Between 750kg and 3500kg:

Must be fitted with an inertia (overrun) type braking system on all wheels.

Must be fitted with a parking braking system.

If the trailer does not exceed 1500kg it must be fitted with a secondary coupling (chain, cable, etc) so that, in the event of separation of the main coupling, the trailer's nose/coupling will not touch the ground and there will be some residual steering action on the trailer. However, if the trailer exceeds 1500kg Maximum Authorised Mass, the braking system must stop the trailer automatically if the main coupling separates while the trailer is in motion.

Any person using a vehicle with inadequate or poorly maintained brakes may have the vehicle prohibited. This offence can also result in prosecution where, on conviction, the maximum penalty is £5000 and 3 penalty points.

Weight

Most vehicles are fitted with a plate that stipulates the maximum weight that the vehicle can carry or tow.

The weights stipulated on the plate or in the handbook are the total weights including vehicle, passengers and any load carried.

It is not permitted to tow an unbraked trailer when the normal weight (kerbside weight) of the motor car is less than twice the weight of the trailer and its load.

Any person using a vehicle in excess of its permitted weight may have their vehicle prohibited and can be prosecuted where, on conviction, the maximum penalty is £5000.

Tachograph

If a trailer is being towed by a vehicle with a combined gross weight of more than 3500kg and is being used in connection with any trade or business, you may need to have a tachograph fitted.

If a vehicle being used for business purposes is detected:

- without a tachograph ;
- without a properly functioning tachograph; or
- failing to keep tachograph records;

you may be prosecuted and, on conviction, fined a maximum of £5000.

For further information, contact:

Driver and Vehicle Agency
www.dvani.gov.uk

Enforcement Section
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Belfast BT1 3DH

Tel: 028 9025 4100
Fax: 028 9025 4111
Email: dvtaenforcements@doeni.gov.uk

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Driver & Vehicle Agency

Guide to Towing Small Trailers

(Version 2 – March 2013)

Our Aim

"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 publication is for general reference only. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that the information provided is accurate, it should not be treated as a complete or authoritative statement of law.

Note: *The weights referred to in this publication refer to the weights shown on the relevant manufacturers plate of the vehicle / trailer.*

Driving Licence

Vehicles towing small trailers mainly fall within two groups:

Pre 1 January 1997

Drivers who passed their driving test before 1 January 1997 can drive the following categories of vehicle:

Category B: motor vehicles not exceeding 3500kg maximum authorised mass (MAM) and with up to 8 passenger seats.

Category C1: medium-sized goods vehicles between 3500kg MAM and 7500kg MAM.

The maximum weight for the vehicle combinations is 8.25 tonnes. This can, for example, consist of a 7500kg MAM motor vehicle in combination with a 750kg MAM trailer or a 4500kg MAM motor vehicle in combination with a 3500kg MAM trailer.

Post 1 January 1997

Drivers who passed their driving test on, or after, 1 January 1997 can drive the following categories of vehicle:

Category B: vehicles not exceeding 3500kg Maximum Authorised Mass (MAM) and with up to 8 passenger seats, along with a trailer weighing up to 750kg MAM (ie 4250kg combined).

Larger trailers can be towed, provided the combined plated weight of the vehicle and the trailer does not exceed 3500kg MAM and the MAM of the trailer is not higher than the unladen weight of the towing vehicle.

Drivers who passed their test in a **Category C1** vehicle will be limited to towing trailers of 750kg MAM unless they pass a C1+E test.

The maximum penalty on conviction for not holding an appropriate driving licence is £1000 and 3-6 penalty points.

Failure to hold the appropriate licence may also invalidate the insurance for the vehicle.

Post 19 January 2013

Driving licence rules in Northern Ireland changed from 19 January 2013. There are new rules regarding motorcycles, cars towing trailers, buses and lorries. Find out more about these changes and how they could affect you by visiting **www.nidirect.gov.uk/EU3D**.

For further Licensing advice please visit our Home Page at **http://www.dvlni.gov.uk/dvlni.aspx**

Brakes

The minimum requirements for brakes on small trailers are set out in Regulations 20, 21 and 24 of the Motor Vehicles (Construction & Use) Regulations (NI) 1999 No 454.

If trailers are fitted with braking systems, they must be kept in good working order and properly adjusted.

Small trailers are split into two main groups, determined by the trailer's MAM. This is as follows:

Not more than 750kg:

No brakes required.

Trailers manufactured after 1 January 2000 must be fitted with a secondary coupling (chain, cable, etc) so that, in the event of separation of the main coupling, the trailer's nose/coupling will not touch the ground and there will be some residual steering action on the trailer.