

- You could face fines up to £1,000 and 3-6 penalty points\* if you drive without the correct class of licence so...
- make sure it's valid, in date and includes your photo card
- make sure you're entitled to drive a van - including Category B vans up to 3.5 tonnes, Category B and E for most 3.5 tonnes van and trailer combinations and C1 for vans up to 7.5 tonnes
- You face immediate fines of up to £300 and having your vehicle taken off the road if it's overloaded or not loaded properly so...
- make sure your load does not exceed your vehicle's maximum weights (including its axles) - the maximum weights will be stamped onto the identification plate

## Your load

- You could face unlimited fines, up to 2 years in prison and having your vehicle taken off the road\* if you don't take notice of the regulations for vans, so...
- make sure your van is always insured, taxed and MOT'd
- follow the GB Domestic Hours regulations for vans up to 3.5 tonnes
- if your van or van and trailer combination is authorised to weigh over 3.5 tonnes, follow EC drivers' hours and tachograph regulations
- follow working time regulations – particularly mobile workers' regulations for vehicles over 3.5 tonnes

## Driving laws and regulations

- make sure you safely secure your load using the right strapping as its weight alone will not be enough to keep it on or in your vehicle



# Staying legal:

## Van driver basics



Safety Standards Service

## Introduction

This guide explains how keeping your van legal can save you thousands in lost income, fines and fixed penalties.

Poor condition of your vans could cost your business up to £4,000 per day. This figure is made up of on-the-spot penalties and lost revenue.

More than 8 in 10 vehicles DVSA stops are overloaded. More than 6 in 10 have serious mechanical defects, which means you might not be allowed to carry on working that day.

If your van has either of these problems then it will empty your wallet. It could leave you facing a court appearance and even heavier fines.

Don't let the state of your van drag your business and your bottom line down. Use this guide to find out how to keep you and your vehicle on the right side of DVSA and the law.

This guide offers general help and isn't a legal document. If you're not sure about any of the advice it contains then you should consider seeking independent legal advice.



## Driving and maintaining your van

- You face unlimited fines, losing your licence and up to 14 years in prison\* if you don't drive your van properly so...
- familiarise yourself with your van's safety features, for example, anti-lock brakes and stability controls
- every time you drive your van carry out the checks outlined in the 'Van Walkaround Checklist' on the back of this guide
- drive within the speed limits for the road you're on and the van you're driving
- don't drink or take drugs while driving as it may impair your ability to control your vehicle

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## Visit our websites:

for commercial customers and private motorists  
[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

for corporate information  
[www.gov.uk/dvsa](http://www.gov.uk/dvsa)

## Contact us:

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

Customer Service Centre  
 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.*

## Roadside checks and fines

- DVSA are stopping more vans and carrying out more roadside checks on vans than ever before to make sure you're driving your vehicle safely and within the law.
- If you and your van are found to be breaking the law then DVSA roadside examiners have the power to:
- issue on-the-spot fines for both non-endorsable and endorsable offences
- stop you using your van if it's overloaded, has serious mechanical defects or you're found to have broken the drivers' hours rules
- immobilise your van if it's too dangerous to let you continue your journey or where you've decided not to pay an on-the-spot fine

DVSA fines range from £50 up to £300 per offence and if your van is over 3.5 tonnes you could face up to 2 years imprisonment\* for drivers' hours and tachograph offences.

You can easily avoid all this by simply following the rules. Keeping your van in good condition will help keep you and your van safe and legal.

\* At the discretion of a magistrates court.

## Van weights

You should always make sure the weight of your van doesn't break its official gross weight and axle limits otherwise it will cost you.

Most vans are classed as light goods vehicles (LGVs). These are commercial vehicles with a gross weight (meaning the total weight of you, your passengers, load and fuel) of up to 3.5 tonnes.

All vans weighing less than 3 tonnes are classed as Class 4 for MOT purposes and vans between 3 and 3.5 tonnes as Class 7.

If your van or van and trailer combination is authorised to weigh over 3.5 tonnes, then you may need to apply for a goods vehicle operator's licence. This will mean you can only drive so many hours in a day under drivers' hours and tachograph rules.

You'll also be hit by all kinds of extra UK and European regulations. If you break these rules you could be looking at unlimited fines and up to 2 years in prison\*.

So if you are unsure of the regulations, please contact the DVSA Customer Service Centre or refer to the DVSA website.



You should check the condition of your van every day and get any problems checked out or repaired as soon as you can

## LIGHTS

Check that:

- ▶ all lights and indicators work correctly
- ▶ all lenses are present, clean and are the correct colour
- ▶ stop lamps come on when the service brake is applied and go out when released
- ▶ marker lights are present and work
- ▶ all dashboard warning lamps work correctly including:
  - ▷ ABS
  - ▷ airbags (SRS)
  - ▷ EPS
  - ▷ full beam headlamp warning lamp
  - ▷ parking brake warning lamp

## HORN AND STEERING

Check that:

- ▶ horn control is easily accessible from driver's seat
- ▶ horn works when its control is operated
- ▶ steering has no excessive play

## WASHERS AND WIPERS

Check that:

- ▶ wipers move continually when switched on
- ▶ wiper blades are not so deteriorated that they don't clear the windscreen effectively when used with washers
- ▶ washers point at the windscreen and are operational
- ▶ washer fluid is topped up

## MIRRORS AND GLASS

Check that:

- ▶ all mirrors that should be there are properly aligned and secure
- ▶ your view of the road in all directions isn't obscured by damaged or discoloured glass or obstructions such as stickers

## SEATS AND SEATBELTS

Check that:

- ▶ seats are secure
- ▶ seatbelts operate correctly and are free from cuts and damage

## BRAKES

Check that:

- ▶ foot / service brake works correctly and does not have any excessive travel
- ▶ hand / parking brake works correctly and does not have any excessive travel

## BODYWORK AND DOORS

Check that:

- ▶ all doors shut properly and are secure when closed
- ▶ there are no sharp edges or damage
- ▶ no body panels are loose or in danger of falling off

## LOAD

Check that:

- ▶ any load is adequately secured
- ▶ van doors have an effective locking device

## TOW BARS AND TAIL LIFTS

Check that:

- ▶ tow bar is secure and any trailer is correctly and securely attached with all electrical connections working correctly
- ▶ tail lift is secure and free from damage, functions correctly and the electrics are working correctly

## EXHAUST

Check that:

- ▶ exhaust doesn't emit excessive amounts of smoke

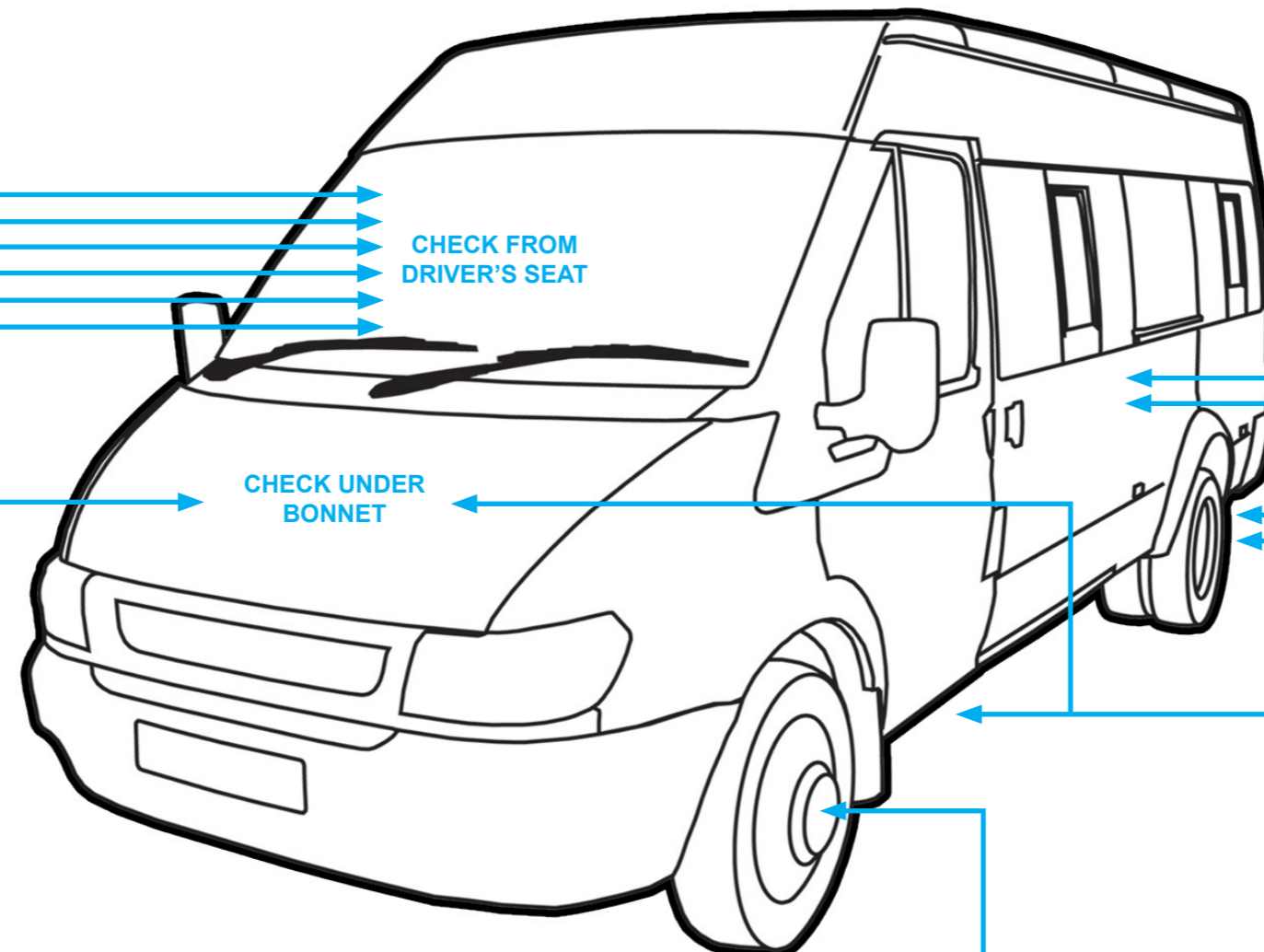
## FLUIDS, FUEL AND OIL

Check that:

- ▶ brake fluid, engine coolant, engine oil, power steering fluid, windscreen washer fluid and water levels are correct
- ▶ fuel filler cap is securely fitted
- ▶ there are no brake fluid, power steering fluid and water leaks by looking for puddles on the ground - if leaks are detected trace the cause

With the engine on, check:

- ▶ underneath the van for any fuel and oil leaks looking for puddles on the ground



## TYRES AND WHEELS

Check as much of your tyres and wheels as you can see. There must be:

- ▶ a minimum tread depth of 1.6mm
- ▶ sufficient inflation of each tyre
- ▶ no deep cuts in the sidewall
- ▶ no cord visible anywhere on the tyre
- ▶ no missing or insecure wheel-nuts

Failing to ensure a tyre is safe and legal can result in receiving 3 penalty points on your licence per tyre.