



Department  
for Transport



Office for  
Low Emission  
Vehicles



Driver & Vehicle  
Standards  
Agency

# Changes to licence requirements for Alternatively Fuelled Vehicles (AFVs)

**Moving Britain Ahead**

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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 In 2018, UK law was changed so that the weight limit for Category B driving licence holders driving alternatively-fuelled vehicles could be increased from 3.5 tonnes to 4.25 tonnes<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.2 The Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 (the 2018 Regulations) made changes to the law to allow Category B licence holders to drive an alternatively fuelled vehicle that weighs between 3.5 and 4.25 tonnes, provided it is not driven outside of Great Britain, used for the transportation of goods, is not towing a trailer and the driver has completed a minimum of 5 hours training.
- 1.3 This non-statutory guidance sets out more information on these changes to legislation. It sets out details of the training required for drivers to take advantage of the new law. It also describes the system of certification that will allow drivers to prove that they have completed the training.
- 1.4 The guidance should be considered by any employer with employees who drive vehicles such as delivery vans, as well as self-employed people and those using their own vehicle for a work-related journey. It will be particularly valuable to those who operate large goods vehicles and those who are responsible for fleet management of goods vehicles.

## Rationale for the change

- 1.5 Reducing emissions from vans is key to combatting climate change and improving urban air quality. Vans account for a growing share of total UK vehicles, and have both higher utilisation rates and higher emissions than cars. Government is keen to support the low emission light commercial vehicles sector in increasing its access to cleaner alternatives.
- 1.6 Alternatively-fuelled vehicles can have an increased kerb weight compared with their conventionally fuelled counterparts. Licencing regulations mean, driving a vehicle with a maximum authorised mass of more than 3.5 tonnes would normally require a Category C1 licence. Therefore, operators of alternatively-fuelled vehicles wanting to remain below this regulatory threshold must either suffer a constrained payload or employ drivers with a category C1 licence. This entails higher staffing costs, and in practice is holding back many fleets from adopting alternatively fuelled vehicles.
- 1.7 The recent changes to legislation should make it easier for organisations to introduce alternatively fuelled vehicles into their fleets.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/784/pdfs/uksi\\_20180784\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/784/pdfs/uksi_20180784_en.pdf) which amended [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1999/2864/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1999/2864/contents/made)

## What is an alternatively-fuelled vehicle?

- 1.8 For the purposes of this guidance "an alternatively fuelled vehicle"<sup>2</sup> means a motor vehicle powered by
- a. electricity, natural gas, biogas or hydrogen; or
  - b. hydrogen and electricity;

## Overview of training requirements

- 1.9 Drivers who wish to take advantage of the new legislation must carry out a minimum of 5 hours of training on driving alternatively fuelled vehicles.
- 1.10 Training may only be provided by members of the only two government recognised LGV training registers<sup>3</sup>. These training registers hold details of qualified LGV and HGV instructors and training centres.
- 1.11 These UK training registers are:
- National Register of LGV instructors
  - the National Vocational Driving Instructors Register.

## Review of regulations in 2023

- 1.12 The 2018 Regulations rely on a temporary derogation from the European Union third Driving Licence Directive (2006/126/EC). This derogation was issued by the European Commission in May 2018 for a period of five years.
- 1.13 We intend to keep the requirements from the 2018 Regulations in place until at least 2023. We will conduct a review of the legislation in advance, to evaluate the impact of the legislation and consider whether it is still necessary.

## 2018 amendments to EU Driver Certificate of Professional Competence CPC Directive

- 1.14 In April 2018 the EU agreed amendments to the Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) and on Driving Licences<sup>4</sup>. One of the amendments in this Directive gives member states the option to introduce similar rules to those set out in the 2018 Regulations, increasing the weight limit of alternative fuelled vehicles that can be driven on a Category B licence.
- 1.15 As the UK has already passed similar legislation, we do not intend to transpose this element of the Directive.

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<sup>2</sup> See Regulation 7(12) of the Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) Regulations 1999

<sup>3</sup> See Regulation 7(12) of the Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) Regulations 1999

<sup>4</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2018/645/oj> - see Art 2

## 2. Other legislation relevant to alternatively fuelled vehicles

2.1 This chapter provides information about other legislation that drivers will need to consider when driving or operating alternatively fuelled vehicles. It sets out the licences that drivers will need to obtain, the requirements that drivers will need to comply with, and how these differ from the licenses and requirements for conventionally fuelled vehicles.

### Operator Licensing

- 2.2 Operator licensing is a regulatory regime which exists to ensure the safe and proper use of goods vehicles. Generally, transport operators (or self-employed drivers) are subject to the regime if they use vehicles weighing above 3.5 tonnes to carry goods for hire or reward or relating to a trade or business.
- 2.3 General information on operator licensing is available on the gov.uk website: <https://www.gov.uk/topic/transport/vehicle-operator-licences>.
- 2.4 However, there is an exemption for goods vehicles fuelled entirely by alternative fuel, with a permissible laden mass not exceeding 4.25 tonnes, currently used in Great Britain. Alternative fuel is defined as one or more of the following:
- a. electricity;
  - b. hydrogen;
  - c. natural gas or;
  - d. liquefied petroleum gas.
- 2.5 In addition, there is an exemption from goods vehicle operator licensing for all electrically propelled goods vehicles (of any weight), if first registered before 1 March 2015.

### Drivers' hours and tachographs

- 2.6 The EU drivers' hours rules (Regulation (EC) 561/2006), which require the use of tachographs and prescribe maximum limits on driving time and minimum requirements for breaks and rest periods, apply to drivers of most vehicles used for the carriage of goods - defined as goods or burden of any description - where the maximum permissible weight of the vehicle (or combinations of vehicle and trailer) exceeds 3.5 tonnes.
- 2.7 Vehicles that are alternatively fuelled by natural or liquefied gas or electricity and carry goods within a 100 km radius of the company base, and do not exceed 7.5 tonnes (maximum authorised mass) including the mass of a trailer are exempt from the EU Drivers rules Regulation.
- 2.8 Details of all the exemptions/national derogations can be found in guidance available on the gov.uk website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/drivers-hours-goods-vehicles>

- 2.9 If a vehicle meets one of the exemptions/derogations, including the above exemption for certain gas or electric vehicles, then the driver is exempt from the EU drivers' hours rules. Normally drivers out of scope of the EU drivers' hours rules would automatically come under scope of the GB domestic drivers' hours rules.
- 2.10 If the vehicle is solely used for private driving (i.e. not in connection with a job or in any way to earn a living), the driver would not need to comply with the GB rules.

### **Roadworthiness testing**

- 2.11 The statutory roadworthiness testing regime is in place to help reduce road safety risks posed by improperly maintained vehicles. Although formerly exempt, electric goods vehicles (of all weights) now require a roadworthiness test, unless they were first used prior to 1 March 2015. (Other types of alternatively-fuelled vehicle are not exempt.)
- 2.12 Vehicles up to 3.5 tonnes are subject to the MOT testing regime:  
<https://www.gov.uk/getting-an-mot>
- 2.13 Vehicles over 3.5 tonnes are subject to the goods vehicle annual testing regime:  
<https://www.gov.uk/annual-test-for-lorries-buses-and-trailers>

### **Health and Safety Legislation**

- 2.14 Employers also have responsibility under Health and Safety legislation to ensure so far as reasonably practicable the health and safety of their employees and others who may be affected by their work activities. This includes the activity of driving on public roads.
- 2.15 Drivers of these vehicles, as well as operators (Employers), have a duty under health and safety legislation to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions.
- 2.16 For practical help to manage the risks from driving at work visit:  
[www.dft.gov.uk/drivingforwork](http://www.dft.gov.uk/drivingforwork) or download the Driving at work - Managing work related road safety leaflet: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg382.htm>

### **Speed limits & Speed limiters**

- 2.17 The national speed limits for different categories of road vehicle depends on how the vehicle is configured for use on the road. That generally means whether the vehicle is designed primarily for the carriage of passengers or goods. The way in which the vehicle is fuelled has no relevance to the legislation governing vehicle speeds. For goods vehicles, the weight of the vehicle is also relevant. The gov.uk website has guidance on speed limits for vehicles of different classes, which can be found at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/speed-limits>
- 2.18 Speed limiters are required by legislation to be fitted to passenger carrying vehicles with more than 8 passenger seats (PSVs); and, heavy goods vehicles over 3.5 tonnes (HGVs). Limiters restrict maximum powered speed to 100 km/h (62.5 mph) in the case of PSVs; and, 90 km/h (56 mph) in the case of HGVs. This will include alternatively fuelled goods vehicles over 3.5 tonnes.

# 3. Training Syllabus

## The training

- 3.1 This chapter sets out the training syllabus for drivers of alternatively fuelled vehicles (AFVs).
- 3.2 It outlines for instructors and drivers what is included in the training and what the expected learning outcomes will be. The syllabus will be used by instructors to develop their own training materials, which must cover the content set out in the syllabus.
- 3.3 The training may be a mix of practical and theory, and will include vehicle handling techniques when driving a loaded alternative fuelled vehicle, refuelling alternative fuel types and the safe loading of alternative fuelled vehicles.
- 3.4 The syllabus sets out how to train drivers in the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to be a safe and responsible driver of an AFV. Its contents were developed by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA), working in partnership with The National Register of LGV Instructors and The National Vocational Driving Instructors Register. As stated in the regulations, only instructors on these two registers may carry out the training.
- 3.5 The syllabus represents current good practice for driver training. But we recognise that there will be many different, valid ways to deliver the learning outcomes.

### **Who can take advantage of this authorisation?**

- 3.6 As a starting point, drivers on this course must already hold a current full category B (car) driving licence.

### **How is the training structured?**

- 3.7 Drivers must do a minimum of five hours specific training on how to drive an AFV over 3.5 tonnes. DVSA recommends that drivers practice driving on the road following the five hours' training.
- 3.8 The training will be a mixture of theory and practical (such as demonstrations with equipment), with a maximum driver and instructor ratio of 20:1.
- 3.9 This syllabus should ideally complement the induction training that an employee receives from their employer.
- 3.10 Drivers in any doubt about any of the elements covered in this guide, should speak to their employer.

## Aim of the syllabus

- 3.11 The syllabus sets out how to train drivers in the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to be a safe and responsible driver of an AFV.



3.12 When a driver has completed the syllabus, they will have a better understanding of these aspects of driving an AFV:

- Road safety benefits
- Fuel-saving driving techniques
- Energy-saving driving techniques
- Refuelling and the safety factors of alternative fuel types
- Safe driving techniques
- Safe loading
- Vehicle handling techniques
- Legislative requirements.

3.13 The driver needs to successfully complete the course to the instructor's satisfaction.

### **Who is this syllabus for?**

3.14 This syllabus is for:

- the driver (full licence holder of category B)
- the instructor conducting training.

3.15 All references in the syllabus to 'trainer' mean instructors who are registered with either [The National Register of LGV Instructors](#) or [The National Vocational Driving Instructors Register](#).

## **The syllabus**

3.16 The Syllabus is divided into three units, which are based on content from the DVSA [National Driving Standard for cars and light vans and the National standard for driving lorries](#).

- Unit 1 - preparing the alternatively fuelled vehicle and its contents for daily use
- Unit 2 - drive the alternatively fuelled vehicle in accordance with the Highway Code and legislation
- Unit 3 - safely and efficiently.

3.17 To drive safely and responsibly, it is important for drivers and instructors to see these three units as inter-connected and all equally important. A driver can only become competent by understanding how the content from all the units fits together.

3.18 The route taken through the material by each driver may differ, and DVSA believes that the training should be client-centred. Client-centred learning means two things.

- It takes into account a learner's preferred style of learning
- People are more likely to keep learning if they are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning at an early stage.

3.19 Drivers and employers should use this training to:

- develop a greater awareness of the risks associated with driving
- learn to reflect on their own driving performance and take steps to improve in areas that need further development.

## Unit 1: Preparing an alternatively fuelled vehicle and its contents for daily use

3.20 The aim of this unit is that drivers should be able to make an informed judgement on whether drivers, the alternatively fuelled vehicle and the load are fit to travel. It will also make drivers aware of how the alternatively fuelled vehicle may or may not be affected by certain safety factors associated with its fuel type. Drivers will then be able to act appropriately, based on that judgement.

### Assess your own and your vehicle's safety

3.21 This unit will teach drivers about:

- factors affecting driver fitness to drive that can change from day to day and over their driving lifetime
- certain attitudes and misunderstandings that can prevent drivers from acting on the knowledge and understanding drivers have
- corporate reputation and responsibility when driving at work
- the roadworthiness of the drivers alternatively fuelled vehicle
- the potential risks to drivers and others whilst refuelling or recharging
- what action drivers should take to manage any specific risks in the event of an incident
- how traffic, weather and road conditions can affect driving.

### Loading and refuelling your alternatively fuelled vehicle

3.22 The unit develops knowledge and understanding of the issues involved in driving a loaded or unloaded AFV safely and securely and how to reduce the risks that driving with a loaded alternatively fuelled vehicle can generate.

3.23 It also informs drivers of the different fuel types an AFV can use coupled with how to refuel safely, ensuring drivers have enough fuel or charge to complete their journey. Drivers will also learn how to control the associated risks of these fuel types in the event of a crash or emergency.

## Learning outcomes

3.24 When drivers have completed this unit, they will:

- be able to understand when outside factors can affect their competence at driving for work. Drivers will also understand the potential impact on corporate responsibility, and make suitable decisions based on that understanding
- understand and act on their responsibility to make sure that they and their alternatively fuelled vehicle is legal
- be able to control the risks associated with carrying loads
- be able to plan a journey suitable for an AFV
- be able to know and understand the various fuel types of an AFV and how to refuel safely and responsibly

- be able to understand what to do if an AFV is involved in a crash or an emergency and how to control any risks associated with an AFV.

## Unit 2: Drive the alternatively fuelled vehicle in accordance with The Highway Code and regulations

3.25 The aim of this unit is to teach drivers why it is important to understand and follow the rules in The Highway Code and other regulations.

### The Highway Code

3.26 It is important that drivers do not think of The Highway Code as just something that they had to learn to pass their driving test. The Highway Code contains advice and rules about road signs and how to behave in particular situations whilst driving. Drivers will also need to know the speed limits that apply to their alternatively fuelled vehicle especially on motorways and national speed limit roads. If drivers understand the Code's content, it will make it much easier for them to drive safely and responsibly in changing traffic situations.

### The new authorisation regulations

3.27 The new authorisation applies when:

- driving an AFV only in Great Britain
- drivers hold a relevant full licence which allows them to drive alternatively fuelled vehicles in category B
- they have completed a minimum of five hours' training with a registered instructor
- the AFV they drive has a maximum authorised mass (MAM) of more than 3.5 tonnes and less than 4.25 tonnes
- they are not driving with a trailer
- the driving is for the transportation of goods.

### Exemption from holding an operator's licence

3.28 EC drivers' hours rules apply to vehicles or vehicle and trailer combinations over 3.5 tonnes MAM.

3.29 However, there is an exemption from these rules for vehicles or combinations which do not exceed 4.25 tonnes. This applies when

- they are used to carry goods
- their fuel is natural or liquefied gas or electricity
- drivers are within a 100 km (62miles) radius from their base and, therefore, exempt from using tachograph.

3.30 Electric, hydrogen and gas-propelled vans tend to have more range. So drivers need to be aware that they would come into scope of EC drivers' hours and tachograph rules when going beyond 100 km (62miles) radius from their base.

3.31 Where this exemption applies, drivers will have to follow GB domestic drivers' hours' rules instead. Drivers can find more information about this at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/drivers-hours-goods-vehicles>.

3.32 If drivers do not follow the advice and rules set out in The Highway Code or regulations, there may be serious consequences for them, their employer and other road users.

## Learning outcomes

3.33 When you have completed this unit, you will

- have a better understanding of how to drive safely and responsibly in changing road and traffic conditions
- be able to comply with signals, signs, markings, traffic calming measures, weight limits, congestion zones and low emission zones
- be able to understand drivers' hours and work-related road safety.

## Unit 3: Drive safely and efficiently

3.34 The aim of this unit is that drivers should be able to guide and control their AFV safely and responsibly, taking into account road, traffic and weather conditions.

### Guiding and controlling your alternatively fuelled vehicle

3.35 Driving is a complex task; it involves taking in a large amount of information and responding to it appropriately. To be able to do this, drivers must constantly scan the world around them, understand what is happening and identify possible hazards and risks.

3.36 To be able to manage this, drivers need to master basic driving skills, such as steering and coordinating the use of controls. Drivers need to be able to do these things without really thinking about them, so they can devote their concentration to what is happening on the road.

### Your alternatively fuelled vehicle's load

3.37 Drivers are responsible for the contents of their alternatively fuelled vehicle and need to make sure that it is loaded correctly for stability and ease of access. Drivers also need to be aware of the feel and handling of their alternatively fuelled vehicle at all times. As the driver, they need to be aware of

- the impact of multi-drop deliveries and how they load the alternatively fuelled vehicle
- the load distribution and the effects of accelerating, braking and steering.

3.38 The distance certain AFVs can travel (their range) can be significantly affected, depending on a number of factors. For example, drivers need to be aware of the reduction in the alternatively fuelled vehicle's normal range when it is loaded and think about planning a suitable route.

## Learning outcomes

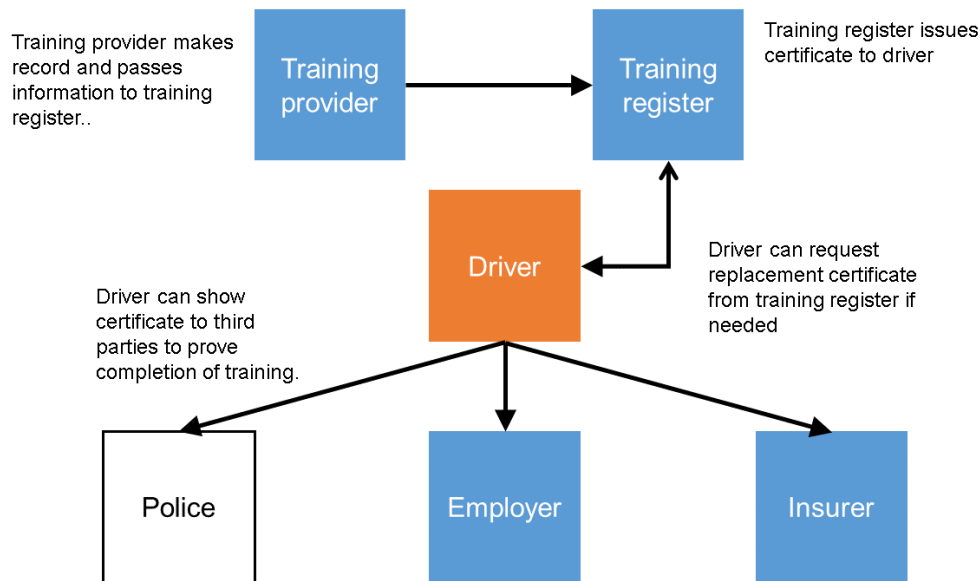
3.39 When you have completed this unit, you will:

- have a better understanding of how to start, move off, stop and leave an alternatively fuelled vehicle safely and appropriately

- have a better understanding of how to drive and manoeuvre an alternatively fuelled vehicle safely on different road surfaces and in different weather conditions
- have a better understanding of how to control the alternatively fuelled vehicle and the driving forces and risks associated with carrying loads
- be able to understand the benefits of route planning and how to maximise alternatively fuelled vehicle range.

## 4. Certification of training

- 4.1 Once the training set out in Chapter 3 has been completed by a driver, the training provider should contact their training register who will issue the driver with a certificate confirming that they have completed the required training.
- 4.2 This certificate can then be used by third parties to evidence that they have completed the training.
- 4.3 Anyone found driving an alternatively fuelled vehicle between 3.5 tonnes and 4.25 tonnes on a Category B licence without having done the 5 hours training would be guilty of an offence under the Road Traffic Act (1988) – driving otherwise than in accordance with a licence.
- 4.4 Drivers who hold a Category C licence including sub categories are permitted to drive alternatively fuelled vehicles weighing more than 3.5 tonnes without the need for additional training. However, the driver would in this case then come into scope of Driver CPC.
- 4.5 Whereas a driver who holds a Category C licence including sub categories (and therefore also a category B licence) who undertakes the additional training is permitted to drive alternatively fuelled vehicles weighing up to 4.25 tonnes without coming into scope for Driver CPC.
- 4.6 Third parties who are likely to want to evidence that a driver has completed training are:
  - Insurance companies
  - Employers
  - The police.



### Cost of Certificate

- 4.7 The certificate will be produced by one of two national training registers, depending on which of these registers a training provider is associated with. Certificates will be sent directly to an address specified by a driver.
- 4.8 The cost of these certificates should be charged at £15 + VAT, which includes postage. This is subject to change.

### Retention of certificates

- 4.9 The certificate is proof that the driver has completed the necessary training that allows them to drive an alternatively fuelled vehicle of up to 4.25 tonnes legally. The driver will therefore need to retain the certificate for as long as they wish to drive their alternatively fuelled vehicle using their Category B licence.
- 4.10 In the event a certificate is lost or stolen, the training register will be able to re-issue a replacement certificate to the driver. The cost of a replacement certificate will be charged at £15 + VAT.

### Carrying certificates while driving

- 4.11 There is no requirement for Category B licence holders to carry a certificate with them while driving. However, if stopped by the police it is likely that they will be asked to bring the certificate to their local police station.

### Format of the certificate

- 4.12 Certificates will be produced according to a standard template, and contain the following information:
- Trainer name
  - Trainer registration number
  - Date training undertaken
  - Driving licence number of driver
  - Name of trained driver
  - Contact details of Training Register

### **Obligations on training providers**

4.13 Training providers will need to submit the following information to their training register:

- Date training undertaken
- Driving licence number of driver and ID has been verified
- Name of trained driver
- Address where the certificate should be sent
- [Confirmation whether the driver consents for the training register to share data about their completion of the training with relevant third parties]



## 5. Supporting documentation

- 5.1 Information on the 'National Standard for driving cars and light vans (category B) is available at <http://www.gov.uk/dvsa/driving-standards> and [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/377664/car-and-light-van-driving-syllabus.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/377664/car-and-light-van-driving-syllabus.pdf)
- 5.2 The 'National Standard for Lorries' the content of which covers category C1 [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/377668/national-standard-for-driving-lorries.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/377668/national-standard-for-driving-lorries.pdf)
- 5.3 Instructors should also refer to the 'National Standard for driver and rider training', also available at [www.gov.uk/dvsa/driving-standards](http://www.gov.uk/dvsa/driving-standards).
- 5.4 More detailed information can also be obtained from the following publications
  - Department for Transport – The Official Highway Code ISBN: 9780115528149 (also available as an e-book or mobile phone application)
  - Department for Transport – Know Your Traffic Signs ISBN: 9780115528552
  - Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency – The Official DVSA Guide to Driving – The Essential Skills ISBN: 9780115531347
  - Department for Transport – The Official DVSA Guide to Driving Goods Vehicles ISBN: 9780115534096
- 5.5 For more information contact
  - DVSA technical support by email [Technical.standards@dvsa.gov.uk](mailto:Technical.standards@dvsa.gov.uk) or by calling 0115 936 6370
  - OLEV Enquiries by email [olev.enquiries@Olev.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:olev.enquiries@Olev.gsi.gov.uk)
  - DfT by calling 0300 330 3000
- 5.6 More can be read about the statutory instrument (the law) here: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/784/made>

## 6. Frequently Asked Questions

### **What if a training provider does not issue me with a certificate?**

- 6.1 Before drivers begin the training, they must check that their training provider is registered with one of the two authorised training registers, and that will ensure they are issued with a certificate on completion of the training.
- 6.2 You will receive your certificate from the National Register of LGV instructors (NRI) or the National Vocational Driving Instructors Register (NVDIR). If you haven't received it within 21 days of completion of the training, you should call the appropriate number below. You will need to quote:
  - Your name
  - Driver number
  - Date of training completion
  - Name of trainer (if possible)
- 6.3 For NRI, please call: 01952 520210
- 6.4 For NVDIR, please submit a call back request via: <http://www.lgvregister.org.uk/general-enquiries/>

### **What if I have questions about the validity of a certificate?**

- 6.5 If drivers are doubtful that a certificate is valid, drivers can contact the training register to enquire. Details of how to do so will be on the training registers websites:
  - <https://lqv instructorregister.com/>
  - <http://www.lgvregister.org.uk/>

### **How do I know whether my vehicle applies to this requirement?**

- 6.6 If drivers would like to check whether their vehicle qualifies as an alternative fuel vehicle, please find their vehicle at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/co2-and-vehicle-tax-tools> which allows drivers to find fuel consumption and, CO2 and other emissions, by make and model.