

PREPARING FOR THE ROAD

Before moving off	14
Motorhome terms	14
Loading of vehicle	15
Large storage areas	15
Roof loading	16
Tyres	16
Dedicated travelling passenger seating	16
Child seats	17
Three point seat belts	17
Driving licence	18
Vehicle classifications	18
Advice on towing	18

Preparing for the road

BEFORE MOVING OFF

Check:

- all gas operated appliances have been isolated, except the heating system.
- gas cylinders are correctly positioned, secured and turned off unless using en-route heating.
- loose articles including Luton ladder are stowed securely. Do not stow tins, bottles or heavy items in overhead lockers.
- all lockers and cupboard doors are closed and secured.
- main table is stored or locked in its transit position.
- fridge is on 12V operation and door lock is set.
- 230V mains input socket flap is securely closed.
- all drain taps are closed.
- tyre pressures and wheel nuts.
- rear corner steadies are raised.
- exterior roof rack ladder is raised and secured.
- all windows/doors/rooflights are closed and secured.
- TV aerial is lowered and locked into position.

- exterior step (where fitted) is retracted/folded in.

Special attention must be taken to ensure all top hinged windows as well as the Luton windows and rooflights are closed when in transit. All units should be fully closed and latched to prevent damage. The motorhome exterior door should also be locked.

The entrance door must be closed before the central locking is activated. Failure could result in being locked out of the vehicle if the keys are left inside.

MOTORHOME TERMS

Mass in Running Order:

This is the mass of the motorhome as stated by the manufacturer, i.e. ex works weight including the driver with 90% fuel / fresh water / gas capacity and standard fixtures and fittings, in compliance with European Directive 92/21/EEC (Masses and Dimensions).

Note: Quoted MRO is subject to tolerance, due to weight variation of materials used in Motorhome construction.

Maximum User Payload:

The maximum allowable weight to be put into the motorhome whilst it is being driven. This is made up of 4 sections:

Personal effects, conventional load, optional

equipment and essential habitation equipment.

The Maximum User Payload is the difference between the Maximum Technically Permissible Laden Mass and the Mass in Running Order.

Personal Effects:

Those items which a user can choose to carry in a motorhome and which are not included as Essential Habitation Equipment or Optional equipment.

Conventional Load:

A mass allowance for each designated passenger seat.

Optional Equipment:

Items made available by the manufacturer over and above the standard specification of the motorhome.

Essential Habitation:

A mass allowance for liquids in systems not accounted for within the MRO.

Maximum Technically Permissible Laden Mass:

The maximum weight for which the motorhome is designed for normal use when being driven on a road, laden.

This mass takes into account specific operating conditions including factors such as the strength of materials, loading capacity of tyres etc.

Preparing for the road

Number) plate located under the bonnet on the front cross member.

Please take care to ensure you have allowed for the masses of all the items you intend to carry in your motorhome e.g. passengers, optional equipment, essential habitation equipment and personal effects such as clothing, food, pets, bicycles, sailboards, sports equipment etc.

LARGE STORAGE AREAS

The large storage areas provided in some motorhome layouts are designed solely for the purpose of carrying personal possessions, these areas must not be used;

- as a habitation area (eg living, sleeping or cooking).
- to carry passengers, animals or livestock.
- for the installation (or use) of any LPG gas operated appliances, (unless supplied fitted by the manufacturer).
- for carrying LPG gas bottle cylinders.
- to carry any flammable liquids, unless properly stored, sealed and secured.
- for the operation of an electrical generator.

WARNING: Under no circumstances should the axle loadings or the Maximum Technically Permissible Laden Mass of this motorhome be exceeded.

Nose weight:

The static mass of the trailer towing device on the rear of the towing vehicle.

Notes:

- (i) When measuring the noseweight it is important that the trailer is loaded.
- (ii) The trailer is intended to be towed slightly nose heavy. The nose weight can be adjusted by distribution of the load. The nose weight should be approximately 7% of the actual laden weight (but not greater than the hitch capacity) and at the same time suit the motorhome requirements. See 'Advice on Towing' page 17/18.

LOADING OF VEHICLE

WARNING: Loads must not be exceeded. The driver is responsible for arranging the loads so that they comply with the technical weight limits of the specific motorhome model. See specification handbook.

Correct weight distribution is an important factor

in ensuring your vehicle is well balanced and easy to drive. It is therefore necessary to load your motorhome carefully making sure all heavy articles are evenly distributed and are preferably placed in the lower lockers or bed boxes.

WARNING: The two longitudinal bars fitted to the roof are there for styling purposes only and should not be used for load carrying.

WARNING: Do not travel with televisions or microwaves in overhead lockers unless the appliance was supplied fitted to your motorhome by the manufacturer.

Although it is essential to ensure that the total weight of your motorhome does not exceed the stipulated Maximum Technically Permissible Laden Mass, (MTPLM), it is important to remember that the front and rear axles also have individual maximum weights which must not be exceeded.

To ensure adequate road holding the load on the front axle, under all conditions, must not be less than 40% or more than 70% of the total weight.

Ensure you distribute the payload equally on each side of the vehicle to avoid an imbalance.

These weights, together with the MTPLM, can be found on the VIN (Vehicle Identification

Preparing for the road

- in such a way that the load exceeds the MTPLM and maximum axle loads.

Care must be taken to ensure that exterior doors are closed, locked and that all possessions are properly stored and secured before setting off on any journey.

ROOF LOADING

Some motorhome roofs can be fitted with a roof rack (optional).

A maximum load of 50kgs can be evenly distributed on the roof rack system. This figure **MUST NOT** be exceeded.

Note: When loading the roof rack, make sure the load is spread evenly and do not allow sharp objects to come into contact with the roof surface.

Do not apply excessive load to the rear suspension of your motorhome or allow the vehicle to reverse with the roof rack access ladder in the down position, touching the ground. This may cause excessive strain on the ladder fixing points.

The roof areas, up to the over cab section, are capable of withstanding an average person's weight (13 stone or 82.5kg).

Note: Do not walk on the over cab section.

WARNING: the roof may become slippery in adverse conditions, wipe dry before attempting to walk on roof section. Extreme care should be taken to avoid falling from the vehicle.

WARNING: When walking on the roof, deck type shoes should be worn – not leather sole

TYRES

If a wheel or tyre fitted to a wheel is changed any replacement must be of the same type of construction and size.

The law requires that the tyres and pressures must be suitable for the use to which they are being put. The minimum tread depth must be 1.6mm throughout a continuous band comprising the centre three-quarters of the breadth of the tread and around the circumference of the tyre.

Please refer to base vehicle manufacturer's handbook for tyre pressure information. This may also be displayed in the driver's door aperture.

DEDICATED TRAVELLING PASSENGER SEATING

Seat belts are fitted to all travelling seats. Travelling seats are designated by the manufacturer and vary according to the layout you have purchased. Each seat is homologated i.e. tested to all relevant safety requirements. **NEVER** travel in or attempt to install a seatbelt to a non-designated seat.

WARNING: Side facing seats are designed for habitational use only, not for use when the vehicle is in motion.

Seat belts and legislation

Designated driver and passenger seats are fitted with seat belts and **MUST** be worn.

Children, aged up to 3 years of age, must wear an appropriate child restraint suitable for their age and weight. Children from 3 years of age and up to 135cm (4'5") in height, or 12 years of age, whichever is reached first must use a restraint suitable for their age.

Children over 135cm (4'5") in height or aged 12 or 13 years must wear a seat belt.

Note: It is the legal responsibility of the driver To ensure children aged up to 14 years old are suitably restrained. For passengers aged 14 and over, it is their responsibility (not the driver) that a seat belt is worn.



Fig 1

Designated passenger seats within the habitational compartment of your motorhome are identified (fig. 1). Seat belts are fitted for your safety and must be worn unless a

'Certificate of Exemption from Compulsory Seat Belt Wearing' is held. This Certificate must be produced if asked for by the Police – seat belt offences can result in a fine.

CHILD SEATS

Choosing/Buying

Go to a reputable retailer such as Halford's, Mothercare, Toys R Us, John Lewis etc. Most reputable retailers will have trained child seat advisers on site and will offer a fitting service. Ask the advisor to fit various seats to the vehicle. Once a correctly fitting seat has been installed, satisfy yourself on its suitability for your child and the vehicle before buying as it is important to use a correctly fitting seat in your motorhome.

CAUTION: The child seat you use in your car may not be suitable for mounting on a motorhome seat.

Choose the right seat for your child's height and weight.

Ensure it has an official approval mark (usually the United Nations 'E' mark). The current UN standards is Regulation 44.03

Never fit or use a second hand car seat. It could have been damaged and may not meet modern standards. The fitting instructions may also be missing.

Positioning/ Fitting

Dependant upon the child seat type, the most suitable position for the child seat to be fitted may be the front passenger seat of the cab (NOTE airbag advice below) or the window seat of the forward facing rear seat, the isle seat in the rear is not a recommended position, advice should always be taken from the retailer on the suitability and security of the seat in the motorhome.

Read and follow the child seat manufacturer's instructions for fitting the seat.

All Swift Motor homes are fitted with inertia reel seat belts, however, the child seat must be tight in the adult seat. Push all your weight into the child seat as you tighten the belt.

Keep a copy of the child seat fitting instruction in the motorhome for easy reference.

Any doubts, ask an advisor to show you how to correctly install the seat.

Airbag

Never fit a rear-facing child restraint in a seat with an active airbag in front of it.

Forward-facing child restraints should be positioned as far back from the airbag as possible. Check the base vehicle handbook.

THREE POINT SEAT BELTS

This section refers to the seat belts located in the habitation area of your motorhome.

Fastening the seat belt:

Insert tongue into buckle; a positive 'click' indicates correct assembly.

Releasing the seat belt:

Press the red release button, the tongue will be ejected from the buckle.

- The belt is designed for use by one person and must not be put around a child seated on a person's lap.
- The belt is suitable for restraining most child seats and boosters.
- The belt should at all times be adjusted and used in accordance with the instructions. No excessive slackness should be present.
- Once installed the diagonal should pass across the centre of the shoulder and the buckle should lie just on or below the hip.
- Avoid twisting the webbing during use.

Preparing for the road

Webbing must not be allowed to chafe against sharp edges.

- Do not make alterations or additions to the belt.
- Belts that have been cut, frayed, damaged or stressed through impact should be replaced. After impact the motorhome anchorage points should also be checked.
- To clean use warm soapy water only.
- Periodic inspection of the installation will ensure reliability of the seat belt.

DRIVING LICENCE

Licences issued to drivers who passed their car driving test before 1st January 1997 include categories B+E and C1+E which gives them entitlement to drive motor vehicles up to 7500kg MTPLM.

Drivers who passed their test on or after this date have category B entitlement only, which restricts the entitlement to motor vehicles with up to 8 passenger seats and an MTPLM of up to 3500kg with trailers up to 750kg MTPLM (4250kg combined) or larger trailers providing the combination of the trailer and towing vehicle does not exceed 3500kg and the MTPLM of the trailer does not exceed the unladen weight of the towing vehicle.

Drivers who passed their test on or after the 1st

January 1997 will need to take an additional test(s) to gain the B+E and C1+E entitlement.

A number of Swift Group motorhomes have an MTPLM greater than 3500kg, therefore you must check you have the driving licence entitlement for the vehicle you drive.

VEHICLE CLASSIFICATIONS

Motorhomes up to 3500kg MTPLM are P/LGV (Private Light Goods Vehicles), motorhomes with an MTPLM over 3500kg and up to 7500kg are P/HGV (Private Heavy Goods Vehicles). These are used in defining MOT classifications and vehicle excise duty (road tax) classifications.

ADVICE ON TOWING

The towing capability of each motorhome differs depending on the specific chassis and engine types, (see 'Towing Capabilities' in your specification handbook).

This takes account of the maximum front and rear axle loadings as well as the minimum front axle loading in two conditions, MRO and MTPLM condition.

Towing in these, and any other condition requires sensible loading and distribution of payloads to ensure the requirements of the towing capability table are met.

When towing, the demands on both the vehicle and driver increase. A trailer reduces manoeuvrability, the ability to climb hills, acceleration and braking capacity and makes the vehicle handle and corner differently. It will also increase the fuel consumption of the vehicle.

Always brake in good time. Special care must be taken when descending gradients. Change down before going down a steep hill so the engine can act as a brake. Ensure that the towing vehicle tyre pressures are correct and adjusted for full load conditions and that the trailer tyre pressures are as recommended by the trailer manufacturer. Regularly check the operation of trailer brakes and lights.

For maximum stability, when loading the trailer ensure that the loads are properly secured during transit. Position loads so that most of the weight is placed close to the floor and, where possible, immediately above or close to the axle(s). Where the load can be divided between trailer and tow vehicle, loading more weight into the vehicle will generally improve the stability of the combination. After loading the trailer, check that the nose weight and axle loads are in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations, also check the rear and front axle loads on the motorhome. When calculating the laden weight of the trailer, remember to include the weight of the trailer PLUS THE LOAD.

NOTE: Towing regulations vary from country to country. It is very important to ensure that national regulations governing towing weights and speed limits are observed (refer to the relevant national motoring organisation for information). The stated maximum permissible towing weights refer to the vehicle's design limitations and NOT to any specific territorial restrictions.

Notes:

- i) Do not exceed the motorhome gross vehicle train weight.
- ii) Do not exceed the maximum front & rear axle loads on the motorhome.
- iii) Ensure the motorhome front axle load is never less than 40% or more than 70% of the total weight.
- iv) Motorhomes with an MTPLM up to 3500kg which have European Type approval can only be fitted with a type approved towbar complying to 94/20/EC.
- v) The limit for towing an un-braked trailer is 750kg (based on VIN plate not actual weight), this applies to a towed car.
- vi) A car dolly with a car with a GVW over 750kg in place is considered as two trailers, these are legal for use for recovery but under the Road Traffic Regulations Act

1984 the combination is limited to 40 mph on motorways and dual carriageways and 20 mph elsewhere. A car dolly is not legal for transportation (there is a very specific difference between recovery and transportation. Recovery is defined as the removal of a broken down vehicle to a place of safety).

- vii) The maximum permitted vehicle combination length is 18.75m, however any combination must ensure compliance with the turning circle requirements of Construction and Use regulations 1986 & 97/27/EC.

Preparing for the road