

Side guards



Regulations 49 and 51 of the 'The Road Vehicles (Construction & Use) Regulations 1986' refer to Rear and Side Protection for Goods Vehicles.

Regulation 52 covers the maintenance of side guards, and states that a side guard "must be maintained free from any obvious defect which would be likely to adversely affect its effectiveness".

Mandatory Fitment

Side guards **must** be fitted to the following:

1. An **articulated vehicle** with plated train weight of more than 32,520 kg to the semi-trailer, if :
 - a. its plated gross weight exceeds 26,000 kg and
 - b. it was manufactured before 1 May 1983 and
 - c. the distance between the foremost axle and the centre of the kingpin (the rearmost kingpin if there is more than one) exceeds 4.5 metres;
2. **Any other motor vehicle** exceeding 3,500 kg maximum gross weight first used on or after 1 April 1984 if the distance between any two axles exceeds 3 metres
3. **A trailer** (including a semi trailer) with unladen weight exceeding 1,020 kg, manufactured on or after 1 May 1983, **except** :
 - a. for a **drawbar trailer** if the distance between 2 axles does not exceed 3 metres.
 - b. for a **semi-trailer** if the distance from the foremost axle to the centre of the kingpin (as defined in 1), exceeds 4.5 metres
4. **All Semi-trailers with driven wheels** must be fitted with side guards.

Vehicle types exempt from fitment

The following vehicles types are exempt from the legal requirement to have side guards fitted:

- 1) A motor vehicle incapable because of its construction of exceeding 15 mph on the level under its own power when fully laden
- 2) Engineering plant

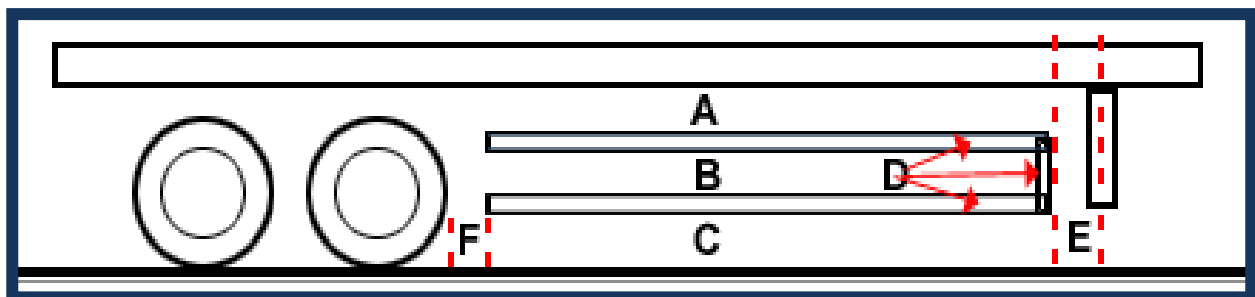


- 3) Fire engines
- 4) An agricultural motor vehicle or agricultural trailer/trailed appliance
- 5) A vehicle so constructed that it can be unloaded by part being tipped sideways or rearwards (see picture)
- 6) A vehicle owned by the Secretary of State for Defence and used for naval, military or air force purposes
- 7) A chassis without bodywork that is being driven or towed:
 - a) for a quality or safety check by its manufacturer, dealer or distributor, or
 - b) by previous arrangement to premises where bodywork is to be fitted or preparatory work done or to premises of a dealer or distributor
- 8) A vehicle being driven or towed to a place where by previous arrangement a side guard is to be fitted so that it complies with this regulation
- 9) A vehicle designed solely for use and used solely in connection with street cleansing, collection or disposal of refuse or collection or disposal of the contents of gullies or cesspools
- 10) A trailer designed and constructed, and not merely adapted, to carry round timber, beams or girders of exceptional length
- 11) A motor car or heavy motor car constructed or adapted to form part of an articulated vehicle
- 12) A vehicle designed and constructed, and not merely adapted, to carry other vehicles loaded onto it from the front or rear

- 13) A vehicle specially designed, and not merely adapted, for the carriage and mixing of liquid concrete
- 14) A temporarily imported foreign trailer
- 15) A trailer with a load platform which is not more than 750 mm from the ground

Side guard dimensions

The diagram below shows a trailer with side guards attached, the dimensions specific to the construction and fitment of the side guards represented by the letters on the diagram can be found on the list below.



- A. - 350mm (maximum) from the underside of the vehicle bed to the top of the side guard.
- B. - 300mm (maximum) between the bottom of the top rail to the top of the lower rail.
- C. - 550mm (maximum) from the underside of the lower part of the side guard to the ground.
- D. - 100mm (maximum) being the width of the side guard construction.
- E. - 250mm (maximum) from the front of the side guard to the centre point of the landing legs.
- F. - 300mm (maximum) from the end point of the side guard to the leading edge of the foremost tyre.

Other Important Points to remember:

- The top of the side guard must be a minimum of 1.5 metres from the ground. However, in the case of concrete mixers (Where this dimension is not achievable), the distance is 1 metre.
- It should also be noted, that from the forward edge of the side guard (nearest point to the landing legs), the distance to the kingpin should be a maximum distance of 3 metres.
- Extendible trailers must fully comply only when closed. A gap at one end of the trailer is allowed when extended.
- The regulations say it is only necessary to satisfy the specification 'so far as is practicable' in the case of:
 1. A bulk liquid, powder or gas tanker, where the tank is permanently fitted to the vehicle and is provided with valves and hose or pipe connection for loading and unloading; and
 2. A vehicle fitted on one or both sides with outriggers to provide the additional stability required during loading, unloading, or in use for operations for which it is designed.

Further information

In the first instance, contact your maintenance, bodywork provider or vehicle supplier as they will be able to help you

You can obtain electronic and/or hard copies of the regulations and subsequent amendments from The Office of Public Sector Information (www.opsi.gov.uk/).

The Freight Transport Association (www.fta.co.uk) publishes the Yearbook of Road Transport Law, which contains a comprehensive summary of this and other topics.

The Road Haulage Association (<http://www.rha.uk.net/>) also offers advice to its members and publishes the RHA haulage manual <http://www.rhaonline.co.uk/product.php?id=245>

