

## Maximum Vehicle Widths and Lengths

I have copied and simplified these tables from 'The Companion to British Road Haulage History' by various transport luminaries. I have tried to make sense of the headings for maximum vehicle widths but without much success as these definitions go back to 1861 and I cannot find any publication, even the DVLA website, that gives a reasonable explanation of the titles used.

The vehicle length table has far simpler headings which all of us will be able to understand.

**Table 1: Maximum Vehicle Widths**

	Motor Car	Heavy motor car	Motor tractor	Locomotive	Trailer
1861				7ft 0in	
1865				9ft 0in	
1896	6ft 6in			9ft 0in	
1904/5	7ft 2in	7ft 2in		9ft 0in	7ft 6in
1931	7ft 2in	7ft 6in <sup>1</sup>	7ft 6in	9ft 0in	7ft 6in <sup>1</sup>
1941	7ft 6in	7ft 6in <sup>1</sup>	7ft 6in	9ft 0in	7ft 6in <sup>1</sup>
1955	7ft 6in	8ft 0in	7ft 6in	9ft 0in	8ft 0in
1964	8ft 2.5in	8ft 2.5in	8ft 2.5in	9ft 0.5in	8ft 2.5in
1986	8ft 2.5in <sup>2</sup>	8ft 2.5in <sup>2</sup>	8ft 2.5in	9ft 0in	8ft 2.5in <sup>2</sup>
1996	8ft 2.5in <sup>2</sup>	8ft 4in <sup>2</sup>	8ft 4in	9ft 0in	8ft 4in <sup>2</sup>

1 – extra width allowed over wheels and tyres in certain circumstances to allow for conversion to pneumatic tyres and for steam vehicles

2 – increased to 8ft 4.5in. in 1986 and 8ft 5in. in 1989 for refrigerated vehicles

**Table 2: Maximum Vehicle Lengths**

	Rigid Vehicle		Drawbar trailer	Rigid + trailer	Artic	Semi-trailer
	4 wheels	6/8 wheels				
1922					33ft 0in	
1927	27ft 6in <sup>2</sup>	30ft 0in <sup>2</sup>			33ft 0in	
1930	27ft 6in <sup>2</sup>	30ft 0in <sup>2</sup>			33ft 0in <sup>3</sup>	
1931	27ft 6in <sup>2</sup>	30ft 0in <sup>2</sup>	22ft 0in		33ft 0in <sup>4</sup>	
1947	27ft 6in	30ft 0in	22ft 0in	60ft 0in	33ft 0in <sup>4</sup>	
1954	27ft 6in	30ft 0in	22ft 0in	-	33ft 0in <sup>4</sup>	
1955	30ft 0in		22ft 0in	-	35ft 0in <sup>4</sup>	
1964	36ft 1in		22ft 11in	59ft 0in	42ft 7in	
1968	36ft 1in		39ft 4.5in	59ft 0in	49ft 2.5in	
1983	36ft 1in		39ft 4.5in	59ft 0in	50ft 9in	40ft 0in <sup>5</sup>
1986	39ft 4.5in		39ft 4.5in	59ft 0in	50ft 9in	40ft 0in <sup>5,6</sup>
1990	39ft 4.5in		39ft 4.5in	59ft 0in	54ft 1in <sup>7</sup>	46ft 1in <sup>8</sup>
1991	39ft 4.5in		39ft 4.5in	60ft 2in <sup>9</sup>	54ft 1in <sup>7</sup>	46ft 1in <sup>8</sup>
1998	39ft 4.5in		39ft 4.5in	61ft 5in <sup>9</sup>	54ft 1in <sup>7</sup>	46ft 1in <sup>8</sup>

1 – Excluding drawbar

2 – 26ft 0in. if drawing trailer

3 – 36ft 0in. for 8-wheel articulated vehicle registered before 2 July 1930

4 – 36ft 0in. for 8-wheel articulated vehicle registered before 1 January 1931

5 – Length available for load carrying

6 – Semi-trailers used on international journeys exempted from this length limit

7 – 59ft 1in. for articulated trailer with a low-loader (but not a step-frame low-loader) semi-trailer

8 – 54ft 8in. for car transporters

9 – Subject to 51ft 3in. maximum length of the load-carrying space

All official measurements after 1968 are shown as metric. All measurements converted to imperial lengths for easy conversion to 4mm : 1ft.