

# Information sheet

## OVERHANGING LOADS: a brief guide

The requirements relating to loads that overhang the front, rear or sides of vehicles are set out in regulations 81 and 82 of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 (C&U), as amended. This information sheet provides an overview of the main requirements, but for the definitive requirements, the regulations themselves should be consulted. Details of how to obtain the C&U regulations can be found at section 4 of this information sheet.

### 1. Loads overhanging the front or rear of the vehicle.

The table below is a summary of the requirements applicable to front and rear overhanging loads set out in regulation 82(7) of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 (C&U), as amended.

Length of Projection	Action if load projects rearwards	Action if load projects forwards
Not exceeding 1 metre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No requirements specified.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No requirements specified.</li> </ul>
More than 1 metre, but not exceeding 2 metres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>End must be made <b>clearly visible</b>. (C&amp;U Schedule 12, para 4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No requirements specified.</li> </ul>
More than 2 metres, but not exceeding 3.05 metres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Marker boards</b> required (C&amp;U Schedule 12, para 3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Attendant</b> required (C&amp;U Schedule 12, para 2)</li> <li><b>Marker boards</b> required (C&amp;U Schedule 12, para 3)</li> </ul>
Exceeding 3.05 metres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two clear working days <b>notice to Police</b> (C&amp;U Schedule 12, paragraph 1)</li> <li><b>Attendant</b> required (C&amp;U Schedule 12, paragraph 2)</li> <li><b>Marker boards</b> required (C&amp;U Schedule 12, paragraph 3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two clear working days <b>notice to Police</b> (C&amp;U Schedule 12, paragraph 1)</li> <li><b>Attendant</b> required (C&amp;U Schedule 12, paragraph 2)</li> <li><b>Marker boards</b> required (C&amp;U Schedule 12, paragraph 3)</li> </ul>

Racing boats propelled by oars, and certain other vehicles have slightly different requirements. For details consult regulation 82 of C&U. Details of how to obtain a copy of these regulations can be found in section 4.

### 2. Loads overhanging the sides of the vehicle.

The table below is a summary of the requirements applicable to loads overhanging the sides of a vehicle as set out in regulation 82 of C&U.

Load Projection or Overall Width	Action required
Over 305mm lateral projection on either side.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two clear working days <b>notice to Police</b> (C&amp;U schedule 12, para 4)</li> <li>• <b>Marker boards</b> front and rear (C&amp;U Schedule 12, para 3)</li> <li>• Additional lights required during hours of darkness or poor visibility.</li> </ul>
More than 2.9 metres, but not exceeding to 3.5 metres overall width	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two clear working days <b>notice to Police</b> (C&amp;U schedule 12, para 4)</li> <li>• <b>Marker boards</b> front and rear (C&amp;U Schedule 12, para 3)</li> <li>• Additional lights required during hours of darkness or poor visibility.</li> </ul>
More than 3.5 metres, but not exceeding to 4.3 metres overall width	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two clear working days <b>notice to Police</b> (C&amp;U schedule 12, para 4).</li> <li>• <b>Attendant required</b> (C&amp;U Schedule 12, para 2).</li> <li>• <b>Marker boards</b> front and rear (C&amp;U Schedule 12, para 3).</li> <li>• Additional lights required during hours of darkness or poor visibility.</li> </ul>

Note: these requirements apply to the loads carried by vehicles under the C&U regulations. Different requirements apply to loads carried under the Road Vehicles (Authorisation of Special Types) (General) Order 2003 which can be found at:

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031998.htm>

Further guidance on wide abnormal loads can be found at:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/drs/drivingforwork/largeorheavyloads/guidance/policeailloadwidthdiagram.pdf>

Details of how to obtain a copy of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 SI 1986 No. 1078 can be found in section 4. For information on the additional lighting requirements for wide loads in the hours of darkness or poor visibility, please refer to the DfT information sheet on this subject.

### 3. Extract from the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 - Schedule 12.

Conditions to be complied with in relation to the use of Vehicles Carrying Wide or Long Loads or Vehicles Carrying Loads or Having Fixed Appliances or Apparatus Which Project

**Part I** (see regulations 81 and 82)

#### 1. Advance notice to police

(a) Before using on a road a vehicle or vehicles to which this paragraph applies, the owner shall give notice of the intended use to the Chief Officer of Police for any area in which he proposes to use the vehicle or vehicles. The notice shall be given so that it is received by the date after which there are at least two working days before the date on which the use of the vehicle or vehicles is to begin, and shall include the following details—

- (i) time, date and route of the proposed journey, and
- (ia) in a case to which regulation 7(9) applies, the overall length of the trailer,
- (ii) in a case to which regulation 82(2) applies, the overall length and width of the vehicle by which the load is carried and the width of the lateral projection or projections of its load,
- (iii) in a case to which regulation 82(4)(a) applies, the overall length and width of each vehicle by which the load is carried, the length of any forward or rearward projection and, where the load rests on more than one vehicle, the distance between the vehicles,
- (iv) in a case to which regulation 82(4)(b) applies, the overall length of the combination of vehicles and the length of any forward or rearward projection of the load, and

- (v) in a case to which regulation 82(7) and (8) applies, the overall length of the vehicle and the length of any forward or rearward projection of the load or special appliance or apparatus.

The Chief Officer of Police for any police area may, at his discretion, accept a shorter period of notice or fewer details.

(b) The vehicle or vehicles shall be used only in accordance with the details at (a) subject to any variation in the time, date or route which may be directed by—

- (i) any such Chief Officer of Police to the owner of the vehicle or vehicles, or
- (ii) a police constable to the driver in the interests of road safety or in order to avoid undue traffic congestion by halting the vehicle or vehicles in a place on or adjacent to the road on which the vehicle or vehicles are travelling.

(c) In this paragraph—

“Chief Officer of Police” has, in relation to England and Wales, the same meaning as in the Police Act 1964, and in relation to Scotland, the same meaning as in the Police (Scotland) Act 1967,

“working day” means a day which is not a Sunday, a bank holiday, Christmas Day or Good Friday, and

“bank holiday” means a day which is a bank holiday by or under the Banking and Finance Dealings Act 1971, either generally or in the locality in which the road is situated.

## 2. Attendants

At least one person in addition to the person or persons employed in driving a motor vehicle to which this paragraph applies shall be employed—

(a) in attending to that vehicle and its load and any other vehicle or vehicles drawn by that vehicle and the load or loads carried on the vehicle or vehicles so drawn, and

(b) to give warning to the driver of the said motor vehicle and to any person of any danger likely to be caused to any such other person by reason of the presence of the said vehicle or vehicles on the road.

Provided that, where three or more vehicles as respects which the conditions in this paragraph are applicable are travelling together in convoy, it shall be a sufficient compliance with this paragraph if only the foremost and rearmost vehicles in the convoy are attended in the manner prescribed in this paragraph.

For the purpose of this paragraph when a motor vehicle is drawing a trailer or trailers—

(i) any person employed in pursuance of section 34 of the 1972 Act in attending that vehicle or any such trailer shall be treated as being an attendant required by this paragraph so long as he is also employed to discharge the duties mentioned in this paragraph; and

(ii) when another motor vehicle is used for the purpose of assisting in their propulsion on the road, the person or persons employed in driving that other motor vehicle shall not be treated as a person or persons employed in attending to the first-mentioned vehicle or any vehicle or vehicles drawn thereby.

## 3. Marking of longer projections

(a) Every forward and rearward projection to which this paragraph applies shall be fitted with—

- (i) an end marker, except in the case of a rearward projection which is fitted with a rear marking in accordance with the Lighting Regulations, and
- (ii) where required by sub-paragraphs (c) and (d) of this paragraph, two or more side markers; which shall be of the size, shape and colour described in Part II of this Schedule.

(b) the end marker shall be so fitted that—

- (i) it is as near as is practicable in a transverse place,
- (ii) it is not more than 0.5 m from the extreme end of the projection,
- (iii) the vertical distance between the lowest point of the marker and the road surface is not more than 2.5 m,
- (iv) it, and any means by which it is fitted to the projection, impedes the view of the driver as little as possible, and

- (v) it is clearly visible within a reasonable distance to a person using the road at the end of the vehicle from which the projection extends;
- (c) where the forward projection exceeds 2 m or the rearward projection exceeds 3 m, one side marker shall be fitted on the right hand side and one on the left hand side of the projection so that—
- (i) each marker is as near as is practicable in a longitudinal plane,
  - (ii) no part extends beyond the end of the projection,
  - (iii) the vertical distance between the lowest part of each marker and the surface of the road is not more than 2.5 m,
  - (iv) the horizontal distance between each marker and the end marker or, as the case may be, the rear marking carried in accordance with the Lighting Regulations does not exceed 1 m, and
  - (v) each marker is clearly visible within a reasonable distance to a person using the road on that side of the projection;
- (d) where—
- (i) a forward projection exceeds 4.5 m, or
  - (ii) a rearward projection exceeds 5 m

extra side markers shall be fitted on either side of the projection so that the horizontal distance between the extreme projecting point of the vehicle from which the projection extends and the nearest point on any side marker from that point, and between the nearest points of any adjacent side markers on the same side does not exceed—

2.5 m in the case of a forward projection, or  
3.5 m in the case of a rearward projection.

For the purposes of this sub-paragraph the expression “the vehicle” shall not include any special appliance or apparatus or any part thereof which is a forward projection or a rearward projection within the meaning of regulation 81;

- (e) the extra side markers required by this sub-paragraph shall also meet the requirements of (i), (iii) and (v) of sub-paragraph (c);
- (f) every marker fitted in accordance with this paragraph shall be kept clean and unobscured and between sunset and sunrise be illuminated by a lamp which renders it readily visible from a reasonable distance and which is so shielded that its light, except as reflected from the marker, is not visible to other persons using the road.

#### 4. Marking of shorter projections

A projection to which this paragraph applies shall be rendered clearly visible to other persons using the road within a reasonable distance, in the case of a forward projection, from the front thereof or, in the case of a rearward projection from the rear thereof and, in either case, from either side thereof.

#### 5. Marking of wide loads

- (a) Subject to sub-paragraph (d), every load carried on a vehicle in circumstances where this paragraph applies shall be fitted on each side and in the prescribed manner, with—
  - (i) a prescribed marker in such a position that it is visible from the front of the vehicle, and
  - (ii) a prescribed marker in such a position that it is visible from the rear of the vehicle.
- (b) For the purposes of sub-paragraph (a)—
  - (i) a marker on a side of the load is fitted in the prescribed manner if at least part of it is within 50 mm of a longitudinal plane passing through the point on that side of the load which is furthest from the axis of the vehicle; and
  - (ii) a prescribed marker is a marker of the size, shape and colour described in Part II of this Schedule.
- (c) Every marker fitted pursuant to this paragraph shall be kept clean and between sunset and sunrise be illuminated by a lamp which renders it readily visible from a reasonable distance and

which is so shielded that its light, except as reflected from the marker, is not visible to other persons using the road.

- (d) If the load does not extend beyond the longitudinal plane passing through the extreme projecting point on one side of the vehicle, it shall not be necessary for a marker to be fitted to the load on that side.

## Part II Projection Markers (See paragraph 3(a) and 5(b) of this Schedule)

Diagram of End Marker Surface

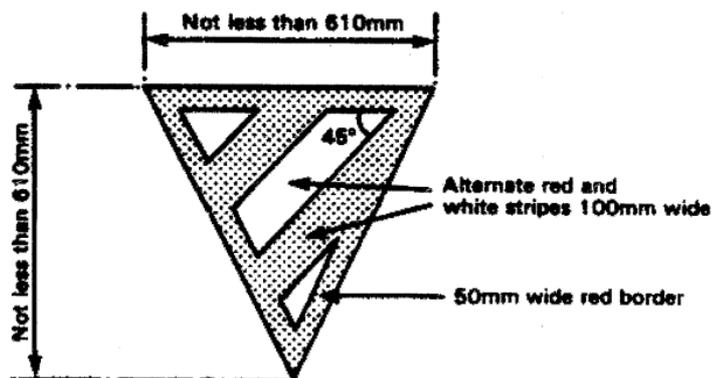
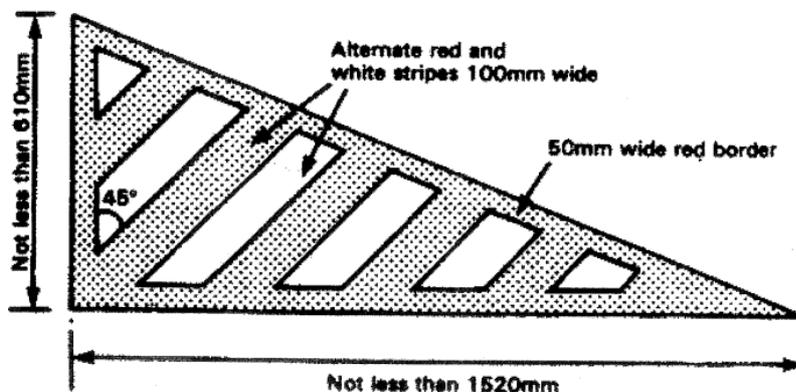


Diagram of Side Marker Surface



## 4. The Road Vehicle (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986.

These regulations are not available on the internet and have been amended many times which makes it difficult to piece together the latest form of the regulations. However these regulations are available in a consolidated format in most city reference libraries, from companies who publish law. One example is 'Sweet and Maxwell' who publish the "The Encyclopaedia of Road Traffic Law and Practice". This publication is continually updated and Volume 4 contains a full version of the above-mentioned regulations in consolidated format. Other possible suppliers include InterRegs, who charge around £160 for a fully consolidated version of the Construction and Use Regulations. This can be obtained from:

<http://www.selectregs.com/details.php?id=GBR-SI1078>

Alternatively, it is possible to purchase printed copies of the Statutory Instruments that comprise the Regulations from the TSO at the following address:

The Stationery Office  
TSO Orders/Post Cash Dept  
PO Box 29  
Norwich  
NR3 1GN  
Tel: 0870 600 5522  
Fax: 0870 600 5533

e-mail: [customer.services@tso.co.uk](mailto:customer.services@tso.co.uk)

Online ordering: <http://www.tsoshop.co.uk/bookstore.asp>

Customer service: <http://www.tso.co.uk/contact/customerservices/>

## 5. Overloading

Vehicles that are overloaded can pose a danger to the driver, passengers or other road users. If a vehicles' gross or axle weight limits are exceeded when weighed by either VOSA, the police or trading standards officers, the company and/or driver risk prosecution. In addition to this, an overloading conviction is one of the factors that could lead to a Traffic Commissioner taking disciplinary action against the operator's licence. For further information on overloading please refer to the VOSA website at:

[www.vosa.gov.uk](http://www.vosa.gov.uk)

## 6. Safety of loads

Regulation 100 (2) of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 (as amended), requires all vehicles to not be used or loaded in such a way that they endanger either those using the vehicle or other road users. Further information on the safety of loads can be found in the DfT information sheet 'Safety of Loads'.

## 7. Important information about this Information Sheet

The views expressed in this Information Sheet are based on the Department's current understanding of what the law means and are not definitive. If you are in any doubt about your legal obligations, you should take independent legal advice as this Information Sheet is not a substitute for such independent legal advice.

## 8. Further Information

This information sheet was last updated in April 2009. If you have any enquiries regarding the contents, please contact the DfT at the address below:

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