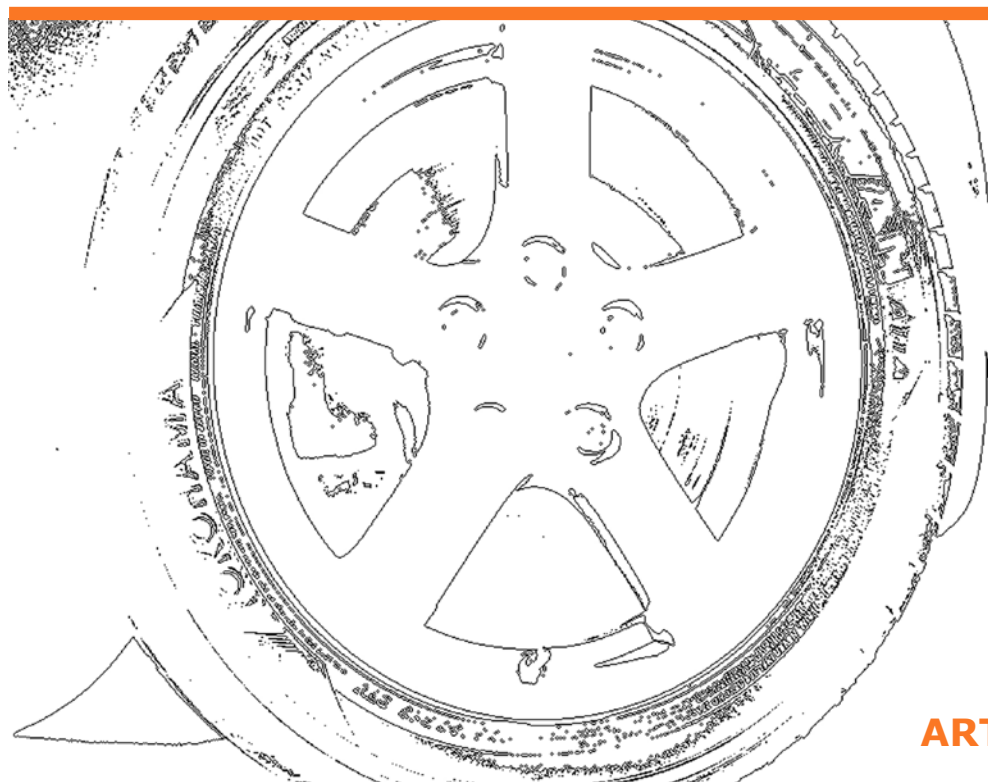


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**ARTICLE 5**

Running a business van

# Running a business van

## Vans and light commercial vehicles

Light commercial vehicles (also called light goods vehicles) are defined as having two axles, weighing up to 3.5 tonnes and having no rear side windows.

## Van and LCV selection, disposal and use

There are eight different categories of vans:

### 1. Microvans

These are small vans, ideally suited to city centres. They are often used by sandwich vendors who call on several office blocks every lunchtime.

### 2. Pick-ups

These are flat-bed, single- or double-cab vehicles. They have a large open load area (though hard and soft covers are available for these). Until a few years ago most British people would have been more familiar with these from American movies rather than from seeing them on British roads, though they have become more popular here because they have enjoyed benefit in kind income tax breaks.

### 3. 4x4 vans

By removing the rear seats from a conventional 4x4 car, and adding two rear doors, manufacturers have produced tough vehicles capable of carrying heavy loads over rough terrain. They can be quite heavy on fuel consumption compared with car-derived vans.

### 4. Car-derived vans

These are mainly regular passenger hatchback vehicles that have been converted into vans by blocking off the rear windows and adding a rear door. They are more comfortable to drive than other vans and have good fuel economy. Load-carrying capacity is restricted, though.

### 5. Compact panel vans

These are a medium size vans that offer a relatively good balance of load handling, driving refinement and fuel economy. Typical users might be a retail outlet that needs to deliver white goods (washing machines, etc) to local customers.

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#### 6. Large panel vans

These are larger vans, capable of moving larger loads over long distances in reasonable comfort. They come in short and long wheelbase versions. It is hard to generalise about the typical user, as they will be valuable to so many different businesses.

#### 7. Light vans

These vans take up the same amount of road space as a car, but have high roofs so they can carry more than a car-derived van.

#### 8. Chassis cabs

These are flatbed heavy-duty vehicles, often used by builders to carry building materials. They are ideally suited for carrying heavy loads over shorter journeys.

In recent years you would have been best advised to steer away from white when choosing a car, because white cars have not been valued highly in the used car market. However, white is the most highly prized colour for a used van and achieves the best resale price. Yellow and black are not popular colours amongst used van buyers and sale prices reflect this.

Unlike cars, metallic paint does not increase the resale value of vans; in fact it is likely to reduce it. Flat colours do much better.

Air-conditioning can add to the resale value of a car but it has no effect on the resale value of a van. It also adds from 5-10% to the fuel consumption of the vehicle.

If your vans need to display your company logo or advert, use removable vinyl decals rather than painting directly onto the vehicle. If decals do not allow light to pass through, the paintwork will fade unevenly and this will show when the decals are removed. All signage should be removed before you sell your vans: buyers will pay less where they have to do this. Perhaps more importantly, they may use your vehicles to carry out fraudulent activities.

A plywood or custom-made lining should be fitted as standard to all vans. This costs little and affords excellent protection against internal damage.

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When selling vans at auction, it is best to choose an auction specifically targeted at buyers of LCVs, rather than cars. The right buyers will be in the audience and when bidding they will be far more understanding if your vans have high mileage.

When operating vans, drivers should be made aware that there are additional health and safety risks over and above those that arise when using a car.

Consider any manual handling risk. Be careful to select a van that is appropriate to the job and that allows easy loading and unloading of the type of goods you carry. If there is a tail lift or a refrigeration unit, the driver will need to be trained to use them. The driver should be made aware of the van's payload limit and if special equipment is fitted this should be taken into account in calculating the remaining allowable payload. If you overload a van you may bring its weight into the category requiring heavy goods vehicle operator licensing.

It is not widely recognised that if a van weighing more than 1525 kg is parked on the public highway overnight, it is a legal requirement for its parking lights to be illuminated.

The maximum speed for vans on most roads is 10 mph lower than for cars and car-derived vans.

It is illegal to overload a vehicle. If you have an accident and your vehicle is overloaded, this may invalidate your insurance.

The Vehicle Operating Services Agency (VOSA) stops and weighs tens of thousands of vehicles each year. Around 21% of the vans and 7% of the trucks is stops are overloaded.

More information on vehicle overloading can be obtained from [VOSA](#), who produce useful information sheets on the dangers of vehicle overloading.