

Huge law changes to be come in later this month will 'enhance the safety of UK roads'

[express.co.uk/life-style/cars/1772730/driving-law-changes-longer-lorries-may-2023](https://www.express.co.uk/life-style/cars/1772730/driving-law-changes-longer-lorries-may-2023)

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New rule changes are set to be introduced at the end of the month to allow longer lorries on the road, boosting the economy and slashing emissions.



Major new laws to be introduced this month will 'reduce congestion and lower emissions' (Image: Getty)

Earlier this month, the Government [laid out legislation](#) to safely roll out longer lorries, potentially up to 18.55 metres on roads in Great Britain.

The longer vehicles will be 2.05 metres longer than the standard size and are expected to bring a £1.4billion boost to the UK economy.

The new rules, which come into force on May 31, will slash road emissions by saving 70,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide, as well as supporting the haulage industry and supply chains.

With the new lorries, the same volume of goods will be transported using eight percent fewer journeys than current trailers, taking one standard-size trailer off the road for every 12 trips.

The move has been welcomed by a number of experts, who point to the greater efficiency of the sector and the financial and environmental benefits it will bring.

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The new rules will come into effect on May 31. (Image: Department for Transport)
Dr Christopher de Saxe, head of sustainability at Zeus, said: “The Department for Transport’s approval of longer lorries on UK roads is welcome news.

“Too often, weights and dimensions regulations are an overlooked but crucial piece of the decarbonisation puzzle.

“Permitting the use of larger, more efficient vehicle combinations is a relatively tech-light solution to achieve up to double-digit percentage reductions in emissions, while also improving the energy efficiency of future net-zero HGVs.”

A Longer Semi-Trailer (LST) is an extra-long semi-trailer, which can be towed by a lorry and will be allowed on British roads from the end of the month.

This follows an 11-year trial to ensure they are safe to use on roads, with operators being encouraged to mandate extra safety checks and training initiatives.



The UK lorry driver shortage. (Image: Express)

The trial showed that LSTs were involved in around 61 percent fewer personal injury collisions than conventional lorries, according to the Department for Transport.

Despite the longer length, the LSTs will be subject to the same 44-tonne weight limit and are expected to cause less wear on the roads than conventional lorries.

Commenting on the impending rollout of the new rules, Roads Minister Richard Holden, said: “A strong, resilient supply chain is key to the Government’s efforts to grow the economy.

“That’s why we’re introducing longer semi-trailers to carry more goods in fewer journeys and ensure our shops, supermarkets and hospitals are always well stocked.

“These new vehicles will provide an almost £1.4billion boost to the haulage industry, reduce congestion, lower emissions and enhance the safety of UK roads.”

It is hoped this move will play a role in the introduction of future clean HGV technologies, including electric vehicles, with plans for relaxed weight limits to accommodate the heavy battery packs.

However, Dr de Saxe did have some reservations regarding the new lengths, pointing to the dangers faced by more vulnerable road users.

He added: “As a cyclist, however, I do note some concerns from this community regarding the so-called increased ‘tail-swing’ of some of these trailers.

“Thankfully, modern trailer steering technologies are starting to address this at lower costs than before, resulting in comparable turning performance to standard tractor semi-trailers.”