

Trailer & Towing Tuition

Changes to the licensing and testing system on 1st January 1997 saw the introduction of one completely new test, the B+E car and trailer test.

Although this test has been around for some 8 years now, a huge number of people, including some instructors are completely unaware of it. This has led to numerous incidences of people driving unlicensed, and uninsured through ignorance of the law.

The regulations regarding the towing of trailers, written by the European Committee were not designed in a way that is straightforward or easy to understand. The resulting rules are extremely confusing and are a minefield for the unwary.

Here is a summary of the rules; this SHOULD NOT be taken as a full explanation:

A B+E driving licence is required to tow a large trailer behind a motor vehicle.

A car is defined as a vehicle with no more than 8 seats, and a maximum permitted weight of 3500kg. A trailer is anything that is towed by a vehicle e.g. Horse boxes, Box van, large caravan, Car transporters etc. Trailers with a gross weight of more than 750kg need to be fitted with brakes, usually “over-run” brakes worked from the tow ball.

A driver without a B+E licence can tow a trailer, providing the gross weight of the trailer is less than the un-laden weight of the towing vehicle. The whole combination must weigh less than 3500kg in total. A post ’97 licence holder can however tow a trailer with a gross weight of around 1.5 tons, providing the towing vehicle and trailer are very carefully matched. If this matching is not done correctly, it will fail to comply with the exemption, resulting in the driver being unlicensed and uninsured. In a court of law this could carry a maximum of 9 penalty points and a £1000 fine and in some cases even a ban.

Two to Three day courses

These are suitable for drivers with little or no experience of towing a Trailer. These Courses are designed to provide more time to learn and practice each area of training. This is necessary to reach the standard required to take the B+E car and trailer test.

The day starts with a session on, law and ethics of towing a trailer, followed by theory tuition.

You will then proceed outside to practice the uncoupling and re-coupling procedure for the trailer. A demonstration will be given showing you how to carry out the necessary safety checks, i.e. securing trailer doors and ensuring the load is safe and secure and that all electrical systems are in working order.

The next stage is to perfect your On the Road driving skills, which will include a systematic and Eco style of driving, Moving off and stopping, Junctions, Country roads, Motorway driving, Awareness and planning and a reversing exercise.

A DSA B+E car with trailer test can be taken at the end of the final training day if booked in advance.

A standard training day is based on approximately six hours tuition.

A one-day course

These are suitable for drivers who have some previous experience of towing, or drivers who have recently failed a B+E car with trailer test. The course is similar in content to the two & three day course but less intense.

An assessment drive will be required at the start of any training course to assess the driver's ability and therefore identify the level of training required.

COURSE OUTLINES >>

Course Fee's

Course fees start from £240.00 per day, which includes use of a DS UK car and trailer.

The DSA test fee which is currently £105.00 is payable directly to the DSA where appropriate.

The Test

All B+E cars with trailer tests are conducted at LGV test centres and last approximately two hours. For B+E tests the towing vehicle must meet the usual car test requirements i.e. L - plates, seat belts and head restraints for driver and examiner. The towing vehicle must also be fitted with mirrors that meet the current regulations for towing.

The test will begin with a reverse exercise followed by a braking exercise; you will then proceed to an on-the-road driving assessment, which can take up to One hour. A test route is usually around 15 miles long. The test-marking scheme is the same as for other tests, with a maximum of 15 driver faults allowed.

On return to the test centre you will be asked to uncouple & re-couple the trailer, if the trailer is light enough you can move the trailer into the coupling position by hand. If the trailer is heavier, you are allowed to move the towing vehicle into the required position. You must then demonstrate the safety checks.

If you are travelling to Leeds for your training and need a hotel, DS UK can arrange a 3 star hotel at £65.00 DBB per night. For more information contact the hotel by calling 01977 682761 or via email at enquiries@hotels-leeds-selby.com

For more information contact Paul Murphy on 0113 232 0440, mobile 07812 063 669 or by emailing us through our contact form.