

Driver testing changes

The HGV driver shortage is a long-standing challenge facing countries across the world.

As a result of the pandemic, driver testing was suspended for large parts of the last year. It is now back up and running and the government has already increased capacity, but we can go further.

Over the summer, we consulted on 3 measures which will substantially increase the number of vocational driving tests available. I can announce today (10 September 2021) that we will proceed with the measures we consulted on:

First, car drivers will no longer need to take another test to tow a trailer or caravan, allowing roughly 30,000 more HGV driving tests to be conducted every year.

Second, tests will also be made shorter by removing the 'reversing exercise' element – and for vehicles with trailers, the 'uncoupling and recoupling' exercise – and having it tested separately by a third party.

And third, we will make it quicker to get a licence to drive an articulated vehicle, without first having to get a licence for a smaller vehicle. This would make around 20,000 more HGV driving tests available every year and mean drivers can gain their licence and enter the industry more quickly – without reducing the rigour of the test.

We've already provided a 50% increase in testing compared to pre-COVID. These measures go even further. These new measures follow a [public consultation](#) over the summer, which saw thousands of respondents, including industry leaders, support the move as a positive step to help the sector tackle the lorry driver shortage currently affecting countries around the world. Some of these changes will generate additional capacity for HGV tests very rapidly, and we will shortly lay the appropriate licensing regulations before the House.

These changes will not change the standard of driving required to drive an HGV, with road safety continuing to be of paramount importance. Any driver who does not demonstrate utmost competence will not be granted a licence. All car drivers will also still be encouraged to undertake training to tow trailers and caravans.

A new cross-government ministerial group has been set up to monitor labour supply chains, identify pinch points and consider necessary government action. Chaired by CDL and meeting on a weekly basis, the group includes ministers from numerous government departments including DfT, DfE, Home Office, BEIS and DEFRA to make sure all angles are being considered.

The driver shortage is a widespread problem affecting countries across Europe and also the United States, caused by a range of factors, including an ageing workforce. Today's announcement will ramp up driver testing and numbers and

help industry leaders build a resilient haulage sector which attracts drivers from across society.

[New rules for towing a trailer or caravan with a car from autumn 2021.](#)

[Government takes further action to tackle HGV driver shortage](#) news story, 10 September 2021.