

New Caravan & Trailer Regulations when visiting EU

It has not been widely publicised, but from 26 August 2025, all UK caravans and trailers over 750kg Maximum Authorised Mass (MAM) must be registered with the DVLA before travelling to most European countries. These regulations apply to all leisure and commercial types, including caravans and boat trailers.

Ireland and Spain are exceptions where registration is not required, but only if going direct. Registration will still be required if entering via another EU country, such as France.

The Regulations require you to have both a registration certificate and show a registration plate on your caravan/trailer. The registration process is simple and can be completed online:

Visit the DVLA application portal <https://www.gov.uk/register-trailer-to-take-abroad> and follow the steps below for your caravan or other trailer. You will need a Government Gateway user ID and password and trailer account to process your application. If you do not have one, you can create this when you use the service.

You will need

- The name of the trailer manufacturer. Please note that currently not all boat trailer manufacturers will be listed, so it may be necessary to select 'Manufacturer not listed' from the dropdown menu.
- The trailer type - for example: boat trailer, box trailer, container trailer, horsebox or caravan.
- The trailer's vehicle identification number (VIN) (usually 17 characters) or chassis number - this is usually on a metal plate fitted to the trailer or stamped into the chassis.
- The gross (fully loaded) and unladen (empty) weights of the trailer. These are usually found on a dedicated plate on a trailer's drawbar.
- An email address.
- A debit or credit card.

Costs:

£26 to register a trailer for the first time

£21 to issue a new registration certificate for a new registered keeper

£10 to replace a lost, stolen, damaged or destroyed UK trailer registration certificate

Once you've paid the £26 registration fee you will receive a confirmation email. This contains a PDF copy of your Trailer Registration Certificate (TRC), and a paper copy should arrive within five working days. The registration certificate will be needed when ordering your registration plate, which will cost around £20.

Fit the official registration plate to your caravan/trailer, either a single plate on the back or one each side. As boat trailers are occasionally used on the road without the boat (i.e. after launching) the plate must be carried on the trailer or lighting board, not attached to the boat.

Always carry the trailer registration certificate and documents when travelling, especially in the EU.

Please Note that the Government Trailer Registration Scheme is a separate requirement to the existing Caravan Registration and Identification Scheme (CRiS).

Jon Davies (Merriwinds, 21/36) has been through the registration process and has written a short account of his experiences, ***Trailing a Boat in France***, which can be found elsewhere in this section.

New EU Rules for UK Travelers

In addition to the need to register your trailer, new rules for UK travellers visiting the EU are also being brought into force. These involve the new Entry/Exit System (EES) (biometric checks at the border) and ETIAS (visa waiver for short stays) and are alongside ongoing passport validity rules and the 90-day rule for Schengen Area visits. As a consequence, visits to the EU will require additional planning and potentially longer border waits.

Key Changes & Requirements

Passport: Must be less than 10 years old (check issue date) and valid for at least 3 months after you plan to leave the Schengen Area. .

EES (Entry/Exit System):

This is a digital system for non-EU nationals, capturing fingerprints and facial images at automated kiosks. To be gradually introduced from October 2025 and expected fully operational by April 2026. For first-time entry, fingerprints & facial images will be taken and these will be stored for 3 years. Expect longer queues at borders initially whilst the data is being taken. A Mobile travel app may be available for EES pre-registration before your trip.

ETIAS (European Travel Information and Authorisation System):

This is a visa waiver for short trips (similar to the USA ESTA). It is expected to be in force sometime in late 2026. UK passport holders will need to apply and pay the appropriate fee before travelling.

90/180-Day Rule: UK travellers can stay in the Schengen Area (most of EU + Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, Liechtenstein) for a maximum of 90 days in any 180-day period.

Before You Travel

- **Check Passport:** Ensure it meets the less than 10 years old/3 months validity rule.
- **Plan Stays:** Use a calculator for 90/180-day rule if visiting multiple countries.
- **Apply for ETIAS:** When it launches (late 2026), apply online.
- **Allow Extra Time:** Expect longer border waits due to EES.