



Driver Factsheet 012

EU DRIVERS HOURS FACTSHEET

For obvious safety reasons, strict rules apply on how long drivers can stay behind the wheel before taking a break or rest, and on the duration of that break or rest.

Two sets of rules may apply:

- EU drivers' hours regulations, which cover drivers of most goods vehicles over 3.5 tonnes GVW on journeys within EU member states; and
- Domestic UK hours rules, which cover goods vehicle drivers exempt from EU drivers' hours rules when operating in the United Kingdom.

What are the main EU rules requirements?

EU drivers' hours rules provide limits for daily, weekly and fortnightly driving as well as stipulating minimum breaks for drivers during the working day and daily/weekly rest periods. The core requirements from 11th April 2007 are:

- Daily driving must not exceed nine hours, although this may be extended to 10 hours twice a week.
- Weekly driving must not exceed 56 hours.
- Fortnightly driving must not exceed 90 hours in any two consecutive weeks.
- Drivers must take breaks totalling 45 minutes during or after a maximum of 4.5 hours' driving. The 45 minutes can be split into two periods, of 15 minutes and 30 minutes. Note that it is no longer acceptable to split breaks into three periods of 15 minutes.
- Drivers must normally take at least 11 consecutive hours' daily rest, though this can be reduced by up to two hours on up to three occasions between any two weekly rest periods. No compensation is required for such reductions.
- Drivers may split their daily rest into two periods totalling 12 hours. If they do, the first period must be at least three hours and the second at least nine hours. Note that it is no longer acceptable to split daily rest into more than two periods.
- Within six 24-hour periods from the end of their last weekly rest, drivers must extend their daily rest period into a weekly rest period. This may be either the regular 45-hour weekly rest or a reduced period of at least 24 hours. In any two consecutive weeks, drivers must take at least two regular weekly rests, or one regular and one reduced weekly rest. Reductions in weekly rest must be compensated for by an equivalent number of hours before the end of the third week following the week in which reduced rest was taken.

What are the domestic hours rules requirements?

Domestic UK hours rules apply to those who are not covered by the EU rules. There are two key requirements for drivers:

- A daily driving limit of 10 hours
- A daily duty limit of 11 hours

Note that off-road driving does not count towards the daily driving limit but DOES count towards the daily duty limit.

Note also that if a driver drives for less than four hours in each day of any fixed week he need not observe the domestic hours requirements during that week, i.e. he can ignore the daily duty limit of 11 hours. However, if he drives for more than four hours on any one day during the week, he must respect the above limits for the whole of the week in question.

Where can I find out more?

For a full breakdown of both UK domestic hours rules and EU drivers' hours rules from 11th April 2007, see the [Transport Office's guide to the new rules](#).

Also well worth looking at is the [RHA guide to the changes in EU drivers' hours rules](#).

Points to Ponder

If a driver uses a vehicle subject to EU drivers' hours rules in a day or week in which he also drives a vehicle subject to the domestic UK restrictions, he can EITHER observe the EU rules all the time OR a combination of both rules. However, the EU limits must not be exceeded when driving on EU work.

The new EU drivers' hours rules include a number of changes to the derogations and exemptions that were previously applied. See the [Transport Office's guide to the new rules](#) for more information.