

## **General legal requirements**

This information is prepared by the Caravan Club as part of its services to members. The contents are believed to be correct at the date of publication. To find out the latest news, changes to driving laws, and hints and tips about overseas touring check the latest news our new club together section or our website: [Club together](#)

Every country has its own traffic and driving regulations, we have tried to cover most of these with the information below, however, more detailed information can be found in our Caravan Europe Books: [www.caravanclub.co.uk](http://www.caravanclub.co.uk) type "Caravan Europe" in the search bar or call 01342 327410 to order your copy.

### **Breathalyzers in France**

From the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2012 it will be a legal requirement for all vehicles in France to carry a disposable breathalyzer which must be NF approved.

Breathalyzers can be purchased from the Caravan Club on-line shop, most French supermarkets and pharmacies for approximately €1.50 - €2.00, alternatively you can buy a twin pack costing £4.99 plus P & P from [www.travelspot.co.uk](http://www.travelspot.co.uk) Telephone: 01462 499 646.

The fine for not carrying a breathalyzer is €11.00, however, the French police will show leniency until 1<sup>st</sup> March 2013.

### **A-Frames**

If you would like to tow a car behind a motor caravan in Europe, our advice would be to use a trailer with all four wheels of the car off the ground.

Although most countries in Europe do not have a specific law banning A-frames they do have a law which prohibits "a motor vehicle towing another motor vehicle", and it is down to the local police how they interpret their own laws.

We have been contacted by a small number of members who have been stopped and fined for using an A-frame (particularly in Spain), and the fines range from €42.00 to €250.00. We have also been contacted by members who have travelled thousands of miles in Europe and not had any problems at all, however, if you want 100% guarantee that you are legal, you need to use a trailer with all four wheels of the car off the ground.

### **Carriage of bicycles**

Bicycles may usually be carried on the roof of a car, providing they are attached to an adequate roof-rack and the total height does not exceed 4m. However, the cross-Channel operator will need to be advised in advance of the total height of the vehicle and this may affect the cost of your crossing.

Bikes can also be transported at the back of a vehicle providing they do not obscure lights, indicators or numbers plates. Bike racks can only rest on the tow bar if the maximum weight allowed on the tow bar is not exceeded.

Portuguese regulations stipulate that bicycles may not be carried at the rear of a car, but they can be carried at the rear of a motor caravan or caravan, providing that they do not extend beyond the width of the vehicle or more than 45cm beyond its length.

In Spain and Italy any overhanging loads must be indicated by a square panel measuring 50cm x 50cm with reflectorised red and white diagonal stripes. This can be purchased from Fiamma stockists: [www.fiamma.com](http://www.fiamma.com) the panels are available in aluminium and plastic, in Spain you can use either, but in Italy panel must be aluminium.

## **Headlights**

Adapt your headlights so that you “do not dazzle oncoming traffic” by manually adjusting your lights or by using headlight converters. Eurolites are available from most motor accessory shops or on-line at [www.travel-spot.co.uk](http://www.travel-spot.co.uk) these headlight converters come with a list of over 600 different vehicle types, with corresponding diagrams showing you how to position them. Eurolites are suitable for clear lens, projector and xenon headlights.

It is compulsory in Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden to use your headlights at all times. In other countries lights must be used when travelling through tunnels, or in bad weather conditions.

## **Low Emission Zones**

There are a number of countries that have introduced low emission zones in towns and cities, including: Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Italy, and Sweden. For up to date details on low emission zones and requirements please see: [www.lowemissionzones.eu](http://www.lowemissionzones.eu) for information on the German low emission zones please see: [here](#)

## **Number plates**

If you do not have the new Euro style number plates (12 stars in a circle with GB below) then you will need to attach GB stickers to the rear of your vehicles.

## **Outfits over 12m travelling to Spain**

In Spain any car/caravan combinations or motor homes over 12m in length are required to fit marker boards to the back of the vehicle. The marker boards must be:

- Plain yellow in the centre with a red outline.
- Made of aluminium.
- Manufactured to ECE70 standards.

You can either have two small boards or one large board they must be placed at the back of the outfit between 50cm and 150cm off the ground, the smaller boards can be attached horizontally or vertically. Marker boards can be purchased from most HGV suppliers including HGV Direct: [www.ghvdirect.co.uk](http://www.ghvdirect.co.uk) telephone: 0845 686 0008.

Further information can be found our website [here](#)

## **General**

In most European countries it is a legal requirement to carry a warning triangle (in Spain and Slovenia two are recommended if you are towing) and high visibility vests for all passengers travelling in the vehicle, in some countries the law requires you to put the high visibility vest on before you exit the vehicle, so vests should not be kept in the boot of the car. A first aid kit is a legal requirement in Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, and Hungary, and recommended in most other countries. It is also recommended to carry a fire extinguisher. A complete list of compulsory equipment requirements can be found in the overseas advice section of our website.

Most European countries have banned the use of hand held mobile phones whilst driving, and the drink/drive limit can be much lower than here in the UK, in the Czech Republic for instance no amount of alcohol in the blood is tolerated whilst driving.

At the approach to some roundabouts in France you will see a sign “Vous n’avez pas la priorité”. This shows that traffic *on* the roundabout has priority. If there is no such sign, traffic *entering* the roundabout has priority. Other common signs are “Toutes Directions” (all directions), “Autres Directions” (other routes) and “Péage” (toll motorway).

In some towns and villages the speed limit of 50kph/30mph is not signposted, instead the name of the town/village is displayed on a rectangular sign edged in red, this sign signifies that the speed limit is 50kph, at the exit to the town/village there will be a similar sign edged in black with a red line through the name, once you have passed this sign the speed limits increases to what it was before you arrived at the town/village.

In France pedestrians have priority over cars when crossing a road. Pedestrians need to “show a clear intention to cross” described as “an ostensible step forward or a hand gesture” The only exception to this rule is where there is a designated pedestrian crossing less than 50m away. Drivers who ignore this rule and do not stop for pedestrians waiting to cross the road can receive a fine of up to €135.00

A solid white line down the centre of the road prohibits overtaking. In Spain this line must not be crossed to execute a left turn, despite the lack of any other “no left turn” sign. If necessary proceed to a “cambio de sentido” (change of direction) sign to turn. Also in Spain, many roads have a single white line on the near (verge) side of the carriageway; this marks a narrow lane for pedestrians and/or cyclists and is not for use as a hard shoulder. A continuous line also indicates “no stopping”; even if it is possible to park entirely off the road, it should not be crossed except in a serious emergency.

Halt signs *mean* halt – on the spot fines are imposed on motorists creeping forward at these signs. When stopping at traffic lights, ensure that you stop soon enough so that you can still see the colour of the lights as they can be to the side or high overhead without a further set in front.

In nearly all European countries it is illegal to use car navigation systems which actively search for mobile speed cameras or interfere with police equipment (laser or radar detection). Car navigation systems which give a warning of fixed speed camera locations are legal in

most countries with the exception of France, Germany, Ireland and Switzerland where this function must be de-activated.

In 2012 Austria, Slovenia and the Czech Republic introduced “emergency corridors” on motorways and duel carriageways. As a precaution whenever congestion occurs road users on the left hand land must move as far to the left as possible, whilst drivers in the right hand lane must move as far over to the right as possible, this will make a large enough gap in the middle of the road for emergency vehicles to pass and reach the scene of an accident. It is anticipated that more countries will introduce a similar system. (If there are more than 2 lanes, vehicles using the lane on the left must move to the left, and all other vehicles must move to the right)