

# FAQs on Down-rating or Up-rating a Vehicle

## What is down-rating?

Down-rating a vehicle, also referred to as down-weighting or down-plating, is when an owner wants to lower a vehicle's original design weight. The design weight, also referred to as DGVW, MAM, Payload etc. is the weight of a vehicle or trailer, including the maximum load it can carry, as outlined by the manufacturer. Motor tax rates and driver licence categories go by a vehicle's weight so down rating a vehicle can result in reduced motor tax fees and lesser licencing requirements.

## What is up-rating?

Up-rating a vehicle, also referred to as up-weighting or up-plating, is when an owner wants to increase a vehicle's original design weight. Doing this will also increase the load carrying capacity of the vehicle. In most cases a physical modification is required to uprate a vehicle because carrying a heavier load requires stronger brakes, better suspension etc. Note that up-rating a vehicle may result in additional legal obligations such as a higher [licence category](#), a [tachograph](#), a [speed limiter](#) etc. which can be viewed under embedded links.

## What are the steps to down-rating or up-rating a vehicle?

Whether up-rating or down-rating a vehicle (motorhome, truck, van, bus, car etc.), the following steps apply:

**Step 1:** Contact your vehicle's original manufacturer (or authorised distributor) for advice. A vehicle's DGVW (Design Gross Vehicle Weight) should never be changed without the original manufacturer's approval.

**Step 2:** If the original manufacturer agrees to your vehicle being down-rated/up-rated, they will advise you of what physical modifications are required, if any. If your vehicle needs to be physically modified, a [Modifications Report](#) will need to be completed by the original manufacturer (or authorised distributor) and presented at its next roadworthiness test.

**Step 3:** A new weights and dimensions plate (also referred to as a statutory plate) will need to be fitted to your vehicle outlining the lower or higher DGVW. This can only be done by the original manufacturer (or authorised distributor). The new plate is required regardless of whether any physical modification takes place.

**Step 4:** Declare the revised weights to the Driver and Vehicle Computer Services Division (DVCSD) - Tel. 061 365053 or LoCall 1890 411 412, or contact your local [Motor Tax Office](#). They can advise what documentation is required to change the information on your vehicle's file and registration certificate (Log Book).

**Step 5:** Please contact Revenue to find out if any Vehicle Registration Tax (VRT) changes apply to your vehicle's new weight. Click [here](#) for local Revenue contact details. You should also notify your insurance company of any changes.

## What if the original manufacturer or authorised distributor is no longer in operation?

If the original manufacturer or authorised distributor is no longer in operation you can try contacting a UK or European branch (if in existence) to obtain written approval. If this is not possible, an [Approved Test Centre \(ATC\)](#) may be willing to certify the vehicle and complete the modifications report. However please contact the DVCSD on 061 365053 or LoCall 1890 411 412 **before** doing this to confirm whether they will accept this type of certification.

## I need to add (retro-fit) an axle to my truck to uprate it. What are the steps?

Steps 1 to 5 above apply, but only the original manufacturer (or authorised distributor) can certify this. Click [here](#) for a list of Irish HCV Distributor contact details.

## I haven't declared the new weight(s) to the DVCSD yet. Can I still drive my vehicle?

By law, the information on your vehicle's plate should match its file/record so if this differs and you're stopped by a member of An Garda Síochána you could be liable for prosecution.