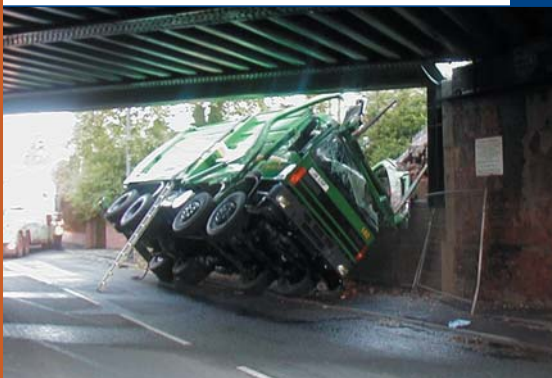


Prevention of bridge strikes

A good practice guide for professional drivers



Department for
Transport



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Introduction

This good practice guide is intended to provide advice to professional drivers on the risks and consequences of bridge strikes, and to give guidance so that bridge strikes may be prevented.



A crushed car as a result of a bridge strike

What is a bridge strike?

- a bridge strike is an incident in which a vehicle, its load or equipment collides with a bridge
- most bridge strikes occur where roads pass under railway bridges

What are the effects?

Striking bridges is potentially dangerous and expensive.

You could:

- be killed or seriously injured
- cause the death or serious injury of another road user
- suffer serious economic loss – you could lose your job
- be prosecuted for serious traffic offences
- cause serious disruption to the community



A damaged trailer and load

Your company may lose their operator's licence.

Your company will be liable for the costs of bridge damage and examination.

What are the effects on the railway?

- a serious incident could result in a train being derailed with catastrophic loss of life
- bridge strikes may seriously jeopardise the safety of the public travelling by train or road
- every bridge strike causes delays and disruption
- bridge strikes cause damage to railway bridges



A bridge strike can seriously damage railway bridges

Prevention of bridge strikes

Your responsibilities are to:

- **know your vehicle height and width**
- **know your route**
- **obey road traffic signs**

Before commencing a journey check:

- the security and safety of the load
- the height of the cab
- the height of the trailer, its load and equipment
- that the correct maximum height is displayed in the cab
- the maximum vehicle width

A route and vehicle check pro – forma is provided for your use to record checks carried out to aid the prevention of bridge strikes.



Always check the maximum height of your vehicle, its load and equipment.

When en route:

You commit an offence if the overall travelling height of your vehicle is over 3 metres and the correct maximum height is not displayed in the cab.

Remember, your vehicle height can change for a variety of reasons, for example, adjustment of the 5th wheel, trailer loaded, unloaded or reloaded.

Avoid short cuts to save time as this could lead you to a low bridge.

Stop and seek advice on an alternative route if you:

- are diverted from your planned route;
- realise that your route is obstructed by a bridge lower than the height of your vehicle

It is an offence to use a hand held mobile phone or similar device while driving.

Road traffic signs

Road traffic signs are provided at bridges to show the maximum permitted vehicle height when less than 16'-3". Dimensions are displayed in feet and inches. Some signs may also include the dimension in metres.

- red circles prohibit
- red triangles warn

If your vehicle is higher than the dimension shown on a circular road sign at a bridge, you are legally required to stop and to not pass the sign.

If your vehicle is higher than the dimension shown on a triangular road sign at a bridge, you should not pass the sign.



Height notice in the cab



Warning chevrons and circular signs at girder bridge

White lines on the road and 'goal posts' on the bridge may be provided at arch bridges to indicate the extent of the signed limit on vehicle dimension, normally over a 3m width. There may be two or more sets of 'goal posts' showing different heights through an arch.



White lines on the road indicating the extent of the signed vehicle height limit

At arch bridges ensure your vehicle is in the centre of the arch under the goal posts.

Wide loads over 3m (9'10") need extra care at arch bridges as the maximum height available will be less than the signed limit on vehicle height.

On the approaches to bridges with a vehicle height restriction, signs may give you advance warning of the restriction in order that you may take an alternative route avoiding the low bridge.

You should be aware however that advance warning signs are not provided at all low bridges.



Advance warning of a prohibition ahead

What action should be taken in the event of a bridge strike?

Step 1 Notify Network Rail immediately. Telephone the number shown on the identification plate on the bridge.

Step 2 Advise the police using the 999 system. Failure to report any road traffic collision is an offence.

Step 3 Report the bridge strike to your employer.

Step 4 Keep the public away and do not move your vehicle.

THIS BRIDGE IS ELR 12/1234

Acacia Avenue,
between Anytown and London

In the event of any road vehicles striking this bridge please phone

THE RAIL AUTHORITY on
01234 5678910

as quickly as possible. The safety of trains may be affected.

Appendix I

Professional driver's route and vehicle check

Date		Driver's name	
Vehicle no.		Trailer fleet/serial no.	
Route	From	To	Via
Load type	<input type="checkbox"/> Box <input type="checkbox"/> Container <input type="checkbox"/> Curtainsider <input type="checkbox"/> Plant and machinery <input type="checkbox"/> Skip <input type="checkbox"/> Waste <input type="checkbox"/> Car transporter <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)		

Route and vehicle check	
Have low bridges on your route been identified?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
What is(are) the location(s) of the lowest bridge(s) on the route?	
What is the limit on vehicle height under bridges on your route?ftinsmetres
Is the load and equipment properly secured and safe?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
What is the maximum travelling height of your vehicle?ftinsmetres
Is the maximum height of your vehicle less than the limit on vehicle height under bridges on your route?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
What is the maximum width of your vehicle?ftinsmetres



Know your vehicle height and width. Know your route. Obey road traffic signs. Don't hit and run.



Conversion chart for vehicle height



Feet/inches	Metres
16'-6"	5.0
16'-0"	4.85
15'-6"	4.7
15'-0"	4.55
14'-6"	4.4
14'-0"	4.25
13'-6"	4.1
13'-0"	3.95
12'-6"	3.8
12'-0"	3.65
11'-6"	3.5
11'-0"	3.35
10'-0"	3.05