

Maximum laden weights

I am aware that some people, when looking at purchasing a motorhome, endeavour to find one with a GVM (maximum safe laden weight rating) of not more than 3,500kg. This will allow the vehicle to be operated on a Warrant of Fitness with a lesser frequency of checks than a Certificate of Fitness and also at a lesser cost per inspection.

However care must be taken to ensure that the vehicle does not exceed the GVM rating at any time.

Vehicle manufacturers and dealers specifications quote the vehicle manufacturers GVM ratings and also display a tare weight. However, sometimes the tare weights are not strictly comparable between makes because in some cases they do not include a full fuel tank and some even state that the tare weight only includes a partially full tank.

The unladen weight of the vehicle (often referred to as the tare weight) is interpreted in the Land Transport Act 1998 as: the weight of the vehicle together with the fuel in its fuel system and the equipment and accessories on it that are necessary for its operation for the purpose for which it was designed.

In the case of a motorhome or caravan, the unladen weight would include all articles that are permanently built or affixed into the vehicle. These include a full fuel tank plus stove, refrigerator etc but it does not include any persons, or anything that is not built into the vehicle such as food, clothing, water, camp chairs and gas cylinders etc.

The following are examples of recent advertising of specifications of motorhomes which indicate they could easily exceed the GVM ratings when carrying the number of people for which there are sleeping berths.

Example A:

GVM rating	3,500kg
Tare	3,160kg
Available payload	340kg
Berths	4
If we add the weights of 4 persons @80kg	320kg
120 litres of water	120kg
2x9kg full LPG cylinders @22kg	44kg
Toilet cassette full	19kg
	<u>502kg</u>
Vehicle now exceeds GVM rating by	162kg

However there has been no allowance for clothing, food, crockery and cutlery, cooking utensils, camp chairs and table, bicycles or any other equipment and accessories.

Example B:

GVM rating	3,490kg
Tare	2,992kg
Payload	498kg
Berths	6
If we add the weights of 6 persons @80kg	480kg
100 litres of water	100kg
1x9kg full LPG cylinder	22kg
Toilet cassette full	19kg
	<u>621kg</u>
Vehicle now exceeds GVM rating by	123kg

However, again there has been no allowance for any other equipment.

If the vehicle is loaded to exceed the chassis manufacturers maximum laden weight rating then the manufacturer's warranty may be null and void. Likewise in the event of an accident the insurance company is entitled to reject any claims as the vehicle was not being operated in compliance with the relevant legislation or the terms of the insurance policy.

