

## Aftermarket HID Headlamps

### Statement

This document provides general guidance and advice on the legislative requirements in Great Britain relating to aftermarket HID headlamps. Every effort has been made to ensure that it is factually correct but recipients should check with the producers of this document if they have reason to believe any part is not correct or is now out of date.

### General requirements

In the Department for Transport's (DfT) view it is **not legal** to sell or use after market HID lighting kits, for converting conventional Halogen headlamps to HID Xenon. If a customer wants to convert his vehicle to Xenon HID he must purchase **completely new Xenon HID headlamps**. The reason for this is that the existing lens and reflector are designed around a Halogen filament bulb, working to very precise tolerances. If one places a HID "burner" (bulb) in the headlamp, the beam pattern will not be correct, there will be glare in some places and not enough light in other places within the beam pattern.

The following is the legal rationale:

The Road Vehicle Lighting Regulations 1989 regulate the situation in the UK. Under these Regulations, HID/Gas Discharge/Xenon headlamps are not mentioned and therefore they are not permitted according to the strict letter of the law.

However new vehicles have HID headlamps. This is because they comply with European type approval regulations. The UK cannot refuse to register a vehicle with a European type approval. These approvals relate to ECE Regulation 98 (for the HID headlamps which are tested on a rig in a laboratory) and ECE Regulation 48 (lighting installation on the vehicle).

For the aftermarket, a used vehicle cannot obtain type approval because this only applies to new vehicles. However DfT does not think it reasonable simply to ban HID in the aftermarket. Instead the Department makes analogies with new vehicles. It seems reasonable to require HID in the aftermarket to meet the same safety standards as those for new vehicles. The same level of safety should apply.

Therefore a HID headlamp unit sold in the aftermarket should:

1. be type approved to ECE Regulation 98 as a component;
2. when fitted to the vehicle should enable ECE Regulation 48 to be complied with (although no government inspection will take place); and
3. comply with RVLR as far as "use" is concerned.

In practice this means:

1. The headlamp unit (outer lens, reflector, bulb) shall be type approved to ECE 98 and be "e-marked" to demonstrate this. That can only be done by the headlamp supplier - Hella, Valeo etc. - who must test the headlamp in an independent laboratory.
2. Once fitted to the vehicle it must have headlamp cleaning and self-levelling (which can be for the headlamp or can be in the vehicle suspension - some expensive estate cars have "self-levelling suspension" and that is adequate). Also the dipped beam must stay on with the main beam.
3. The headlamp must be maintained in good working order, kept clean, and aligned/adjusted correctly in the same way as any other headlamp.

Under the Road Traffic Act 1988 it is an offence to supply, fit or use vehicle parts which are not legal.

In summary: it is not permitted to convert an existing halogen headlamp unit for use with HID bulbs. The entire headlamp unit must be replaced with one designed and approved for use with HID bulbs and it must be installed in accordance with the rules stated above.

### **Further information**

A note on legislation for vehicle lighting is annexed to this information sheet.

If you require any further information regarding the content of this information sheet, please contact the DfT at the address below:

International Vehicle Standards  
Department for Transport  
Zone 1/33  
Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
London  
SW1P 4DR  
Telephone: 020 7944 2091  
Fax: 020 7944 2196  
Email: [TTS.enquiries@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:TTS.enquiries@dft.gsi.gov.uk)

**NOTE:** The information in this document is a summary of DfT's understanding of what the law requires. However, ultimately the interpretation of the law is a matter for the courts based on individual facts of any particular case. You are therefore advised to consult the relevant legislation and, if necessary, seek independent advice.

## *GB Road Vehicle Lighting Regulations*

The Statutory Instruments which make up the GB Road Vehicle Lighting Regulations are available on the Legislation website of The Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI) <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/> as follows:

### **Base Regulation:**

*The Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations 1989:*

Statutory Instrument (S.I.) 1989 No.1796

[http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1989/Uksi\\_19891796\\_en\\_1.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1989/Uksi_19891796_en_1.htm)

### **As amended by:**

*The Road Vehicles Lighting (Amendment) Regulations 1994:*

S.I. 1994 No.2280

[http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1994/Uksi\\_19942280\\_en\\_1.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1994/Uksi_19942280_en_1.htm)

*The Road Vehicles Lighting (Amendment) Regulations 1996:*

S.I. 1996 No.3016

[http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1996/Uksi\\_19963016\\_en\\_1.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1996/Uksi_19963016_en_1.htm)

*The Road Vehicles Lighting (Amendment) Regulations 2001:*

S.I. 2001 No.560

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2001/20010560.htm>

*The Road Vehicles Lighting (Amendment) Regulations 2005:*

S.I. 2005 No.2559

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2005/20052559.htm>

*The Road Vehicles Lighting (Amendment) Regulations 2005:*

S.I. 2005 No.3169

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2005/20053169.htm>

*The Road Vehicles Lighting and Goods Vehicles (Plating and Testing)(Amendment) Regulations 2009:*

S.I. 2009 No.3220

[http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2009/uksi\\_20093220\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2009/uksi_20093220_en_1)

### **Other minor and consequential amendments:**

*The Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008*

NB. See Schedule 2 paragraph 82

[http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2008/uksi\\_20081277\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2008/uksi_20081277_en_1)

*The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (Consequential Amendments) (England) Order 2004*

NB. See paragraph 19

[http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2004/uksi\\_20043168\\_en.pdf](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2004/uksi_20043168_en.pdf)

*The Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 (Consequential and Supplementary Amendments to Secondary Legislation Order 2006)*

NB. See paragraph 9

[http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2006/uksi\\_20060594\\_en.pdf](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2006/uksi_20060594_en.pdf)

*Tramcars and Trolley Vehicles (Modification of Enactments) Regulations 1992*

NB. See Part V paragraph 14

[http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1992/Uksi\\_19921217\\_en\\_1.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1992/Uksi_19921217_en_1.htm)

*The Medical Act 1983 (Amendment) and Miscellaneous Amendments Order 2006*

NB. See paragraph 76

[http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2006/uksi\\_20061914\\_en.pdf](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2006/uksi_20061914_en.pdf)

Paper copies of Statutory Instruments are available for purchase from The Stationery Office at:

TSO Orders/Post Cash Department

PO Box 29

Norwich

NR3 1GN

Tel: 0870 600 5522

Fax: 0870 600 5533

Email: [customer.services@tso.co.uk](mailto:customer.services@tso.co.uk)

Website: [www.tsoshop.co.uk](http://www.tsoshop.co.uk)

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EU Directives can be found at: <http://ec.europa.eu/>

([http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/automotive/documents/directives/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/automotive/documents/directives/index_en.htm))

(The above lists all Directives pertaining to road and agricultural vehicles)

UN-ECE Regulations can be found at:

<http://www.unece.org/trans/main/wp29/wp29regs.html>

Paper copies of Directives can be ordered from TSO (see contact details above) or from the Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA) at:

Tel: +44 (0)117 952 4178 or

+44 (0)117 952 4143

Email: [vista@vca.gov.uk](mailto:vista@vca.gov.uk)