



Driver & Vehicle
Standards
Agency

The B+E training syllabus



Helping you **stay safe** on **Britain's roads**

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Introduction to the B+E training syllabus

From 16 December 2021, people in Great Britain who passed a DVSA driving test, category B, after 1 January 1997, are allowed to tow trailers up to 3,500kg MAM.

What is the syllabus?

The training syllabus sets out how to train drivers in the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to be a safe and responsible driver when towing a trailer with a category B motor vehicle. This category includes cars, vans and pick-up trucks.

Its contents were developed by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA), working in partnership with the Trailer Towing Advisory Group (TTAG) to achieve our common goal of keeping everyone safe on Britain's roads.

The training syllabus represents current good practice for driver training. But we recognise that there will be many different, valid ways to deliver the learning outcomes.

Who can take advantage of this training?

Any driver who holds a current, full category B driving licence can undertake this training as a way to improve their driving competence. Drivers will therefore have the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to demonstrate that they have maintained and continued to improve their driving competence since they gained their full category B driving licence.

How is the training structured?

Drivers must undertake training, covering the contents of this syllabus which provides them with specific training on how to tow a trailer, up to 3,500kg MAM with a category B vehicle. The duration of training will be based on a judgement by the trainer, of the ability of the driver and the time that will be required for them to meet the aim of the syllabus.

The training will be a mixture of theory and practical elements.

If you are in any doubt about any of the elements we cover in this syllabus, you should speak to your trainer.

Important to note this syllabus and National Standard builds on the other National Standards mentioned above and that drivers are already developing their skills knowledge and understanding in driving vehicles in category B.

Vehicle and trailer combinations

You should take your training in a vehicle combination that suits your needs. For some people this may be a light trailer and car, for others there may be a much heavier weight requirement for the trailer and towing vehicle. Towing combinations fall into three broad groups:-

Unbraked trailers – A trailer with a maximum permitted weight of 750kg or lower, is not required to have brakes. These trailers are generally used to transport gardening waste or general household goods. If the trailer has brakes they must be in good working order.

Medium sized vehicles and trailers These are combinations where the Maximum Authorised Mass (or MAM) of the towing vehicle plus the MAM of the trailer or caravan is less than 3,500 kg. A simple way of describing this is the heaviest that the vehicle and the trailer when fully loaded must not exceed 3,500 kg when the two weights are added together.

Large category B vehicles, towing large braked trailers. These trailers could include horse trailers and larger caravans and caged trailers loaded with small plant & machinery

For example, a large 4X4 SUV with a maximum authorised mass of up to 3,500 kg and be able to tow a trailer with a maximum authorised mass of 3,500 kg. This vehicle is legally capable of towing a large horse box or a large 6 berth caravan.

Whatever you tow you should make sure you know how to drive, use and operate it safely.

Aim of the syllabus

This syllabus sets out how to train drivers in the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to be a safe and responsible driver when towing a trailer with a category B vehicle.

On successful completion of this training, drivers will be able to discuss and demonstrate the following 12 (twelve) aspects of driving whilst towing a trailer with a category B vehicle:

- Preparing vehicle and its occupants for a journey
- How to guide and control the vehicle whilst towing
- How to competently reverse a vehicle and trailer
- How to uncouple and recouple the trailer safely and competently
- Use the road in accordance with the Highway Code
- Drive safely and responsibly in the traffic system
- Road safety benefits
- Fuel-saving driving techniques
- Safe driving techniques
- Safe loading
- Vehicle-handling techniques
- Legislative requirements

Successful completion of training is demonstrated by the drivers' ability to discuss and demonstrate all 12 aspects of driving whilst towing a trailer, to the satisfaction of the trainer. This can be evaluated through ongoing assessment throughout the training or at an end point assessment, depending on the needs of the individual and employers. The assessment may be carried out by the course trainer or other competent qualified person.

Who is this syllabus for?

This syllabus is for:

- the trainee (full licence holder of category B)
- the trainer

How to use this syllabus

The Syllabus is divided into four sessions, which are based on content from the [National Driving Standard for cars and light vans and the National standard for driving lorries](#).

Session 1 Preparing the vehicle, trailer, and its contents for daily use

Session 2 Drive the vehicle, whilst towing, in accordance with The Highway Code and legislation

Session 3 Reversing with the trailer, uncoupling, and coupling

Session 4 Drive safely and efficiently

To drive safely and responsibly, it is important for drivers and trainers to see these sessions as inter-connected and all equally as important. A driver can only become competent by understanding how the content from all the sessions fits together.

The route taken through the material by each trainee may differ, and DVSA believes that the training should be client centred. Client-centred learning means two things.

- It considers a learner's preferred style of learning
- People are more likely to keep learning if they are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning at an early stage

Trainees should use this training to:

- develop a greater awareness of the risks associated with driving
- learn to reflect on their own driving performance and take steps to improve in areas that need further development

Session 1: Preparing the vehicle, trailer, and its contents for daily use

The aim of this session is that you will be able to make an informed judgement on whether you, your vehicle, your trailer, and your load are fit to travel. It will also make you aware of how your vehicle may or may not be affected by certain safety factors associated with the weight and size of trailer. Then you will be able to act appropriately, based on that judgement.

Assess your own and your vehicle's safety

This session will teach you about:

- factors affecting your fitness to drive that can change from day to day and over your driving lifetime
- certain attitudes and misunderstandings that can prevent you from acting on the knowledge and understanding you have
- the roadworthiness of your vehicle and trailer
- the potential risks to yourself and others whilst towing
- what action you should take to manage any specific risks in the event of an incident
- how traffic, weather and road conditions can affect your driving

Loading your vehicle and trailer

The session develops knowledge and understanding of the safety and security issues involved in driving when towing a trailer (loaded or unloaded) and how to reduce the risks that driving with a loaded/unloaded trailer can generate.

Learning outcomes

When you have completed this session you will

LO1 be able to understand when outside factors can affect your competence at driving

LO2 understand and act on your responsibility to make sure that you, your vehicle and your trailer are legal

LO3 be able to understand the risks associated with securing loads on trailers

LO4 be able to understand and act on the responsibility to ensure the trailer **is** safely coupled to the towing vehicle

LO5 be able to control the risks associated with **towing loads**

LO6 be able to plan a journey suitable for towing a trailer

LO7 be able to understand what to do if a vehicle and trailer is involved in a crash or an emergency and how **to control any risks associated with towing**

Session 2: Tow safely in accordance with the Highway Code and regulations

The aim of this session is to understand and follow the rules in The Highway Code and other regulations which particularly apply to driving whilst towing.

The Highway Code

It is important that you do not think of The Highway Code as just something that you had to learn to pass your driving test. The Highway Code contains advice and rules about road signs and how to behave in particular situations whilst driving. You'll also need to know the speed limits that apply to your vehicle, whilst towing, especially on motorways and national speed limit roads. If you understand the Code's content, it will make it much easier for you to drive safely and responsibly in changing traffic situations.

If you do not follow the advice and rules set out in The Highway Code or regulations, there may be serious consequences for you and other road users.

Learning outcomes

When you have completed this session, you will

- LO1** be able to drive safely and responsibly in changing road and traffic conditions
- LO2** be able to comply with speed limits, signals, signs, markings, traffic calming measures, weight limits, congestions zones low and zero emission zones
- LO3** be able to understand towing-related road safety

Session 3: Reversing with the trailer. Coupling, and uncoupling

The aim of this session is that you will be able to guide and control your vehicle and trailer safely and responsibly while reversing. You will be able to safely and competently couple and uncouple your trailer to the vehicle, ensuring that it is safe and legal, whether on the public road or off-road.

Reversing with a trailer

Reversing with a trailer is a complex task; it involves taking in a large amount of information and responding to it appropriately. To be able to do this you must constantly scan the area around you, understand what is happening and identify possible hazards and risks.

Couple and recouple your trailer to the vehicle

Safely and successfully coupling your trailer to your towing vehicle is a matter of practice. It is important that you focus on each skill and make sure you understand what's required at each stage of the process.

Learning outcomes

When you have completed this session, you will

- LO1** be able to reverse a vehicle and trailer combination safely and responsibly
- LO2** be able to safely uncouple the trailer and ensure it is secure
- LO3** be able to safely couple a trailer to a vehicle ensuring it is safe and legal to access the public road

Session 4: Drive safely and efficiently

The aim of this session is that you will be able to guide and control your vehicle and trailer safely and responsibly, taking into account road, traffic, terrain when off-road and weather conditions.

Guiding and controlling your vehicle

Driving is a complex task; it involves taking in a large amount of information and responding to it appropriately. To be able to do this you must constantly scan around you, understand what is happening and identify possible hazards and risks.

To drive safely with a trailer attached to your vehicle you need to master the essential driving skills, such as steering and coordinating your vehicle's controls. You will ensure you are very confident of these skills before driving with a trailer so you can concentrate effectively on driving, towing, your surroundings and any potential hazards.

Your trailers load

You are legally responsible for your vehicle and trailer and need to make sure that it is loaded correctly for stability. You also need to be aware of the feel and handling of your vehicle at all times. As the driver, you need to be aware of

- the impact of towing a trailer with a load that is wider than your vehicle
- the load distribution within the trailer and the effects of accelerating, braking and steering

Learning outcomes

When you have completed this session you will

LO1 be able to start, move off, stop and leave a vehicle safely and appropriately

LO2 be able to drive and manoeuvre a vehicle safely, while towing a trailer, on different road surfaces and in different weather conditions

LO3 be able to control the vehicle and the driving forces and risks associated with towing loads

LO4 be able to understand the benefits of route planning when towing

Supporting documentation

Available at www.gov.uk/dvsa/driving-standards, where you can find

The 'National Standard for driving cars and light vans (category B)
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/377664/car-and-light-van-driving-syllabus.pdf

The 'National Standard for Lorries'

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/377668/national-standard-for-driving-lorries.pdf

Trainers should also refer to the 'National standard for driver and rider training', also available at www.gov.uk/dvsa/driving-standards.

Good towing information on <https://www.gov.uk/towing-with-car>

More detailed information can also be obtained from the following publications

- Department for Transport – The Official Highway Code ISBN: 9780115528149 (also available as an e-book or mobile phone application)
- Department for Transport – Know Your Traffic Signs ISBN: 9780115528552
- Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency – The Official DVSA Guide to Driving – The Essential Skills ISBN: 9780115531347
- Department for transport – The Official DVSA Guide to Towing ISBN 9780115534577



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