriate spot

Driver Essentials **Manual Handling**



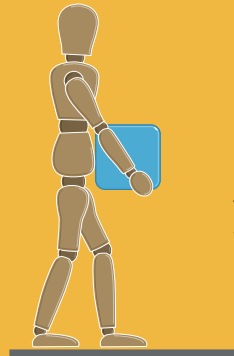
Consider mechanical aids; even a sack truck can make a big improvement



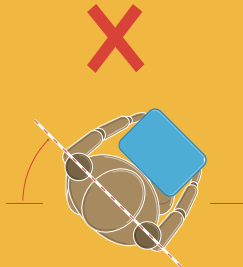
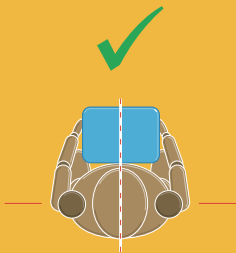
Adopt a stable position with feet apart and one leg slightly forward to maintain balance



Start in a good posture



Keep the load close to the waist



Avoid twisting the back or leaning sideways, especially while the back is bent

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Driver Essentials
**Driver and
Passenger Safety**



Driver Essentials **Driver and Passenger Safety**

Did you know?

Wearing seatbelts reduces the risk of death or serious injury by half.

- Only carry passengers if your company allows it
- Only carry passengers where a seat is provided
- Only carry one passenger per seat
- Ensure seat belts are always worn (if fitted)
- Drive safely – anticipate and adjust to road and traffic conditions
- Drive smoothly, avoid sudden braking and rapid acceleration
- Ensure the van is in roadworthy condition – check that brakes, lights, engine and warning systems are all in working order





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Driver Essentials

Van Speed Limits



Driver Essentials **Van Speed Limits**

Did you know?

It is estimated that for each 1 mph reduction in average speed, accident frequency is reduced by 5% (Department for Transport).

Type of Vehicle	Built Up Areas	Single Carriage-ways	Dual Carriage-ways	Motorways
	MPH	MPH	MPH	MPH
Car-derived vans and light vans up to 2 tonnes GVW	30	60	70	70
Car-derived vans towing trailers	30	50	60	60
Vans up to 3.5 tonnes GVW	30	50	60	70
Vehicles up to 7.5 tonnes GVW	30	50	60	70
Vehicles up to 7.5 tonnes GVW with trailers	30	50	60	60

Notes

Only vans that are derived from a car chassis **and** have a maximum laden weight of no more than 2 tonnes (2,000 kg) have the same speed limits as cars.

Where the speed limit is lower than the limits illustrated above (e.g. in a 20 mph urban area), please observe that limit.

Please check your V5 document to see if your van is described as 'car-derived'.



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Driver Essentials
**Safe and Fuel
Efficient Driving Tips**





Top Tips from the SAFED Programme* to Help You Save Fuel and Maximise Your Safety

Be proactive not reactive	Being proactive will dramatically improve your safety. This includes having an awareness of the conditions and anticipating events before they happen.
Ease and squeeze	Smooth driving is achieved by easing off and squeezing on pressure to the brake or accelerator pedals.
REPS (rear-end protection system)	Use your mirrors prior to braking.
SLOW (speed low – observer warning)	SLOW painted on the road suggests a history of accidents due to restricted view.
Vision before decision	Approaching a hazard, perhaps a roundabout? Got the view? Clear? Now take the gear and GO!
Only a fool breaks the two second rule	Two seconds of following distance between you and the vehicle ahead. If other drivers fill that gap, respond accordingly to reset the gap to two seconds.
Look OUT	Look O ver, U nder and T hrough parked vehicles at the side of the road.
Where there's one there are two	If one vehicle emerges from a side road, be ready for the second, which is often behind it.

*The Department for Transport SAFED (Safe and Fuel Efficient Driving) scheme aims to improve the driving techniques of van drivers through training. This will improve driving techniques and result in improved safety, fuel efficiency and reduced carbon emissions. For further information about the scheme, see www.safed.org.uk/SAFEDVans/home.htm

Driver Essentials **Safe and Fuel Efficient Driving Tips**

Did you know?

Where you actively monitor and manage your fuel use, you can typically reduce fuel consumption by 10%, with an equivalent cost saving.

Brakes to slow, gears to go	Slow the vehicle using the brakes, engage the correct gear for your speed and by-pass all intermediate gears.
LADA (look, assess, decide then act)	Build time into your drive to do this.
Creep and peep	When emerging from a side road creep forward to obtain the full view.
Look for the lurker	The lurker is the oncoming driver who 'pops out' from behind another vehicle looking to overtake.



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Driver Essentials

Driver Fatigue



Driver Essentials **Driver Fatigue**

Did you know?

Fatigue-related accidents kill over 300 people a year in the UK and cause 20% of accidents, particularly on monotonous roads (RoSPA).

Top Tips to Help Counter Fatigue/Sleepiness

- Make sure you are fit to drive: have a good night's sleep before setting out on a long journey
- Plan your journey to include a 15 minute break every two hours of driving
- Remember the risks if you have to get up unusually early to start your trip, or have a long drive home after a full day's work
- Avoid making long trips between midnight-6am and 2-4pm when natural alertness is low
- Avoid taking medicines that can make you drowsy.
- Keep fresh air circulating in the vehicle



- Share the driving if possible
- If you start to feel sleepy, find a safe place to stop (not the hard shoulder of a motorway) as soon as possible and have a strong caffeine drink followed by a short nap

Watch for the warning signs – if you are yawning or having difficulty concentrating, you run the risk of falling asleep at the wheel.



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Driver Essentials

Mobile Phones and Satellite Navigation Systems



Driver Essentials **Mobile Phones and Satellite Navigation Systems**

Did you know? Drivers using hand-held phones are four times more likely to be involved in a crash. Almost half of UK motorists are seriously distracted by in-car technology while driving.

It is illegal to use a hand-held mobile phone or other hand-held device (e.g. a Satellite Navigation system) while driving. You could also be prosecuted for driving and using a hands free phone if you are distracted and not in proper control of a vehicle.

Employers could also be prosecuted if they 'cause or permit' employees to use a mobile phone while driving.



Top Tips for the Safe Use of Mobile Phones and Satellite Navigation Systems

- Switch the phone off while driving
- Find a safe place to stop before picking up any messages and returning calls. This can be combined with your breaks
- Set up your navigation and any other in-van communication or delivery terminals/technology before beginning your journey. Do not make adjustments to equipment while driving
- If the device must be installed on the windscreen/dashboard make sure it doesn't obscure your view or cause blind spots that might conceal other road users or hazards



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Driver Essentials
Driving Hours
and Breaks
(up to 3.5 tonnes GVW)



Driver Essentials **Driving Hours and Breaks** (up to 3.5 tonnes GVW): a summary of key points



Be aware that if you are pulling a trailer that takes the vehicle gross train weight to over 3.5 tonnes, you will then need a tachograph and be subject to more stringent restrictions on your driving hours, including detailed record-keeping.

UK Domestic Drivers' Hours rules on hours and breaks stipulate that:

- In any working day, the maximum amount of driving permitted is 10 hours
- In any working day the maximum amount of duty permitted is 11 hours. A driver is exempt from the daily duty limit (11 hours) on any working day when he does not drive
- A driver who does not drive for more than 4 hours on each day of the week is exempt from the daily duty limit

For full details and exemptions, please go to **www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/freight/road/workingtime/**



VanBestPractice

Driver Essentials
Driving Hours
and Breaks
(over 3.5 tonnes GVW)



Driver Essentials **Driving Hours and Breaks** (over 3.5 tonnes GVW): a summary of key points

Driving Hours

- **Daily driving limit:** Maximum of 9 hours, extendable to 10 hours no more than twice a week
- **Weekly driving limit:** Maximum of 56 hours
- **Two-weekly driving limit:** Maximum of 90 hours

Weekly Rest

- A regular weekly rest of at least 45 hours, or a reduced weekly rest of at least 24 hours, must be started no later than the end of 6 consecutive 24-hour periods from the end of the last weekly rest
- In any two consecutive weeks, a driver must have at least two weekly rests – one of which must be at least 45 hours long

Daily Rest

- Minimum of 11 consecutive hours, which can be reduced to a minimum of 9 consecutive hours no more than three times between weekly rests
- May be taken in two periods, the first lasting at least 3 hours and the second at least 9 hours
- The rest must be completed within 24 hours of the end of the last daily or weekly rest period

Driver Breaks

- For every 4½ hours driven, you must take an uninterrupted 45-minute break

This break can be divided into two periods – the first lasting at least 15 minutes and the second at least 30 minutes – taken over the 4½ hours.

For full details and exemptions, please go to
www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/freight/road/workingtime/