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STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

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**1998 No. 3111**

**ROAD TRAFFIC**

**The Road Vehicles (Authorised Weight) Regulations 1998**

*Made* - - - - *11th December 1998*  
*Laid before Parliament* *11th December 1998*  
*Coming into force* - - *1st January 1999*

The Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, in exercise of the powers conferred by section 41 of the Road Traffic Act 1988(1) and of all other powers enabling him in that behalf, and after consultation with representative organisations in accordance with section 195(2) of that Act, hereby makes the following Regulations:

**Citation and commencement**

1. These Regulations may be cited as the Road Vehicles (Authorised Weight) Regulations 1998 and shall come into force on 1st January 1999.

**Interpretation**

2.—(1) In these Regulations—

“the 1986 Regulations” means the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986(2);

“articulated bus or coach” means a single vehicle which is a bus or coach consisting of 2 or more rigid sections which—

- (a) articulate relative to one another;
- (b) are intercommunicating so that passengers can move freely between them; and
- (c) are permanently connected so that they can only be separated by an operation using facilities normally found only in a workshop;

“articulated vehicle” means a tractor unit to which a semi-trailer is attached;

“axle weight” means the sum of the weights transmitted to the road surface by all the wheels of an axle, and for the purpose of calculating axle weight the 2 axles comprised in a tandem axle and all the axles comprised in a triaxle shall be treated as one axle;

“centre-axle trailer” means a trailer having only a single axle or group of axles which is positioned at or close to the centre of gravity so that, when the trailer is uniformly loaded,

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(1) 1988 c. 52; section 41 was amended by the Road Traffic Act 1991, Schedule 4, paragraph 50 and Schedule 8.  
(2) S.I. 1986/1078; relevant amending instruments are S.I. 1987/676; 1992/2016; 1994/329 and 1997/1096.

the static vertical load transmitted to the towing vehicle does not exceed 10 per cent of the maximum authorised weight for the axle or group of axles or 1000 kg, whichever is the less;

“kg” means kilograms;

“m” means metres;

“maximum authorised weight” in relation to a vehicle, vehicle combination or axle means the maximum authorised weight for the vehicle, vehicle combination or axle determined in accordance with these Regulations;

“rigid motor vehicle” means a motor vehicle which is not a tractor unit or an articulated bus;

“road friendly suspension” means a suspension system whereby at least 75 per cent of the spring effect is produced by air or other compressible fluid under pressure or suspension recognised as being equivalent within the Community as defined in Annex II of Council Directive 96/53/EC(3);

“semi-trailer” means a trailer which is constructed or adapted to be drawn by a tractor unit and includes a vehicle which is not itself a motor vehicle but has some or all of its wheels driven by the drawing vehicle;

“steering axle” means an axle that can be positively steered by the action of the driver;

“tandem axle” means a group of 2 axles not more than 2.5m apart so linked together that the load applied to one axle is applied to the other; references to a “driving tandem axle” include a tandem axle where either or both the axles comprising the tandem axle are driven and references to a “non-driving tandem axle” are to a tandem axle where neither of the axles comprising it is driven;

“tractor unit” means a motor vehicle by which a trailer partially superimposed on it may be drawn so that, when the trailer is fully loaded, not less than 20 per cent of its load is borne by the drawing vehicle;

“triaxle” means—

- (a) a group of 3 axles in which no axle is more than 3.25m apart from any other axle; or
- (b) a group of more than 3 axles in which no axle is more than 4.6m from any other axle, and in either case so linked together that the load applied to one axle is transferred to both or all the others; and

“vehicle combination” means an articulated vehicle or a rigid motor vehicle drawing a trailer.

(2) For the purposes of these Regulations the distance between any 2 axles of a vehicle or vehicle combination shall be taken to be the shortest distance between the line joining the centres of the areas of contact with the road surface of the wheels of one axle and the line joining the centres of the areas of contact with the road surface of the wheels of the other axle.

(3) In these Regulations, except where otherwise specified,—

- (a) a reference to a numbered regulation is a reference to the regulation in these Regulations so numbered;
- (b) a reference to a numbered paragraph is a reference to the paragraph so numbered in the regulation or the Schedule in which the reference occurs;
- (c) a reference to a numbered sub-paragraph is a reference to the sub-paragraph so numbered in the paragraph in which the reference occurs; and
- (d) a reference to a numbered Schedule is a reference to the Schedule to these Regulations so numbered.

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(3) OJ No. L235, 17.9.96, p. 59.

### **Application of Regulations**

3. These Regulations apply to all wheeled motor vehicles and trailers which fall within category M<sub>2</sub>, M<sub>3</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>, N<sub>3</sub>, O<sub>3</sub> or O<sub>4</sub> of the vehicle categories defined in Annex II of Directive 70/156/EEC<sup>(4)</sup> as substituted by Directive 92/53/EC<sup>(5)</sup> except vehicle combinations which for the time being fulfil the requirements of Part II, III or IIIA of Schedule 11A to the 1986 Regulations (exemptions relating to combined transport operations).

### **Maximum authorised weights**

4.—(1) Subject to paragraph (2) and regulation 5, no vehicle to which these Regulations apply and which is of a description specified in a Schedule to these Regulations shall be used on a road if—

- (a) the weight of the vehicle exceeds the maximum authorised weight for the vehicle determined in accordance with Schedule 1;
- (b) where the vehicle is used as part of a vehicle combination, the weight of the combination exceeds the maximum authorised weight for the combination determined in accordance with Schedule 2; or
- (c) the axle weight of any axle of the vehicle exceeds the maximum authorised axle weight for that axle determined in accordance with Schedule 3.

(2) A vehicle to which any of the provisions of regulations 75 to 79 of the 1986 Regulations apply, so long as it is so used that those provisions are complied with, shall be taken to comply with these Regulations.

### **Saving for regulation 80 of the 1986 Regulations (over-riding weight restrictions)**

5. Nothing in these Regulations shall prejudice or affect regulation 80 of the 1986 Regulations and a person using or permitting a vehicle to be used contrary to the provisions of that regulation commits an offence even if the weights authorised by these Regulations are not exceeded.

Signed by authority of the Secretary of State

*Larry Whitty*  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State,  
Department of the Environment, Transport and  
the Regions

11th December 1998

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(4) OJ No. L42, 23.2.70, p. 1.  
(5) OJ No. L225, 10.8.92, p. 1.

**Status:** This is the original version (as it was originally made). This item of legislation is currently only available in its original format.

## SCHEDULE 1

Regulation 4(1)(a)

## MAXIMUM AUTHORISED WEIGHTS FOR VEHICLES

**Weight not to be exceeded in any circumstances**

1.—(1) Subject to paragraph 2, the maximum authorised weight for a vehicle of a description specified in column (2) of an item in Table 1 below and having the number of axles specified in column (3) shall be the weight specified in column (4) of the item.

TABLE 1

<i>(1)</i> Item	<i>(2)</i> Description of vehicle	<i>(3)</i> Number of axles	<i>(4)</i> Maximum authorised weight (kg)
1.	Rigid motor vehicle	2	18000
2.	Tractor unit	2	18000
3.	Trailer which is not a semi-trailer or a centre-axle trailer	2	18000
4.	Trailer which is not a semi-trailer or centre-axle trailer	3 or more	24000
5.	Rigid motor vehicle which satisfies at least one of the conditions specified in subparagraph (2)	3	26000
6.	Rigid motor vehicle not falling within item 5	3	25000
7.	Tractor unit which satisfies at least one of the conditions specified in subparagraph (2)	3 or more	26000
8.	Tractor unit not falling within item 7	3 or more	25000
9.	Articulated bus	Any number	28000
10.	Rigid motor vehicle which satisfies at least one of the conditions specified in subparagraph (2)	4 or more	32000
11.	Rigid motor vehicle not falling within item 10	4 or more	30000

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- (2) The conditions referred to in items 5, 7 and 10 of Table 1 are that—
- (a) the driving axle if it is not a steering axle is fitted with twin tyres and road friendly suspension; or
  - (b) each driving axle is fitted with twin tyres and the maximum weight for each axle does not exceed 9500 kg.

### Weight by reference to axle spacing

2. For a vehicle of a description specified in column (2) of an item in Table 2 below and having the number of axles specified in column (3) of that item, the authorised weight in kilograms shall be the number equal to the product of the distance measured in metres between the foremost and rearmost axles of the vehicle multiplied by the factor specified in column (4) and rounded up to the nearest 10 kg, if that number is less than the maximum authorised weight determined in accordance with paragraph 1.

TABLE 2

<i>(1)</i> <i>Item</i>	<i>(2)</i> <i>Description of vehicle</i>	<i>(3)</i> <i>Number of axles</i>	<i>(4)</i> <i>Factor to determine maximum authorised weight</i>
1.	Rigid motor vehicle	2	6000
2.	Tractor unit	2	6000
3.	Trailer which is not a semi-trailer or centre-axle trailer	2	6000
4.	Rigid motor vehicle	3	5500
5.	Tractor unit	3 or more	6000
6.	Trailer which is not a semi-trailer or centre-axle trailer	3 or more	5000
7.	Rigid motor vehicle	4 or more	5000
8.	Articulated bus	Any number	5000

### SCHEDULE 2

Regulation 4(1)(b)

### MAXIMUM AUTHORISED WEIGHTS FOR VEHICLE COMBINATIONS

#### Weight not to be exceeded in any circumstances

1.—(1) Subject to paragraph 2, the maximum authorised weight for a vehicle combination of a description of vehicle specified in column (2) of an item in Table 3 below and having the number of axles specified in column (3) shall be the weight specified in column (4) of the item.

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TABLE 3

<i>(1)</i> <i>Item</i>	<i>(2)</i> <i>Description of combination</i>	<i>(3)</i> <i>Number of axles</i>	<i>(4)</i> <i>Maximum authorised weight (kg)</i>
1.	Articulated vehicle	3	26000
2.	Rigid motor vehicle towing a trailer satisfying the condition specified in sub-paragraph (2)	3	26000
3.	Rigid motor vehicle not falling within item 2 drawing a trailer	3	22000
4.	Articulated vehicle satisfying the conditions specified in sub-paragraph (3)	4	38000
5.	Articulated vehicle not falling within item 4	4	36000
6.	Rigid motor vehicle towing a trailer satisfying the condition specified in sub-paragraph (2)	4	36000
7.	Rigid motor vehicle not falling within item 6 drawing a trailer	4	30000
8.	Articulated vehicle	5 or more	40000
9.	Rigid motor vehicle towing a trailer satisfying the condition specified in sub-paragraph (2)	5 or more	40000
10.	Rigid motor vehicle not falling within item 9 drawing a trailer	5 or more	34000
11.	Articulated vehicle satisfying the conditions specified in sub-paragraph (4)	6 or more	41000
12.	Rigid motor vehicle towing a trailer satisfying each of the conditions specified in sub-paragraphs (2) and (4)	6 or more	41000

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(2) The condition referred to in items 2, 6, 9 and 12 of Table 3 is that the distance between the rear axle of the motor vehicle and the front axle of the trailer is not less than 3m.

(3) The conditions referred to in item 4 of Table 3 are that—

- (a) the combination consists of a 2-axle tractor unit and a 2-axle semi-trailer;
- (b) the weight of the tractor unit comprised in the combination does not exceed 18000 kg;
- (c) the sum of the axle weights of the semi-trailer does not exceed 20000 kg; and
- (d) the driving axle is fitted with twin tyres and road friendly suspension.

(4) The conditions referred to in items 11 and 12 of Table 3 are that—

- (a) the axle weight of each driving axle does not exceed 10500 kg; and
- (b) either—
  - (i) each driving axle is fitted with twin tyres and road friendly suspension; or
  - (ii) each driving axle which is not a steering axle is fitted with twin tyres and the axle weight of each such axle does not exceed 8500 kg;
- (c) each axle of the trailer is fitted with road friendly suspension; and
- (d) each vehicle comprised in the combination has at least 3 axles.

**Weight by reference to axle spacing**

2. For a vehicle combination of a description specified in column (2) in Table 4 below and having the number of axles specified in column (3), the maximum authorised weight in kilograms shall be the product of the distance measured in metres between the king-pin and the centre of the rearmost axle of the semi-trailer multiplied by the factor specified in column (4) and rounded up to the nearest 10 kg, if that weight is less than the authorised weight determined in accordance with paragraph 1.

TABLE 4

<i>(1)</i> Item	<i>(2)</i> Description of vehicle combination	<i>(3)</i> Number of axles	<i>(4)</i> Factor to determine maximum authorised weight
1.	Articulated vehicle	3 or more	5500

SCHEDULE 3

Regulation 4(1)(c)

MAXIMUM AUTHORISED AXLE WEIGHTS

**Weight not to be exceeded in any circumstances**

1.—(1) Subject to paragraph 2, the maximum authorised weight for an axle of a description specified in column (2) of an item in Table 5 below shall be the weight specified in column (3) of the item.

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TABLE 5

<i>(1)</i> <i>Item</i>	<i>(2)</i> <i>Description of axle</i>	<i>(3)</i> <i>Maximum authorised weight (kg)</i>
1.	Single driving axle	11500
2.	Single non-driving axle	10000
3.	Driving tandem axle which meets either of the conditions specified in sub-paragraph (2)	19000
4.	Driving tandem axle not falling within item 3	18000
5.	Non-driving tandem axle	20000
6.	Triaxle	24000

(2) The conditions referred to in item 3 of Table 5 are that—

- (a) the driving axle is fitted with twin tyres and road friendly suspension; or
- (b) each driving axle is fitted with twin tyres and no axle has an axle weight exceeding 9500 kg.

### Weight by reference to axle spacing

2. For an axle of a description specified in column (2) of an item in Table 6 below, if the dimension specified in column (3) is of the length specified in column (4), the maximum authorised weight shall be the weight specified in column (5) of the item, if that weight is less than the maximum authorised weight determined in accordance with paragraph 1.

TABLE 6

<i>(1)</i> <i>Item</i>	<i>(2)</i> <i>Description of axle</i>	<i>(3)</i> <i>Specified dimension</i>	<i>(4)</i> <i>Length m</i>	<i>(5)</i> <i>Maximum authorised weight (kg)</i>
1.	Driving tandem axle	Distance between the 2 axles comprised in the tandem axle	Less than 1	11500
2.	Driving tandem axle	Distance between the 2 axles comprised in the tandem axle	Not less than 1 but less than 1.3	16000
3.	Non-driving tandem axle	Distance between the 2 axles comprised in the tandem axle	Less than 1	11000
4.	Non-driving tandem axle	Distance between the 2 axles	Not less than 1 but less than 1.3	16000



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(1) Item	(2) Description of axle	(3) Specified dimension	(4) Length m	(5) Maximum authorised weight (kg)
		comprised in the tandem axle		
5.	Non-driving tandem axle	Distance between the 2 axles comprised in the tandem axle	Not less than 1.3 but less than 1.8	18000
6.	Triaxle	Distance between any one axle comprised in the triaxle and the nearer of the other 2 axles	1.3 or less	21000

### EXPLANATORY NOTE

*(This note is not part of the Regulations)*

These Regulations make new provision for the weights of wheeled motor vehicles and trailers which fall within category M<sub>2</sub>, M<sub>3</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>, N<sub>3</sub>, O<sub>3</sub> or O<sub>4</sub> of the vehicle categories defined in Annex II of Council Directive [70/156/EEC](#) as amended. They do not apply to vehicle combinations that meet the requirements for combined transport in Schedule 11A to the Motor Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986.

Regulation 4 introduces the three Schedules, which respectively lay down maximum authorised weights for individual vehicles (Schedule 1), for vehicle combinations (Schedule 2) and for axle weights (Schedule 3), and prohibits the use of a vehicle on a road if any of these weights are exceeded.

A vehicle which complies with the provisions by regulations 75 to 79 of the 1986 Regulations is taken to comply with these Regulations (regulation 4(2)).

The new weight limits are, in accordance with regulation 5, also subject to the overriding limit in regulation 80 of the 1986 Regulations, to which amendments are made by the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) (Amendment) (No. 7) Regulations 1998 (S.I. [1998/3112](#)).

This Regulation has been notified to the European Commission pursuant to Directive [83/189/EEC](#) of 28th March 1983 laying down a procedure for the provision of information in the field of technical standards and regulations (OJ 1983 L109, p.9) as amended by Council Directive [88/182/EEC](#) of 22nd March 1988 (OJ 1988 L81, p.75) and European Parliament and Council Directive [94/10/EEC](#) of 23rd March 1994 (OJ 1994 L100, p.30).