



Department for

**Infrastructure**

An Roinn

**Bonneagair**

[www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk](http://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk)

## **Goods Vehicle Act (NI) FAQ Goods Vehicle Operator Licensing**

### **1. What is the Goods Vehicle Act?**

The Goods Vehicle Act (Goods Vehicles (Licensing of Operators) Act (Northern Ireland) 2010) is an Act of the NI Assembly which requires all operators using vehicles with a gross plated weight over 3500kg to carry goods in the course of a business or trade to be covered by an operator licence.

### **2. When does the Act come into effect?**

The Act came into force on 1 July 2012.

### **3. I only carry my own goods, do I need a goods vehicle operator licence?**

Yes, the legislation applies to operators who only carry their own goods.

### **4. What type of goods vehicle operator licence do I need?**

Companies that carry goods for hire or reward will have to obtain a 'standard' goods vehicle operator licence. Companies that only carry their own goods will have to obtain a 'restricted' goods vehicle operator licence.

### **5. How much does a goods vehicle operator licence cost?**

There will be an initial non-refundable one-off application fee of £254. When the application is approved a licensing fee of £449 will be required which covers a period of 5 years. The goods vehicle operator licence will be continuous but will be reviewed every 5 years.

### **6. How do I get a goods vehicle operator licence?**

Companies can apply for a goods vehicle operator's licence by completing the appropriate application form and sending it, along with the correct fee, to DfI Central Licensing Office, PO Box 180, Leeds, LS9 1BU.

### **7. I only use my vehicle for private purposes, do I need a goods vehicle operator licence?**

The legislation only applies to vehicles used in the course of a business or trade. Vehicles used for private purposes are exempt from the legislation and do not require a goods vehicle operator licence.

*Please note:* charities are considered a business or trade.

**8. I already have an operator licence. Is it still valid?**

Licences issued under the previous legislation (Transport Act (Northern Ireland) (1967) remain valid until their expiry date. A new application for a goods vehicle operator licence under the Goods Vehicle Act will then be needed.

**9. Do I need a goods vehicle operator licence for a minibus?**

The legislation only applies to vehicles carrying goods. Passenger-carrying vehicles are not affected by the legislation.

**10. What is an operating centre?**

An operating centre is the place where vehicles are normally kept when not in use.

**11. What are the requirements for operating centres?**

The operating centre should provide sufficient off street parking for all vehicles and trailers. The Department has to be satisfied that operating centres are suitable i.e., that they are big enough, with safe access and in an environmentally acceptable location. Details of the operating centre will have to be advertised in a local newspaper to allow local residents the right to make representations on environmental grounds.

**12. What vehicles are exempt from the legislation?**

For a full list of vehicles/functions that do not have to obtain a goods vehicle operator licence, refer to 'Use of Vehicle of Any Class for which a Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence is Not Required'. (Please note: if your fleet contains even 1 vehicle which is not exempt from the legislation, you will still have to obtain an operator licence.)

**13. I only operate a vehicle once a week and cover little mileage. Do I still need a goods vehicle operator licence?**

There is no concession for low mileage. If a vehicle is used on the public road to carry goods as a part of a business or trade it must be covered by a goods vehicle operator's licence.

**14. I operate recovery vehicles. Do I require an operator licence?**

There is an exemption for certain recovery vehicles when they are used to recover disabled vehicles, for further details refer to 'Use of Vehicle of Any Class for which a Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence is Not Required'. If your vehicle is used for purposes other than the described functions, then you will need a goods vehicle operator's licence.

**15. What are the maintenance undertakings I have to agree to before being granted a goods vehicle operator licence?**

For a full list of the maintenance undertakings required of all goods vehicle operators refer to 'Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence Maintenance FAQs'.

**16. Do I need a Transport Manager CPC (Certificate of Professional Competence) qualification?**

A Transport Manager CPC is required for operators seeking a 'standard' goods vehicle operator's licence (i.e. operators carrying goods for hire or reward). Those seeking a 'restricted' goods vehicle operator licence (i.e. operators only carrying their own goods) will not need a Transport Manager CPC qualification.

**17. Can I register my vehicles online?**

If you have a goods vehicle operator's licence you can access the Goods Vehicle Licensing Self-Service on the DVSA website by clicking on this link: [Vehicle and Operator Services Agency](#) or via the DfI website at: <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/transport-regulation-unit>.

**18. What are the requirements for companies hiring out trucks and trailers?**

The legislation applies to all companies who use vehicles over 3500kg to carry goods as part of a business or trade. Rental companies would need a goods vehicle operator licence if they transport their own vehicles.

*Please note:* the Department can impound vehicles that are not covered by a goods vehicle operator's licence. Rental companies may therefore wish to ensure that their customers have a goods vehicle operator's licence before hiring.

**19. Are vehicles used for agricultural purposes exempt?**

Some vehicles that are used solely for agricultural purposes will be exempt. For further details on agricultural exemptions refer to 'Use of Vehicle of Any Class for which a Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence is Not Required'.

**20. What are the rules on towing trailers?**

Vehicles and trailer towing combinations with a gross weight over 3500kg must be covered by a goods vehicle operator's licence if they are being used to carry goods for hire or reward. If such a combination is being used to carry a business' own goods then it will be exempt as long as the gross weight of the towing vehicle does not exceed 3500kg.

**21. Do I need a driver CPC (Certificate of Professional Competence)?**

A driver CPC is a separate matter from goods vehicle operator licensing. The helpline number for driver CPC is 0845 402 4000.

**22. Do I need a 6-weekly brake test?**

The frequency with which goods vehicle operators are meant to conduct their safety inspections depends on the size of vehicle, type of load and the distance travelled per year. A guide to safety inspection intervals can be found at Annex 5 of DVA's Guide to Maintaining Roadworthiness, at this link: <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/doi/motoring-info-guide-maintaining-roadworthiness-march-2016.pdf>