

VEHICLE SPECIAL ORDERS:

Guidance for LAND TRAIN applications and operation

General

1. For a vehicle to be used on the public roads in Great Britain it must comply with insurance, licensing (tax) and registration requirements. It must also comply with applicable construction regulations. Primarily these are the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 (C&U), as amended, and the Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations 1989 (RVLR), as amended. These requirements apply even where road use is minimal.
2. Under “normal” circumstances Land Train combinations would not be permitted to operate on public roads as they would contravene in some cases, Regulations 16, 18 items 2 – 8 (braking), 83 (1) items 6 and 7 (number of trailers) and 90 (1) (carriage of passengers in trailers for hire or reward) of C&U. However, Land Train combinations may be permitted to operate on public roads provided that the operator has obtained a Vehicle Special Order (VSO) issued under section 44 of The Road Traffic Act 1988.
3. Attached is an example Vehicle Special Order template which sets out the core terms and conditions that must be observed if an Order is issued. It should be noted that additional terms and conditions may be added, on a case by case basis, at the request of local authorities or local Police, and may include for example, restrictions on certain hours of the day that the Land Train may be used.
4. The view of the Department for Transport is that Land Trains are special purpose vehicles designed for low speed sightseeing operations on a specific itinerary which would not ordinarily be carried out by a passenger vehicle compliant with the regulations (e.g. it is not a traditional public service vehicle).
5. An Order would not be issued unless the proposed itinerary(ies) are for genuine tourist / sightseeing purposes. Consequently an application where a Land Train was intended to be used as part of a bus shuttle service or park and ride scheme would clearly not be accepted. For this reason where an itinerary includes, for example, one or more car parks and / or shopping areas, etc., it is likely that the Land train will only be permitted to operate in one direction between these locations.
6. Applicants are required to submit written approval from the local Police and Highway Authority (e.g. Borough Council, etc.) that they have no objections to the vehicle running on the proposed tour. If either of these parties raises an objection a VSO would not be issued.
7. All vehicles are required by law to be in a roadworthy condition at all times when used on public roads. Applicants must undertake to ensure that this is the case and this must be substantiated at the time of application. For this purpose VCA will accept a report submitted by a suitably qualified engineer to confirm that, at the time of their inspection, the motor vehicle and trailer(s) were, in their opinion, roadworthy. Evidence of previous maintenance and a schedule for future maintenance may also be required. Land Trains may be inspected at any time by the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) to ensure that they are being maintained in a roadworthy condition and that the terms and conditions of the Order being observed. VOSA or the police may take enforcement action for any non compliance.
8. Some land train combinations do not fully comply with the braking requirements contained within C&U. A specific braking standard has been defined for these vehicles (which is contained within Schedule C of the attached example VSO

template) and compliance with these requirements may be used as an alternative to C&U requirements. All vehicle combinations must comply with the requirements of either Schedule C or C&U, and this must be confirmed to VCA before an Order can be issued.

9. Any Order issued by VCA will only exempt the vehicle combination from the Regulations mentioned in Condition 3 of the Order, but the vehicle must comply in every other respect with the requirements of C&U and RVLRL. It is the responsibility of applicants to examine the regulations plus their amendments for themselves to ensure compliance.
10. For the purposes of C&U and licensing the towing vehicle can be considered to be a motor tractor. This fact should be of assistance when examining the regulations.
11. Copies of regulations may be obtained from The Stationery Office (TSO, formerly Her Majesty's Stationery Office) by quoting the SI numbers mentioned above. Alternatively some documents¹ are available freely on-line at www.opsi.gov.uk, or local technical libraries may hold copies for perusal.

Validity of Orders

12. Applicants should make themselves aware of the terms and conditions of an Order and if any non compliance of these has occurred or is likely to occur they should take immediate corrective action. Applicants should also pay particular attention to the requirements for roadworthiness specified at paragraph 7 in this guide and the C&U and RVLRL requirements stated at condition 3 in the attached example Vehicle Special Order template.
13. When an Order is issued it is valid for one year. However, if **any** of the terms and conditions set out on the Order are not complied with it will become invalid. The consequence of any non compliance is that all of the requirements of C&U will apply in full. This may lead to;
 - Prohibition of use of the vehicle combination on public roads
 - Revocation of the Order
 - Prosecution in respect of any requirement of C&U which is not complied with
 - Notification to the Traffic Commissioner

Application Process

14. There is no specific application form as such, however, any request for a new Order or renewal of an existing Order must be in writing and contain at least the following information:
 - a) The applicant must state the name of the operator of the vehicles (if not themselves), plus the operator's official address;
 - b) Full details of the individual motor vehicle(s) and trailer(s)², including;
 - i) registration mark(s) / chassis number(s) / identification number(s).
 - ii) width and length (in metres)
 - iii) gross vehicle weight (in kg)
 - c) Details of the vehicle combination(s);
 - i) the total length (in metres)

¹ Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations 1989 and amendments; some of the amendments to Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986

² (if trailers are different give details for each one individually)

- ii) the combined gross weight (in kg)
 - iii) the total number of passengers which may be carried
- d) An A4 size map highlighting the proposed tour(s) and showing the direction(s) of travel, any stops and any alternatives to / derivatives of and access to the main tour (e.g. travelling to / from garaging / maintenance / refuelling facilities, alternatives in the event of road closures, shortened tour options, etc.) and a written description of the itinerary(ies);
- e) Written confirmation from the relevant Council / Highway Authority and local Police that;
- i) they are aware of the content of this guide and agree that they consider the itinerary(ies) described and outlined on the map to be for genuine tourist / sightseeing purposes, and
 - ii) they consider the operation of the vehicle combination(s) in question on the specified itinerary(ies) does not represent an unacceptable risk to public safety, and
 - iii) they agree that the vehicle combination(s) in question can be used as indicated in the application;
- f) A report from a suitably qualified engineer, that should include, with particular reference to the attached Example Order template, confirmation that the vehicles;
- i) are in a roadworthy condition (e.g. with particular reference to condition 3)
 - ii) are in compliance with the construction requirements, and in particular, the braking requirements contained in Schedule C to the attached Example Order template, and that equipment satisfying the requirements of conditions 6 to 9 and 14 (e.g. beacons, safety chains / signs, safety devices, doors, communication device, fire extinguisher³) are present, in a satisfactory condition and in working order
 - iii) are equipped with a working speedometer (motor vehicles only)
- g) A declaration by the applicant that during the validity of the Order;
- i) the vehicles will be maintained in a fit and roadworthy condition at all times
 - ii) a programme of scheduled maintenance has been put in place
 - iii) all the terms and conditions of the Order will be complied with.
15. Please note that VCA requires at least 10 working days in which to prepare an Order once all the information required by VCA has been received from the applicant.
16. All requests for new VSOs, renewals, or amendments to existing Orders must be sent to the VCA at the following address:-

E-mail: vso@vca.gov.uk

Post: Vehicle Special Orders
VCA Midlands Centre
Watling Street
Nuneaton
Warwickshire
CV10 0UA

Website: www.vca.gov.uk/vehicle-special-orders/vehicle-special-orders.asp

³ for a fire extinguisher to be considered serviceable it must not have lost pressure or been discharged and must be appropriate for the anticipated fire risk, labelled, serviced and / or inspected within the last twelve months

EXAMPLE LAND TRAIN ORDER TEMPLATE

ROAD TRAFFIC ACT 1988

ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE UNDER SECTION 44

The Secretary of State in exercise of his powers under Section 44 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 hereby authorises the use on roads of the vehicle combination described in Schedule A hereto, and hereinafter referred to as "the vehicles", notwithstanding that the said vehicles do not comply in all respects with the requirements of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 S.I. 1986 No. 1078, as amended, subject to the following conditions:

1. The vehicles shall be operated only by ...
2. The vehicles shall only follow the entire itinerary and direction(s) described in Schedule B and marked on the map attached to this Order; they shall not pick up or set down passengers except at designated stops, unless in the event of an emergency.
3. The vehicles shall comply in all respects with the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 (SI 1986 No.1078), as amended (C&U) except for C&U Regulations 16, 18 (2 - 8), 83 (1) Items 6 or 7 and 90 (1). The vehicles shall also comply with the Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations 1989 (SI 1989 No. 1796) as amended.
4. No more than ... trailers shall be drawn at any time.
5. The combination, laden or unladen, and irrespective of the number of trailers drawn, shall not exceed a speed of 10 mph.
6. An amber warning beacon shall be fitted and used on the drawing vehicle and on the end trailer of the combination of vehicles.
7. The gaps between each vehicle and the next vehicle shall be fitted with safety chains, to which shall be attached signs saying "Do not cross between the vehicles", or other device of a kind to prevent pedestrians easily crossing between the vehicles.
8. The entrances / exits of the trailers shall be fitted with safety chains, doors or other devices to prevent passengers easily entering or leaving the trailers while the vehicles are in motion.
9. Each trailer shall be fitted with an acoustic or optical means of communication with the driver of the motor vehicle. This system shall be in working order at all times and available and clearly marked for the use of passengers.
10. An attendant shall travel in the last trailer. Before the vehicles are set in motion the attendant shall advise the driver, by the means described in condition (9), that there is nobody between the vehicles and that the vehicles are safe to start.
11. The driver of the motor vehicle shall hold Category **D** entitlement on his/her driving licence, if the vehicles are operated for hire or reward.
12. All passengers carried shall have seats, and no passengers shall be carried in the motor vehicle.
13. The driver of the vehicle shall comply with Part VI of the Transport Act 1968 as if that part of that Act applied to the motor vehicle.

14. The vehicle shall carry a suitable fire extinguisher.
15. The trailers shall be self-steering in that they follow as far as is practicable the track of the drawing vehicle.
16. The vehicles shall not travel during the hours of darkness except as may be permitted by the Chief Officer of Police for the area.
17. Road use of the vehicle shall be subject to approval by the Local Authority and the Chief Officer of Police of the police area in which the vehicle will be used.
18. The motor vehicle and each trailer shall comply with all the construction, fitting and performance requirements contained in Schedule C.

This Order shall expire on ...

Signed by the authority of the Secretary of State ...

...

Vehicle Certification Agency

SCHEDULE A

A motor vehicle towing up to ... trailers being a ... vehicle combination with registration number ... and having the following maximum weights and dimensions:-

	Motor Vehicle	Trailers (each)
Length metres metres
Width metres metres
Weight (Gross) kg kg
Combination		
Length metres	
Weight kg	
Trailer Identification(s)		

SCHEDULE B

Itinerary and Map

...

SCHEDULE C

BRAKE SPECIFICATION

Motor Vehicle (Powered Drawing Vehicle)

- 1) The vehicle shall be equipped with a service braking system operating on all the wheels and having;
 - i) one efficient split braking system with one means of operation; or
 - ii) two efficient braking systems each with a separate means of operation.

At least one means of operation shall be capable of applying the brakes directly, (not via the transmission), to at least half the wheels of the vehicle.

- 2) In the event of failure of any part of the braking system^{1/}, the driver shall still be able to apply the brakes and achieve the relevant performance specified for secondary braking.
- 3) Braking systems that directly control the braking of any trailer(s) shall be constructed so that, in the event of a failure^{1/}, it shall still be possible for the driver to achieve the secondary performance prescribed for the combination, directly from the application of that part of the drawing vehicle system not affected by the failure.
- 4) The application of any means of operation of a braking system shall not affect or operate the pedal or hand lever of any other means of operation.
- 5) The braking system shall not be rendered ineffective by the non rotation of the vehicles engine.
- 6) The parking brake shall be independent of the means of operation of the service braking system. When set the operative surfaces of the brake must be held in the braking position by a purely mechanical device.

Trailer(s)

- 1) Each trailer shall be equipped with an efficient braking system operating on all the wheels of the vehicle.
- 2) The brakes may come into operation automatically on its overrun or directly from the means of operation which applies the service brakes of the powered drawing vehicle.
- 3) In the event of failure of any part of the braking system¹, braking effort must be available from at least half the wheels of the trailer. This condition must be satisfied when either the service or secondary control of the drawing vehicle is actuated.
- 4) The braking system shall not be rendered ineffective by the non rotation of the engine of the powered drawing vehicle.
- 5) The trailer must be equipped with a braking system that, in the event of the trailer(s) becoming detached from the drawing vehicle, is automatically applied. This system must provide a performance of at least that required for the parking brake system.
- 6) The parking brake shall be actuated by a means of operation fitted to the trailer and be so designed and constructed that it can be applied and released by a person standing on the ground. When set the operative surfaces of the brake must be held in the braking position by a purely mechanical device.

Performance

	Motor Vehicle	Trailer	Combination
Service brake:	50% GVM	50% GVM	45% GTM
Secondary:	25% GVM	25% GVM	20% GTM
Parking ²	18% GVM	18% GVM	12% GTM ³

¹ Certain parts, such as the pedal and its bearing, the master cylinder/control valve and its piston(s), mechanical linkage between the pedal and the master cylinder/control valve, the brake cylinders and their pistons, and the lever and cam assemblies of brakes, shall not be regarded as liable to breakage if they are amply dimensioned, are readily accessible for maintenance, and exhibit safety features at least equal to those prescribed for other essential components of the vehicle, (e.g. steering linkage). Where the failure of any such part would make it impossible to brake the vehicle with a performance at least equal to that prescribed for the secondary braking, that part must be made of metal or of a material with equivalent characteristics and must not be subject to significant distortion in the normal operation of the braking devices.

² These performances relate to percentage gradients.

³ Must be achieved by actuation of single control from the driver's seat.