

FAQs on Modifying or Converting a Vehicle

What is a modification? Any changes to a vehicle's original design, as built by the manufacturer, is considered a modification. A newly manufactured vehicle must meet strict safety standards before it can be put on the market. Modifying that vehicle can affect its original strength or operation, and therefore safety. The RSA does not recommend modifying vehicles, however, in some cases adaptations are unavoidable e.g. for disabled use or access.

Is it illegal to modify a vehicle? Certain modifications are illegal e.g. excessively tinted windows or loud exhausts. However, in general, provided the modification is carried out to an appropriate safety standard, does not negatively affect the roadworthiness of a vehicle and does not present a danger to any road user, there is no law against it. It is important to remember that under Irish road traffic regulations, it is the responsibility of *owner* and/or *driver* to ensure that their vehicle is maintained in a roadworthy condition at all times when used in a public place. Therefore, any modification which negatively affects that roadworthiness can result in prosecution. A copy of these regulations are available at the following links:

S.I. No. 190 of 1963	Road Traffic (Construction, Equipment & Use of Vehicles) Regulations, 1963
S.I. No. 5 of 2003	Road Traffic (Construction and Use of Vehicles) Regulations, 2003
S.I. No. 189 of 1963	Road Traffic (Lighting of Vehicles) Regulations, 1963

Any modification that may affect the safety of a vehicle must be declared at the vehicle's next roadworthiness test and a modifications report, certified by a qualified person (e.g. mechanical engineer), presented in order to pass. In addition, modifications can affect your insurance policy so please contact your insurance provider for more details.

How do I know if a mechanic is qualified to check out a vehicle? You can log onto [SIMI](#) (The Society of the Irish Motor Industry) has a list of approved garages where you can search by location. Alternatively, you can log onto [IAEA](#) (The Institute of Automotive Assessors) who can provide a list of registered mechanical engineers.

What are the steps to converting/adapting a vehicle? (e.g. removing/adding seats, down/up-rating, turning a truck/van into a motorhome, converting a people carrier into a van, or vice versa)

Step 1. Contact the vehicle's original manufacturer (or authorised distributor) to find out if there are safety implications or if it is possible to carry out the proposed modifications

Step 2. Contact your local motor tax office (MTO) to ensure that this type of conversion is permitted and what documentation they require. Click [here](#) for a list of local MTO contact details.

Step 3. Contact [The Revenue Commissioners](#) to enquire whether you need to declare the conversion and whether changes to your Vehicle Registration Tax (VRT) may apply. If so, they will provide you will the necessary forms.

Step 4. Ensure the conversion / modification is carried out to an appropriate and safe standard. NSAI has a [list of Approved Test Centres](#) to choose from and SIMI provides a list of recognised [garages/mechanics](#) in your area.

Step 5. Present a modifications report, certified by a suitably qualified individual (e.g. mechanical engineer) at your vehicle's next roadworthiness test. A [modifications report](#) can be downloaded from either [NCT](#) or [CVRT](#).

I've modified/converted my vehicle, how do I get my registration certificate/log book changed? Please contact your local motor tax office (MTO). They will provide you with details on how to amend your vehicle's registration certificate (log book). Click [here](#) for a list of MTO contact details.

I want to change my vehicle's category (re-classify). What do I need to do? If your vehicle been modified/adapted please refer to steps 2 to 5 above. If not, please contact your [local motor tax office](#) who will advise you what documentation they require.

I've adapted/converted my vehicle and need to get the tax relief/the VRT rate changed, what should I do?

Any queries regarding the payment or refunding of Vehicle Registration Tax (VRT) should be referred to Revenue. Please click [here](#) for local contact details.

Is bolting and plating still acceptable in a vehicle modification? The RSA recommends you contact the original vehicle manufacturer to find out if there are safety implications with the proposed modifications. And that you also obtain certification from them afterwards to ensure that the modification has been carried out to an appropriate standard and has not affected the structural integrity or safety of the original design.

I've purchased a new vehicle and want to adapt it for disabled use. If your vehicle has not been registered yet please contact [Revenue](#). For information on the adaptation/modification process please refer to steps 1 to 5 above.