

DRIVING ADVISORY TOWING



RED Corporate Driver Training believes that training to tow a trailer should be completed and assessed to a competent level. Every employer has a duty of care under health and safety legislation to ensure that employees are properly trained for any task assigned to them.

However, a Government push to deregulate licensing and vehicle training processes has led to a situation where there is little need for mandatory driver training to tow vehicles. It has abandoned the compulsory B+E tests in favour of a voluntary system whereby drivers and companies can undertake optional training in order to have a 'Permit To Tow' certificate.

But the complexities involved in towing vehicles means that road safety is being compromised – under the B+E testing regime, the pass rate for the test was 58%, highlighting just how complex towing is. And with businesses unwilling to pay for a cost which they are not required to under law, there is little incentive to invest in towing safety. In fact, a recent debate in Parliament revealed that the number of people taking up the voluntary towing testing scheme is just 500 – a huge decrease on the 29,000 people annually who were subject to the mandatory B+E test.

This guide offers a practical overview of the training available, and what licensing criteria apply to your employees.



What can I tow without training?

The simple answer is – anything that comes under the B and BE licence categories, which means a newly-qualified 18-year-old can drive a vehicle with up to eight passenger seats and tow a **3,500kg** trailer.



Category B

You can drive vehicles up to 3,500kg with up to eight passenger seats, and you can tow a trailer that **weighs up to 3,500kg MAM** (Maximum Authorised Mass - the weight of the vehicle, the trailer and the maximum load allowed all combined).

Category BE

You can drive a vehicle up to 3,500kg MAM with a trailer. If your licence is valid from before 19 January 2013, you can tow any size trailer within the towing limits of the vehicle, but if it is valid after 19 January 2013, you can tow a trailer with a MAM of up to 3,500kg within the towing limits of the vehicle.

For electric vans, the weight limit is **4,250kg MAM** (to take account of the heavier weight of batteries in EVs compared to regular diesels), although the vehicle and trailer limit remains at **7,000kg**.

For heavier vehicles which fall into the Category C rating, drivers have to undertake a C1 test before driving and towing.

Know your speed

There are different speed limits for vehicles when towing a trailer.

- On single carriageways, cars and vans towing a trailer or caravan are limited to 50mph (regular vehicles are limited to 60mph).
- For dual carriageways and motorways, the limit for towing drops from 70mph to 60mph.

It should also be remembered that you must not travel in the right-hand lane of a motorway, with three lanes or more, if you are driving a vehicle drawing a trailer.

What is a Permit to Tow (PTT)?

The RED Permit To Tow course consists of one, two and three-day courses, offered nationwide or at its Donington Park headquarters.

The courses are a mix of theory and practical training with an assessment at the end of each course. Upon successful completion, the trainee will receive a PTT card valid for three, four or five years from the date of training. RED recommends refresher training should be completed prior to the PTT expiry date.



RED PTT courses

■ One day course with 3-year expiry

This course is only suitable for drivers who tow infrequently, only tow one type of trailer that doesn't require advanced manoeuvres or loading and load security. After a video presentation and vehicle checks, delegates undertake practical assignments in coupling and uncoupling and manoeuvring, followed up with a 40-minute driving assessment.

■ Two-day course with 4-year expiry

This course is suitable for drivers who tow more regularly, only tow one type of trailer that may require advanced manoeuvres but no loading and load security. This builds on the previous course, but with added focus on real-world driving and manoeuvring, plus an extended on-road driving and practical examination.

■ Three-day course with 5-year expiry

This course is suitable for drivers who tow more regularly, may be required to tow more than one trailer type that may require advanced manoeuvres, and conducts loading and load security. This again builds on the previous courses, but with added focus on loading and unloading, coupling and uncoupling, vehicle checking, advanced manoeuvring procedures and an 80-minute assessment covering driving, coupling and manoeuvring.

Why get a PTT?

- Standardised training throughout the fleet.
- Reduced risk of having an incident.
- Improved fuel consumption.
- Less wear and tear.
- Corporate image boosted by having drivers who are better trained.

To find out more about RED Permit To Tow courses, [click here](#)



For more information visit:

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