

FTA Van Excellence – Monthly Hot Topic – February 2017



Safe and legal loading

Vans are very easy to overload and the penalties are severe if caught. Spotting an overloaded van isn't difficult and the enforcement agencies are increasingly wise to this. It's vital to know the maximum your van can weigh overall and the maximum weight allowed for each axle.

It is entirely possible to overload one axle (typically front) while the van is within the overall limit. To avoid this, make sure the load is distributed properly and remember it may need redistributing and re-securing as the load is delivered. The limits for the van can be found on the manufacturer's plate – make sure you know where to find it.

Manufacturer		
Vehicle Type		
Engine Type		
Serial Number		
Number of axles		
Maximum axle weight front	rear	kg
Maximum gross weight	kg	
Maximum train weight	kg	

Overloading also changes the way a van handles – especially if the load is unsecure – and will increase fuel consumption. Check what you've got on board and don't carry stuff around unnecessarily.

Loads must be secure. A shifting load can damage not only the contents but also the interior of the van. This will reduce the vehicle's residual value and lead to recharge fees for rental and leased vans. An insecure load can also be dangerous for the driver. Even a small package or piece of equipment can become a deadly missile in a collision. On a lesser scale, loads falling on drivers as they open van doors can result in injury.

Think about loading. Avoid being overloaded. Know the maximum your van can legally weigh.

Check your van's weight at a local weighbridge if in any doubt - the only defence to driving an overloaded van is that you were taking it to the nearest weighbridge to check!. Ensure your load is secured and properly distributed to avoid overloading an axle. Don't forget the van weight includes any fuel and the weight of the driver and any passengers.

Drivers and their employers can be fined up to £5000 per offence and prosecution would adversely affect an organisation's Operator Licence if trucks are also operated.

Blasts

- Don't overload your van - it's easy for enforcement agencies to spot & penalties are severe if caught
- Make sure your load is secure - an unsecure load is dangerous & can damage the van & its contents
- Know your van's maximum weight - use a weighbridge, ignorance is no defence in law
- Your van's maximum weight includes passengers & fuel - don't get it wrong, you could be fined up to £5K and jeopardise your O Licence

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