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# when is a van not a van?

## When it's a car

Whether a vehicle is a van or a car for tax purposes has caused some confusion in the past, particularly in relation to "double-cabs" or "crew cabs". These are essentially pick-ups which have four doors and two rows of seats.

The Inland Revenue's view has historically been that, prior to 2002/3, if a "double-cab" vehicle replaced a car, it would be taxed as a company car. Whereas if it replaced a vehicle which was used for commercial purposes, it was likely to be assessed as a van for tax purposes. The difference in tax due from the driver could be substantial as a vehicle regarded as a car would be taxed under the company car rules (ie taxed to a maximum rate of 35% of its list price), whereas a van would be taxed on a flat annual rate of 500.

From 2002/3 onwards the Inland Revenue have announced that they will use the same guidelines as those used by Customs and Excise to determine the status of a vehicle (the position for earlier years remains unchanged).

In broad terms, this means that for a double-cab to be regarded as a van it must have a payload of 1,045kg or more. The Inland Revenue have refined this definition by stating they will consider the primary purpose of the vehicle as well. In other words, they would still regard a double-cab vehicle with a payload of over 1,045kg as being a car if its sole use was to transport passengers.

The Inland Revenue have confirmed that this revised definition of a van is only an interim measure and the whole bases on which vans are assessed to tax is to be reviewed shortly.



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