

Van Drivers in England Penalised Heavily Amid Crackdown on Overloading

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Van drivers across England are being hit with substantial fines as part of a nationwide enforcement drive targeting overloaded commercial vehicles. According to new data, hundreds of drivers have been caught exceeding their vehicles' legal weight limit, with fines totalling nearly £400,000 over the past year alone.

Figures compiled by Go. Compare reveals that 208 van drivers were prosecuted for surpassing their vehicle's Maximum Authorised Mass (MAM) during the 2024/25 financial year. On average, this offence carries a hefty £2,000 penalty per vehicle, resulting in a total of £391,964.90 in fines being handed down.

Steve Ramsey, a motoring expert at Go. Compare emphasised the importance of vigilance. In a recent statement, he said:

“Avoiding an overloading fine comes down to awareness and routine. Know your van's weight limit, factor in everything you're carrying, not just the cargo, and get into the habit of checking daily. It's easy to assume you're under the limit, but it doesn't take much to cross the line. A couple of extra toolboxes, some building materials, or even a second passenger can tip the balance.”

He further warned of the knock-on effects:

“It's not just the financial concern; any motoring conviction must be declared to your insurance provider. Offences like overloading or construction and use breaches can lead to higher premiums, limited options, or even policy cancellation. That's a steep price for something easily preventable.”

The Maximum Authorised Mass (MAM) refers to the total weight of a vehicle, including its maximum safe load when used on public roads. Also known as gross vehicle weight (GVW) or permissible maximum weight, the MAM is a legal threshold that, when exceeded, poses safety risks and legal consequences.

The Department for Transport (DfT) clarifies that this information is typically found in the vehicle's manual or displayed on a plate or sticker located on the bodywork, often near the driver's door or engine bay. Additionally, some vehicles will list a Gross Train Weight (GTW), which reflects the combined weight of the vehicle and any attached trailers or loads.

While authorities must maintain road safety standards, many working drivers feel they are increasingly burdened by compliance traps and rising operational costs. The fines also come at a time when tradesmen and small delivery operators are already under pressure from rising fuel costs, tightening margins, and stricter low-emission regulations in urban areas.

This recent crackdown signals a clear message from enforcement bodies: ignorance of weight restrictions is no defence. With roadside checks becoming more frequent, van

operators would do well to ensure that they stay within legal limits, not just to avoid fines, but to maintain safety and reliability on Britain's roads.