

REAL TOTAL MASS FAQ'S

Since 19th January 2013, the rules relating to some bus and truck vehicles which are presented at the driving test have changed. This involves the addition of "Real total mass" requirements which ensures that the driver of the vehicle has demonstrated that they are capable of driving with a minimum load which they may have to carry in their normal driving career in this category of vehicle.

It is very important for road safety that candidates for the driving test prove their competence in a vehicle which will resemble the type they may be driving after their test. This applies to all tests in the following categories:

- BE (Car and trailer)
- C (Rigid trucks/large vans)
- CE (Articulated trucks or combinations of Category C & trailer)
- C1E (Larger vans/light truck, and trailer)
- DE (Bus and trailer)
- ED1 (Minibus and trailer)

The information below in FAQ format is designed to assist you with questions you may have about Real Total Mass.

Q1. What is "Real total mass"?

A1. Real total mass is the weight of a vehicle including the load, if any, which is on it.

Q.2 Why might I need to have a load on the vehicle during my driving test?

A. 2 It is important to bear in mind that the point of having a vehicle with a minimum real total mass for driving test purposes is to make sure that drivers demonstrate their competence in a vehicle which will be similar to the kind of vehicle the full licence will allow them to drive after their test. For Categories BE, C1E DE and D1E, in all cases, irrespective of the weight of the trailer unladen, there is a requirement to load the trailer. In the other relevant categories, (categories C, CE, and D) the vehicle must only be laden if the unladen weight of the vehicle does not already meet the requirement.

Q3. What is the minimum real total mass that is required for the driving test since the 19th January 2013?

A3. There are different real total mass requirements depending on the category of vehicle. These requirements are notified to every test applicant in their test appointment notification and are detailed in the following table:

Category	Real Total Mass Requirement
C (Truck)	The vehicle must be presented with a real total mass (the actual weight of the vehicle including any load if necessary) of at least 10,000kg , having due regard for safety, stability, manufacturer's guidelines and legal limits.
BE (Car and trailer)	The trailer must be presented with a real total mass (the actual weight of the trailer including the necessary load) of at least 800kg , having due regard for safety, stability, manufacturer's guidelines and legal limits of the combination. For these categories, in every case, irrespective of the weight of the trailer unladen, the trailer must be presented with a load of 30 four inch (100 x 220 x 450mm) solid concrete building blocks (see Figure 2 below), to ensure that it meets minimum real total mass requirements for the test (real total mass is the actual weight of the trailer including the

	necessary load), having due regard for safety, stability, manufacturer's guidelines and legal limits of the combination.
CE (Artic or truck and trailer combination)	The articulated vehicle or the combination must be presented with a real total mass (the actual weight of the combination including any load if necessary) of at least 15,000kg , having due regard for safety, stability, manufacturer's guidelines and legal limits of the combination.
C1E (Light truck and trailer)	The trailer must be presented with a real total mass (the actual weight of the trailer including any load if necessary) of at least 800kg , having due regard for safety, stability, manufacturer's guidelines and legal limits of the combination.
DE (Bus and trailer)	The trailer must be presented with a real total mass (the actual weight of the trailer including any load if necessary) of at least 800kg , having due regard for safety, stability, manufacturer's guidelines and legal limits of the combination.
D1E (Minibus and trailer)	The trailer must be presented with a real total mass (the actual weight of the trailer including any load if necessary) of at least 800kg , having due regard for safety, stability, manufacturer's guidelines and legal limits of the combination.

Q3. How will I ensure my vehicle meets the requirements on the day of the test?

A3. This will depend on the vehicle category you are sitting your driving test in.

The following table outlines the requirements which you need to meet for real total mass for each vehicle category:

Vehicle Category	How to meet the Real Total Mass requirement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="197 271 459 434">• BE (Car/Jeep and Trailer) <li data-bbox="197 528 488 629">• DE (Bus and Trailer) <li data-bbox="197 723 491 887">• C1E (Large van/light truck and Trailer) <li data-bbox="197 981 432 1144">• D1E (Minibus and Trailer) 	<p data-bbox="547 271 1437 434"><u>In all cases</u> for categories BE, DE, C1E and D1E, loading of the trailer will be met by placing thirty x 4” (inch) solid concrete blocks in the trailer (see <i>Figure 2</i>).</p> <p data-bbox="547 528 1437 692">The blocks should be evenly distributed across the trailer and positioned in such a way as to keep the nose weight within the recommended limits.</p> <p data-bbox="547 786 1406 1010">The nose weight is the maximum load your trailer can put on your vehicle’s tow ball (set out by the vehicle manufacturer). The suggested figure for a safe nose weight when towing is around 7 per cent of the laden weight of the trailer.</p> <p data-bbox="547 1167 1445 1391">The trailer should be loaded in a way as to ensure individual wheels /axles are not overloaded, having due regard for safety, stability, <u>manufacturer’s guidelines</u> and legal limits of the combination.</p> <p data-bbox="547 1485 1445 1648">Also remember that in order to comply with the law, the braking and lighting systems must be functioning correctly and the general structure must be sound.</p>
<p data-bbox="150 1682 300 1715">C (Trucks)</p>	<p data-bbox="547 1682 1430 1906">You firstly must establish the unladen weight of the truck – the unladen weight is stated on the vehicle’s CRW (Certificate of Commercial Vehicle Roadworthiness) under U.L.W. (Unladen Weight).</p>

If the unladen weight of the vehicle meets or exceeds the real total mass requirement stated in Question 3 above (i.e. 10,000kg), then you will not need to add any additional load to the vehicle for the driving test. You must bring the Certificate of Commercial Roadworthiness with you to the Driving Test to present to the Driver Tester so that they can check the unladen weight.

If the unladen weight does not meet the real total mass requirement stated in Question 3 above (i.e. 10,000kg), then you must first establish the difference between the unladen weight of the vehicle and the real total mass requirement. For example, if the unladen weight of the vehicle is 8,000kg, and the requirement is 10,000kg, then you need to place 2,000kg minimum on the vehicle to meet the requirement.

The RSA requires that IBC's (Intermediate Bulk Containers) filled with water are placed securely on the back of the vehicle (see *Figure 1*). IBC's have a stated capacity – e.g. a 1,000 litre IBC when filled with water will weigh 1,000kg (1 tonne).

In the example above, two 1,000 litre IBC's filled with water loaded securely on the back of the vehicle would meet the minimum requirement for the driving test.

You must bring the current Certificate of Commercial Roadworthiness (pass statement is not acceptable) with you to the Driving Test to present to the Driver Tester so that they can check the unladen weight. Please check the expiry date of the

	<p>CRW to ensure that, should it expire before the test appointment, you have time to have the vehicle tested and have a new CRW issued to you to present at the test.</p>
<p>CE (Articulated trucks or combinations of category C truck and Trailer)</p>	<p>In order to establish the unladen weight of <u>the tractor unit and the trailer together</u>, you must get both weighed <u>together</u> at a weighbridge. You will receive a certificate or receipt from the weighbridge, which you must bring to the driving test with you to show to the Driver Tester and which must contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The registration number of the tractor unit • The trailer mark of the trailer being presented for the driving test • The unladen weight of the tractor unit and trailer together • The date the vehicle was weighed <p>If the unladen weight of the vehicle <u>meets or exceeds</u> the real total mass requirement stated in Question 3 above (i.e. 15,000kg), then you will not need to add any additional load to the vehicle for the driving test. You must bring the weighbridge certificate with you to the Driving Test to present to the Driver Tester so that they can check the unladen weight.</p> <p>If the unladen weight <u>does not meet</u> the real total mass requirement stated in Question 3 above (i.e. 15,000kg), then you must first establish the difference between the unladen weight of the vehicle and the real total mass requirement. For</p>

example, if the unladen weight of the vehicle is 12,000kg, and the requirement is 15,000kg, then you need to place 3,000kg minimum on the vehicle to meet the requirement.

The RSA requires that IBC's (Intermediate Bulk Containers) filled with water are placed securely on the back of the vehicle (see *Figure 1*). IBC's have a stated capacity - a 1,000 litre IBC when filled with water will weigh 1,000kg (1 tonne).

In the example above, three 1,000 litre IBC's filled with water loaded securely on the back of the vehicle would meet the minimum requirement for the driving test.

NOTE FOR ALL CATEGORIES

Please note that the weight of the vehicle/vehicle and trailer, when loaded must not exceed any of the plated axle weights or plated maximum authorised mass of that particular vehicle/trailer. You must have due regard for safety, stability, and manufacturer's guidelines and legal limits of vehicles or combinations. You must refer to the specific Vehicle Manufacturers Guidelines to ensure recommended weights are not exceeded.

Q4. Why do I have to use IBC's if I have to load category C & CE?

A4. In order for the Driver Tester to determine that the vehicle meets the requirements of real total mass, a universal manner of displaying real total mass is required. The use of IBC's is seen to be the most identifiable method. The use of, say, a concrete slab, would not be easily identifiable in terms of mass. IBC's are readily available and are relatively inexpensive, or could be borrowed, and do not require the test applicant to get certification from a weighbridge, for example. You

may be required to open the back of the vehicle in order for the tester to check that the load is in place.



Figure 1 – IBC (Intermediate Bulk Container)

Q5. Why 4" concrete blocks for categories BE, DE, C1E, and D1E?

A5. In order for the Driver Tester to determine that the vehicle meets the real total mass requirements, a universal manner of displaying real total mass is required. The use of concrete blocks for categories BE, DE, C1E & D1E was found to be the most satisfactory for ease of access and loading on the vehicle for the customer, and as being easily identifiable for the Driver Tester. If it is accepted that a trailer will weigh a minimum of 250kg on its own, the 30 blocks (each weighing approximately 19-20kg) will weigh an additional 570kg, which together will exceed the minimum real total mass requirement of 800kg at 820kg. As outlined above, the blocks are required in every case, irrespective of whether the trailer already weighs 800kg when empty.

You may be required to open the door of the trailer in order for the tester to check that the load is in place.



Figure 2 – A four inch solid concrete block (4" x 9" x 18")

Q6. My car/jeep trailer/horse box already weighs 800 kg when empty – do I still have to load it for the category BE test?

A5 Yes, as many such trailers are not required to display the unladen weight, the driver tester must be in a position to immediately be satisfied as to the real total mass presented. Therefore, if every such trailer is loaded with the 30 4" concrete blocks as outlined above, the real total mass requirement is met. This loading with blocks is required **in every case**, irrespective of whether the trailer already weighs 800kg. Test applicants must ensure that the trailer is capable of carrying the load and that neither the trailer, the vehicle nor the vehicle hitch are overloaded.