



OBJECTS IN THE REAR VIEW MIRROR COULD BE MORE HAZARDOUS THAN THEY FIRST APPEAR!



As they appear in the rear view mirror, you check your lights and ensure the children have their seatbelts on. Nope! Nothing appears to be wrong. At which point the police lights indicate for you to pull over. Does this sound familiar? We've all experienced the police stopping us at one time or another; fingers crossed it's nothing serious.

A few minutes later you are given the bad news. You are driving illegally. A very easy mistake to make, but not one that can be forgiven. In the eyes of the law, ignorance is not an excuse. The law is a very unfamiliar entity for most of us in the UK, sure we know the basics; have a driving licence, drive under the speed limit, make sure your vehicle is taxed and insured. Being a good citizen, all of this is in order; however, due to legislation you are towing your racing car illegally. How can this happen? Very easily if you read the law regarding towing a trailer.

Anybody who passed a test after 1/1/1997 needs to take a B+E test if they want to tow a larger trailer.



The actual law states-

“new drivers will only be allowed to drive and tow the following combinations: - “

1. Vehicles up to 3.5 tonnes (category B) with a 750kg trailer (4.25 tonnes total MAM, Maximum Authorised Mass).
2. Category B vehicles with larger trailers i.e. > 750kg, provided that the combined MAM does not exceed 3.5 tonnes and the gross MAM of the trailer does not exceed the kerbweight of the towing vehicle. To be able to tow combinations outside this ruling requires the passing of an additional test. How this translates to the general public is quite important. The first thing you need to know, is how much do your vehicles weigh? Both the vehicle you are driving and the vehicle you are towing. If these vehicles have a combined weight of over 3.5 tonnes, you could be driving illegally. The easiest way to check your eligibility is to get out your licence and have a look at it, something most of us probably haven't really done since it arrived in the post all those years ago. If your licence states that you have B you can legally tow as long as the weight of your vehicle and your trailer does not exceed

4.25 tonnes. If you do not have B+E and decide that you still want to take the risk of driving then that is of course your choice. The penalty for driving illegally is very severe; your vehicle can be impounded until a suitable and legal driver can be provided. (They will also have to be insured on the vehicle) you can also be fined to a maximum penalty of £1000.

Of course, it is always a possibility that you may not be stopped by the police, you may carry on your journey, but should something else happen, for example an accident involving your vehicle. You could find that your insurance does not cover you for anything.

If you are not legally able to drive your vehicle and its trailer, you could be stopped and fined, up to £1000, however currently the cost of B+E Test is £115 (due to rise to £125 in March 2010), a much cheaper option.

If you are unsure of the law, or you feel you may need advice regarding your trailer and vehicle, or you have found that you are now unable to legally tow your racing vehicle, there are people who can help, either with advice or with suitable training. B.o.B Trailer Training Services can help with advice and courses. As a member of **BRSCC** they will give a 10% discount on training. Their friendly and knowledgeable staff have many years experience and can provide training on your doorstep as well as residential courses. Should you find that you are legally able to drive a vehicle with your licence but are due to tow for the first time, they also offer friendly refresher courses and advice on how to tow your trailer. For more information visit their website www.trailer-training-services.co.uk or call 01745 851067 to speak to their friendly instructor.

A phone call is a lot less expensive than the consequences.

