

YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE

Tachograph Rules & Transport Manager CPC

Essential compliance knowledge for drivers, operators, and transport managers.

Stay compliant, avoid penalties, and manage your operation with confidence

Tachograph rules and transport management compliance are among the most complex areas of UK road transport law. Errors can result in substantial fines, licence revocations, and even criminal prosecution. This guide explains the key rules for drivers and the Transport Manager CPC qualification for those responsible for managing road transport operations.



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6 consecutive industry awards for training excellence.



Compliance Experts

Tachograph and compliance training delivered by experienced professionals.



DVSA Test-Standard

All training delivered to current DVSA and DVLA standards.

What is a Tachograph and Who Needs One?

A tachograph is a device that records a driver's speed, distance, and driving time. It is a legal requirement for most commercial vehicles over 3.5 tonnes.

Which vehicles require a tachograph?

Vehicle type	Tachograph required?
Goods vehicles over 3.5 tonnes used for hire or reward	Yes
Goods vehicles over 3.5 tonnes used by the owner (own account)	Yes (if over 7.5t or if international)
Vehicles over 2,501 kg on international hire/reward journeys (from July 2026)	Yes — Smart Tachograph 2
Buses and coaches with more than 8 passenger seats	Yes (if over 50 km from base)
Agricultural, forestry, or construction vehicles	Generally exempt
Emergency services vehicles (police, fire, ambulance)	Exempt

Types of tachograph



Analogue Tachograph

Uses a paper chart (tachograph disc) to record data. Older vehicles may still use these, but they are being phased out. Charts must be kept for at least 28 days in the vehicle.



Digital Tachograph

Records data electronically on a driver card and the vehicle unit. Driver cards must be downloaded at least every 28 days. Vehicle units must be downloaded at least every 90 days.



Smart Tachograph (Gen 1)

Includes GNSS positioning and remote communication. Required in vehicles first registered from June 2019.



Smart Tachograph 2 (Gen 2)

Enhanced version with improved remote enforcement capability. Required in new vehicles from August 2023 and for international journeys over 2,501 kg from July 2026.

EU Drivers' Hours Rules

The EU drivers' hours rules (Regulation EC 561/2006) apply to most commercial goods and passenger transport in the UK and EU. These rules set strict limits on driving time and mandatory rest periods. Drivers must record all activities on their tachograph.

Key driving time limits

Daily driving limit:	9 hours (can be extended to 10 hours twice per week)
Weekly driving limit:	56 hours
Fortnightly driving limit:	90 hours across any two consecutive weeks
Daily rest:	Minimum 11 hours (can be reduced to 9 hours three times per week)
Weekly rest:	Minimum 45 hours (can be reduced to 24 hours, but the reduction must be compensated within 3 weeks)
Break after 4.5 hours:	At least 45 minutes (can be split: 15 min then 30 min)

Tachograph modes – what must be recorded



Driving (D)

All time spent at the wheel of a tachograph vehicle.
Recorded automatically when the vehicle is moving.



Other Work (H)

Loading, unloading, cleaning, maintenance, and all other work-related activities.



Availability (A)

Time when the driver is available but not working – e.g., waiting at a ferry terminal or accompanying another driver.



Rest (Bed symbol)

All rest periods, including daily and weekly rest. Must be recorded accurately.



Penalties for non-compliance

DVSA roadside checks can result in fixed penalty notices of up to £300 per offence for drivers, and unlimited fines for operators. Serious or repeated infringements can lead to licence revocation and criminal prosecution. Accurate tachograph use is not optional.

The Transport Manager CPC Qualification

A legal requirement for anyone named as Transport Manager on a Standard Operator's Licence.

Any business operating goods vehicles over 3.5 tonnes or passenger vehicles with more than eight seats under a Standard Operator's Licence must have a nominated Transport Manager who holds the Transport Manager CPC (Certificate of Professional Competence). This is a Level 3 qualification and a lifetime award — once obtained, it does not expire.

Who needs a Transport Manager CPC?



Road Haulage

Any business operating HGVs for hire or reward under a Standard National or International Operator's Licence.



Passenger Transport

Bus and coach operators holding a Standard Operator's Licence for passenger-carrying vehicles.



Own-Account Operators

Businesses operating their own HGV fleet (not for hire or reward) under a Standard Operator's Licence.



External Transport Managers

Individuals who act as Transport Manager for multiple operators under a formal management contract.

The qualification structure

The Transport Manager CPC is awarded by the OCR (Oxford, Cambridge and RSA) examining body and covers two pathways: Road Haulage and Passenger Transport. Candidates study a comprehensive syllabus covering transport law, business management, financial management, and technical standards. Assessment is by written examination.



Qualification details

Level: Level 3 (equivalent to A-level standard)

Awarding body: OCR

Duration: Typically 3–6 months of study

Assessment: Written examinations (two papers)

Cost: Course fees typically £999–£2,160 depending on provider and study mode

Validity: Lifetime — does not expire once awarded

Operator Licences & Compliance Obligations

Types of Operator's Licence

Licence type	What it covers
Restricted	Own goods only, within the UK. No Transport Manager CPC required.
Standard National	Hire or reward within the UK, or own goods nationally. Transport Manager CPC required.
Standard International	Hire or reward within the UK and internationally. Transport Manager CPC (international pathway) required.

Key operator compliance obligations



Vehicle Maintenance

Operators must have a documented maintenance system. All vehicles must have valid MOTs and be maintained in a roadworthy condition.



Tachograph Downloads

Driver cards: every 28 days. Vehicle units: every 90 days. Records must be kept for at least 12 months.



Driver Records

Operators must keep records of driver working hours, licence checks, and CPC status. Licence checks must be conducted at least every 3 months.



DVSA Audits

The DVSA conducts operator compliance audits (OCRs). A poor audit result can lead to licence curtailment, suspension, or revocation.



Good reputation requirement

Both the operator and the Transport Manager must maintain "good reputation." Serious traffic offences, financial irregularities, or repeated compliance failures can result in loss of good reputation and the revocation of the operator's licence. The Traffic Commissioner has wide powers to investigate and act.



Need compliance support?

Call us to discuss tachograph training and compliance courses for your team.

Contact Us

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Web: www.gsdrivertraining.com

Training base: Surrey, serving the South East and beyond.

Group tachograph and compliance training available for fleets.

Courses Available

- ✓ Tachograph Rules & Compliance
- ✓ Driver CPC Periodic Training (35 hrs)
- ✓ Driver CPC Initial Qualification
- ✓ Category C Rigid HGV
- ✓ Category C+E Articulated
- ✓ Category C1 Medium Vehicles
- ✓ PCV / Minibus / Ambulance



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