

Blind-spot mirrors

What is the legislation?

The European Union introduced regulations designed to increase lorry safety by improving the standards of drivers' mirrors. From 1 April 2009 Directive 2007/38/EC has required vehicles weighing more than 3.5 tonnes to be retrofitted with proper devices to improve each driver's field of vision.

Why was the change introduced?

The directive was introduced to increase road safety for drivers and other road users, especially pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists. With the assistance of an improved mirror on the passenger side, the driver's indirect field of vision is greatly increased.

Previous legislation (Directive 2003/97/EC and 2005/97/EC) only required some new 3.5 to 7.5 tonne and all new vehicles over 7.5 tonnes (registered from 26 January 2007) to be fitted with improved mirrors. These improved mirrors had to meet 95% (Class IV – wide angle) and 85% (Class V – close proximity) vision.

Directive 2007/38/EC incorporates the requirement for all large goods vehicles in the fleet, existing and new, to be fitted with blind-spot mirrors.

How does this affect your fleet?

The table opposite shows which vehicles need to be retrofitted with blindspot mirrors.

	Needs to be retrofitted	No need to be retrofitted
Vehicles 3.5+ tonnes that do not already comply with 2003 directive	✓	
Vehicles 3.5+ tonnes not already Type Approved or approved as a single vehicle	✓	
Vehicles previously derogated from the 2003 Directive	✓	
Vehicles 7.5+ tonnes that were registered from 26 January 2007 (already fitted with Class VI mirrors)		✓
Light goods vehicles below 3.5 tonnes and buses		✓

Are there any exemptions?

Yes, the exemptions are:

Older vehicles

Vehicles over 3.5 tonnes registered before 1 January 2000.

Low cab vehicles

Vehicles over 3.5 tonnes (having maximum total permissible mass not exceeding 7.5 tonnes) where it is virtually impossible to mount a Class V mirror in a way that will ensure:

- The mirror is fully visible from the driving position
- No part of the mirror is less than 2m from the ground (regardless of the adjustment position), when the vehicle is carrying a load to its maximum permissible weight

Vehicles already retrofitted

Vehicles over 3.5 tonnes that are subject to national measures which entered into force before the dates for the transposition of the previous Directive 2003/97/EC and which would require fitment.



It is also important to note that the positioning of the mirrors is vital for compliance with this directive. It will not be enough simply to fit the improved mirrors; they will need to be positioned correctly to ensure the field of view around the vehicle is adequate.

Enforcing the implementation of blindspot mirrors

The Vehicle and Operator Service Agency (VOSA) is working with the Department of Transport on ways to enforce compliance during annual vehicle testing.

From 1 April 2009, operators have had to complete a self declaration certificate, stating that the vehicle is fitted with nearside mirrors or adequate devices that comply with the 2007/38/EC directive. This certificate will need to be presented at the vehicle's first annual test. After it has been presented once, it will not be needed for subsequent tests. If the vehicle is then sold, the certificate will need to be kept with the vehicle's registration documents.

What are the correct mirrors to use?

To ensure that your vehicle has the right mirrors for compliance with the regulations, a field of view check will need to be carried out.

Directive 2007/38/EC requires **no less than 95%** of the field of vision at ground level from a Class IV wideangle mirror and **no less than 85%** of the field of vision at ground level from a Class V closeproximity mirror.

Some manufacturers can offer replacement mirror glass with the curvature and vision to meet the 2003 directive. All that is then required is to replace the glass in the existing housing. However, on some vehicles the existing geometry of the mirrors will not allow this, which means that the housing and mounts for the mirror will also need to be replaced. Contact your vehicle manufacturer for more information.

Further reading

To find out more about the requirements for retrofitting blindspot mirrors and steps to implement the change, visit: www.dft.gov.uk/

Directive 2007/38/EC is available for downloading at: www.dft.gov.uk/vosa/publications/manualsandguides/vehicletestingmanualsandguides.htm

Website: [www.hitachicapitalvehiclesolutions.co.uk /commercial-vehicle-leasing/fact-sheets/](http://www.hitachicapitalvehiclesolutions.co.uk/commercial-vehicle-leasing/fact-sheets/)
Telephone: **0844 499 5227**