



# Mota-Bars

## TOWBAR SPECIALISTS

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Can you legally tow a caravan?

If you passed your test after 1 January 1997 you must sit a category B+E test before towing a trailer (including a caravan) heavier than 750kg on public roads, unless the combined Maximum Allowable Mass (MAM) of trailer and towing vehicle is less than 3500kg. This covers the vast majority of caravan outfits.

The DVLA licence requirement and DSA test has been around for nine years and many people are unaware of the need to pass a DSA test before towing a trailer. Police and road safety groups are aware of the problem but there is no evidence that drivers are being adequately advised.

Drivers and employers who are not legally entitled to tow a trailer will find their insurance null and void.

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Since 1997, the DSA has passed approximately 4.8 million drivers in the UK who will not have the category B+E entitlement. If only 1% need the licence, that would be 48,000 drivers. DSA figures indicate an average of 250 B+E tests being conducted during 2005/2003 in the UK (1183 in 2003/4). Scottish figures for 2003/4 show only 81 cat B+E tests - a 52% national pass rate.

Based on this analysis, large numbers of drivers are allegedly towing trailers illegally, unlicensed and uninsured! Are you one of them?

**TOWED OUTFITS AND RIGID MOTOR CARAVAN OUTFITS CATEGORY B LICENCE OBTAINED PRIOR TO 1 JANUARY 1997 MAY DRIVE (July 2006):**

a. Towed Outfits any outfit where the combined MAM (Maximum Authorised Mass) does not exceed 8,250kg. (over which weight would have required an additional test pre-1997) However Club recommendations on weight ratio between trailer and towing vehicle remain at 85%.

b. Rigid Motor Caravans without trailer any rigid motor caravan without a trailer where the MAM does not exceed 7,500kg.

c. Rigid Motor Caravan with trailer provided the total MAM of trailer and motor caravan does not exceed 8,250kg no further test is required, but Club recommendations on weight ratio between trailer and towing vehicle remain at 85%.

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**CATEGORY B LICENCE FIRST OBTAINED ON OR AFTER 1 JANUARY 1997 MAY DRIVE:**

a. Towed Outfits driver restricted to a combined MAM of 3,500kg and the trailer MAM must not exceed the unladen weight of the towing vehicle (85% ratio remains strongly recommended). If this MAM is to be exceeded an E Test pass is required.

The Driving Instructors' Association has a list of qualified driving instructors that can tutor those wishing to take the B+E driving test. For the number of your nearest driving instructor, please call 0845 345 5151, or visit the Driving Standards Website on [www.dsa.gov.uk](http://www.dsa.gov.uk).

b. Rigid Motor Caravans without trailer driver restricted to a MAM of 3,500kg until obtaining a pass of the LGV test, after which the driver is qualified to 7,500kg MAM.

c. Rigid Motor Caravan towing trailer provided the trailer does not exceed 750kg and the combined MAM does not exceed 4,250kg no further test is required for this type of outfit. However if the trailer MAM exceeds 750kg then a. applies for a vehicle less than 3,500kg. Otherwise an LGV test plus an E Test is needed.

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#### YOUR DRIVING ENTITLEMENT ON RENEWING AT THE AGE OF 70

On reaching the age of 70, drivers will retain their driving entitlement for Category B and Category B+E (provided Category B+E was held prior to the expiry date of their driving licence).

Category B+E entitles drivers to drive a motor vehicle (ie car, van or 4x4) not exceeding 3.5 tonnes Maximum Authorised Mass\* (MAM), drawing/towing any weight trailer/caravan within the prescribed maximum towing weight. The maximum towing weight will be specified in the technical data section of the vehicle manufacturer's handbook.

However, Club recommendations on weight ratio between trailer and towing vehicle remain at 85%.

\*The terms 'Maximum Authorised Mass', 'Gross Weight' and 'Permissible Maximum Weight' all have the same meaning, ie the weight of the vehicle plus the maximum load the vehicle may safely carry. When drivers of any vehicle over a MAM of 3,500kg reach 70 years of age and their driving licence expires they must pass the D4 Medical Test and pass the required standard eyesight test at 20.5 metres/67 feet with glasses used when driving.

This legislation became effective from 1 January 1998.  
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