

# Driving A Van For The First Time

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Driving and parking a van is not as difficult as it might look, but it still requires a little extra care compared to driving a car. Follow these tips when driving your hire van and you won't go far wrong.

## Speed

Van speed limits **are lower** than car speed limits:

- Motorways: 70mph
- **Dual carriageways: 60mph**
- **Single carriageways: 50mph**
- Built-up areas: 30mph

### Remember:

The police can and do enforce these speed limits, which apply to virtually all hire vans.

## Size Restrictions

- **Height:** Most vans are at least 2m high and **will not** go under most car park height barriers.
- Make sure **you know the height of your van** and keep an eye out for height restrictions.
- **Width:** Watch out for **6' 6"** width restrictions. Luton vans will not fit through and many panel vans will not either – and if they do, it will be very, very tight. **Avoid these width restrictions wherever possible.**

### Remember:

Rental companies normally hold you, the driver, responsible for any roof damage and exclude it from their insurance cover.

## Mirrors

- Vans do not normally have central rear view mirrors, but they do have excellent large wing mirrors.
- **Make sure these are adjusted correctly or you won't be able to see behind you at all.**

### Remember:

Mirrors are a van driver's friend – use them a lot.

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## Driving

Modern vans are fast and easy to drive – almost too easy. Remember that despite their powerful engines and power steering, they are:

- **Slower to stop**
- **Less stable when cornering**
- Longer and wider
- You may also have expensive and fragile goods in the back – **think of your load.**

Finally, make sure you are familiar with the controls – lights, windscreen wipers and gears.

### Remember:

Don't try to drive your van like a car – take it easy and plan ahead.

Remember that your load may shift and be damaged if you drive too fast.

## Loading

- When loading your van, take time to make sure nothing can move. **If it can move, it will – often causing damage.**
- Protect furniture with old sheets and blankets.
- Load your hire van from the bulkhead backwards to help ensure your load is stable and evenly distributed.
- Put the heaviest boxes at floor level and the lightest stuff on top.

### Remember:

The secret to avoiding damage is to make sure that nothing can move.

If you are transporting anything heavy, make sure you do not exceed your van's permitted payload.

## Parking

- Don't be afraid to **get out and look or have someone see you back** when parking a big van.
- The slower you are going, the less damage you will do if you bump anything (we've all done it...)
- Rear overhang – the part of the van body behind the rear wheels can swing round and hit things. If you are parked against a wall or bollard, don't put full steering lock on from a standing start.

### Remember:

Your mirrors will help you see any obstructions down either side of the van and your position against the curb.

Don't be afraid to get out and look if you are unsure of what is directly behind you.