



Driver & Vehicle  
Licensing  
Agency

# Converting a vehicle into a motorhome



INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE

## Statement

It is a legal requirement that all UK registered vehicles are classified correctly on the V5C log book. All campervans, motor caravans and motorhomes fall into the DVLA category of 'motor caravan'. If you have converted a van into a motor caravan then you must return the V5C to DVLA for body type amendment.

DVLA is required to record the details of vehicles for road safety and law enforcement. The body type information held on the vehicle record must describe what a vehicle actually looks like. This description, in addition to other distinguishing features, enables the police and other enforcement agencies to identify a particular vehicle. **Therefore, the body type will not be changed unless the exterior of the vehicle actually appears to be a motor home.**

This document provides general guidance relating to the registering of DIY motor caravans. Every effort has been made to ensure that it is factually correct but recipients should check with the producers of this document if they are unsure about any of the content.

## Minimum features

In order for a converted vehicle to qualify as a motor caravan it must have certain minimum features, as follows:

- a door that provides access to the living accommodation
- a bed, which has a minimum length of 1800mm or 6 feet. This can be converted from seats used for other purposes during the day but must be permanently fixed within the body of the vehicle
- a water storage tank or container on, or in, the vehicle
- a seating and dining area, permanently attached to the vehicle. The table may be detachable but must have some permanent means of attachment to the vehicle. It is not good enough to have a loose table
- a permanently fixed means of storage, a cupboard, locker or wardrobe
- a permanently fixed cooking facility within the vehicle, powered by gas or electricity
- at least one window on the side of the accommodation

If the vehicle has all of these features present, permanently fixed and installed properly, then it is a legal requirement to have it reclassified as a motor caravan on the V5C.

## Process

The process for changing the classification on the V5C is as follows:

DVLA will require photographic evidence of the completed conversion showing the changes made, along with a description of the work carried out and any receipts. If you fail to provide sufficient clear evidence of the changes made DVLA may wish to inspect the vehicle prior to approving a change to the V5C. **You will need to complete section 7 on your V5C (and any other changes) and send it to DVLA, Swansea, SA99 1BA along with the required evidence.**

The evidence provided should be:

1. Make sure that the vehicle is completely finished, clean and tidy and that all of the required features are in place and visible.
2. Exterior photographs from the front and rear with the registration plates clearly visible. If the vehicle has a rear door it should be opened and showing some of the interior.
3. Interior photographs of each of the required features with the bed and table in the usable position.
4. On the back of each photograph write a description of what the photograph shows, the date and the vehicle registration number.

What you are trying to do is to provide clear evidence that what you have made is permanently a 'motor caravan' and that the furniture and fixings have been fitted to a satisfactory standard. You need to provide the DVLA with sufficient clear evidence in order for them to simply change the V5C and send it back to you. If you don't provide sufficient clear evidence then they will want to inspect your van before approving it for a change in classification.

It will do no harm to send them the completed engineers report that insurers require with your photographs and V5C. Your covering letter should explain that you have completed the conversion of a van into a 'motor caravan' and that you are now seeking to have your V5C amended. Make it clear in this letter that you understand the requirements and list what your vehicle has ie permanently and securely fixed:

- seats and table
- sleeping accommodation which may be converted from the seats
- cooking facilities
- water storage
- storage facilities

State the date that your conversion was completed, ideally this should be the date that is shown on the back of the photographs.

We have provided an example letter in rtf format [here](#). You can use this as the basis of your own letter. Make sure that you change all of the parts between square brackets and add anything else that you think may be pertinent.

Submit this and all being well your V5C will just arrive back amended. Currently there is no charge for this amendment.

## **DFT definition of motor caravan**

The following is taken from the DFT website now in the National Archives.

'motor caravan' means a special purposes passenger car constructed to include living accommodation which contains at least the following equipment:

- seats and table
- sleeping accommodation which may be converted from the seats
- cooking facilities
- storage facilities

This equipment shall be rigidly fixed to the living compartment; however, the table may be designed to be easily removable.

The interpretation applied to this definition is as follows

### **Seats and a table**

- Are required to be an integral part of the living accommodation area, and mounted independently of other items.
- The table must be capable of being mounted directly to the vehicle floor and /or side wall.
- The table mounting arrangement must be secured as a permanent feature, (bolted, riveted, screwed or welded), although the table may be detachable.
- Permanently secured seating must be available for use at the table.
- The seats must be secured directly to the vehicle floor and/or side wall.
- The seats must be secured as a permanent feature, (bolted riveted, screwed or welded).

### **Sleeping accommodation**

- Must be an integral part of the living accommodation area.
- Either beds or a bed converted from seats (to form a mattress base).
- Secured as a permanent feature, with base structures bolted, riveted, screwed or welded to the vehicle floor and / or side wall, (unless the sleeping accommodation is provided as a provision over the driver's cab compartment).

### **Cooking facilities**

- That are an integral part of the vehicle living accommodation and is mounted independently of other items.
- That are secured to the vehicle floor and /or side wall.
- Secured as a permanent feature, (bolted, riveted, screwed, or welded).
- The cooking facility must consist of a minimum of a two ring cooking facility or a microwave in either case having a fuel/power source.
- If the cooking facility is fuelled by gas having a remote fuel supply, the fuel supply pipe must be permanently secured to the vehicle structure.
- If the cooking facility is fuelled by gas having a remote fuel supply, the fuel reservoir must be secured in a storage cupboard or the reservoir secured to the vehicle structure.

### **Storage facilities**

- Storage facilities must be provided by a cupboard or locker.
- The facility must be an integral part of the vehicle living accommodation, ie mounted independently of other items, unless incorporated below seat/sleeping accommodation or the cooking facility.
- The storage facility must be a permanent feature, (bolted, riveted, screwed or welded).
- The storage facility must be secured directly to the vehicle floor and / or side wall, unless a storage provision is provided over the driver's cab compartment.

**NOTE:** The information in this document is a summary of the Department's understanding of what the law requires. However, ultimately the interpretation of the law is a matter for the courts based on individual facts of any particular case. You are therefore advised to consult the relevant legislation and, if necessary, seek independent advice.