Cumbria County Council

Car Driver's Handbook



Contents

Introduction 3

The driver 5
Driver fitness and health 5
Driving position 6
Driving fatigue and tiredness 6
Driver licence 7
Insurance cover 7
Vehicle security 7
Personal injury 8
Disclosure of material facts 8

The vehicle 9
Permitted use of council provided vehicles 9
Service and maintenance 9
Windscreen/glass replacement 9
Condition of vehicle 9
Routine checks 10
Road fund licence/MOT 10

The journey 11
Loads and goods 11
Trailers and towing 11
Off road driving 11
Personal safety 11

Driving guidelines 13
Driving speed 13
Seatbelts 13
Prosecution 14
Production of documents 15
Mobile phones 15
Other hand-held units 16
Satellite Navigation devices 16
Smoking 17
Drugs and alcohol 17
Care and attention of service users 18
Preparing your car for winter 18
Driving in winter conditions 19
Driving in fog 19
Driving in rain or hail 19
Driving in snow 19
Driving safely on icy roads 20
Safe driving in road works 20
Refuelling 20
Advice on the safe storage of fuel 21
How to deal with a breakdown 22
Punctures 23
Incident procedure 23
Reporting incidents 23
Theft/attempted theft 24
Reporting incidents internally 24

Appendices 25
Appendix 1 25
Appendix 2 25
Appendix 3 26
Appendix 4 28
Appendix 5 30
Appendix 6 30

Introduction

The Health & Safety Executive regards existing health & safety law as applying to anyone driving a vehicle as part of their work. It is essential that Cumbria County Council has a controlled and auditable management process in place to protect itself and its employees.

The elimination/reduction of occupational road risk and the health & safety of employees, as well as members of the public, is of great importance to the successful management and operation of Cumbria County Council and it takes these responsibilities very seriously.

Safe driving is a vital element in each individual's ability to perform his or her particular job effectively. Cumbria County Council looks to each employee to uphold the highest standards of driving and safety.

The Council's philosophy is that, irrespective of blame, collisions are preventable and all risks can be contained. All vehicle users are not only responsible for their own safety, but also for that of others who may be affected by their actions. Therefore drivers are required to operate their vehicles, at all times, in a manner that is safe, responsible and legal.

Procedures for checking all drivers' documentation are in place but subject to ongoing review. All managers and staff must cooperate fully with the requirements of these procedures.

All vehicles must be maintained in a road-worthy condition at all times. Cumbria County Council looks to each employee to uphold the conditions of road-worthiness demanded by law.

This driver vehicle handbook sets out the procedures that all persons who drive for work purposes at Cumbria County Council must follow. Within the handbook, specific requirements and tasks are set out. Anyone using a vehicle for work purposes must comply with these requirements. Failure to do so may result in Cumbria County Council treating the matter as a disciplinary issue.

Serious, even fatal consequences can be caused to members of the public, the employee, or Cumbria County Council due to misuse of any vehicle. It is Cumbria County Council's intention to actively manage and control the risk which arises from the use of any vehicle used for work purposes.

Drivers are required to familiarise themselves with this handbook and comply with its guidelines and requirements. In return, the employee, Cumbria County Council and the public at large will only benefit from the successful management of this important part of our business.

This handbook provides a combination of policy and guidance in relation to use of cars, which should be taken to mean small passenger vehicles up to seven seats. It is applicable to all such vehicles whether Council provided leased or hired and also employee provided vehicles used for work purposes. Much of the general guidance is also applicable to other types of vehicle.

If you are unsure about any aspect of your legal responsibilities or are unclear on the handbook guidelines and instructions then please discuss these with your line manager.

Health and Safety Procedure number 25 Management of Occupational Road Risk addresses the management aspects of occupational road risk.

The Driver

Driver fitness and health

Each driver is responsible for ensuring they are fit enough to drive before they get behind the wheel.

Medical fitness

All drivers must be free from illness which may cause a problem whilst driving and must not be taking medication which impairs their driving. The driver should seek medical advice if in doubt as to the effect of any prescribed medication that they are taking.

The driver must inform their line manager of any health conditions or changes to medical conditions that may affect their ability to drive safely. Council rules preclude anyone who is medically unfit to drive.

Drivers should be free from undue stress and anxiety which may prove a distraction. If the driver feels unduly pressurised they should discuss it with their line manager

The driver is also required to notify the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) of any of the following medical conditions or changes to those conditions.

- Diabetes controlled by insulin
- Epilepsy
- Any condition affecting both eyes, or the remaining eye if you only have one eye (not including colour blindness, short or long sight)
- Stroke, with any symptoms lasting longer than one month, recurrent 'mini strokes' or TIAs (Transient Ischaemic Attacks)
- Fits or blackouts
- Any type of brain surgery, severe head injury involving in-patient treatment, or brain tumour
- An implanted cardiac pacemaker
- An implanted cardiac defibrillator (ICD)
- Repeated attacks of sudden disabling giddiness
- Any other chronic neurological condition including Multiple Sclerosis, Motor Neurone and Huntington's Disease
- A serious problem with memory or periods of confusion
- Persistent alcohol misuse or dependency
- Persistent drug misuse or dependency
- Serious psychiatric illness or mental ill-health
- Parkinson's disease
- Sleep apnoea syndrome
- Narcolepsy
- Any condition affecting your visual field (the surrounding area you can see when looking directly ahead)
- Total loss of sight in one eye
- Any persistent limb problem which needs driving to be restricted to certain types of vehicle or those with adapted controls
- Severe learning disability.

It is a criminal offence to fail to notify the DVLA of the relevant medical conditions or changes to such conditions.

Eyesight

It is a criminal offence to drive any motor vehicle if unable to read a standard number plate in good daylight from 20.5m (67 feet), using glasses or contact lenses if necessary. A driver who needs glasses or contact lenses must wear them every time they drive. The Royal National Institute for Blind People advises eye tests every two years from the age of 16, and then annually from the age of 60.

Driving position

The driver must ensure vehicle seat height; any lumbar support (if fitted) and head restraint are correctly adjusted, along with the steering wheel and mirrors, so that they are in a comfortable position whilst driving. Posture is important in avoiding injuries such as back and neck strains.

Driving fatigue and tiredness

A significant number of collisions occur when drivers become drowsy. (25% of sleep related accidents occur to people who are driving for work purposes) There are many things which cause drowsiness, for example, lack of sleep, long/monotonous journeys, consuming alcohol before a journey (even the night before), a journey home after long hours at work, taking medication and certain times of the day. The driver should consider whether the journey is really necessary. If it is, where possible, they should consider alternative forms of transport.

Driving when you are tired greatly increases your risk of collision. To minimise this risk:

- Do not begin a journey if you are tired. Get a good night's sleep before embarking on a long journey
- Avoid undertaking long journeys between midnight and 6 am, when natural alertness is at a minimum
- Plan your journey to take sufficient breaks. A minimum break of at least 15 minutes after every two hours of driving is recommended
- If you feel at all sleepy, stop in a safe place. Do not stop on the hard shoulder of a motorway. The most effective ways to counter sleepiness are to drink, for example, two cups of caffeinated coffee and to take a short nap (15–20 minutes but not more). Under no circumstances should any driver continue to drive if feeling unduly fatigued.

Cumbria County Council requires you to look upon business driving as part of your working day:

- The maximum business driving/working day should be 11 hours
- The driver must ensure that there is a minimum of 11 hours between duty times
- Cumbria County Council will reimburse overnight accommodation where required.

- All employees are expected to take a break for lunch

Driver licence

It is an offence to drive a vehicle on a public highway without a valid driving licence. Cumbria County Council places upon the driver the responsibility to notify their line manager, of any endorsement or disqualification imposed.

Under no circumstances may a vehicle be driven by a driver who has been disqualified or deemed to be unfit to drive by a doctor.

You should also be aware that the photo on photo card licences must be changed every 10 years or you could be liable for a fine of up to £1000, a similar fine can result from failure to notify DVLA of a change of address.

See Appendix 1 for how to obtain a uk driving licence – advice for ex pats. And Appendix 4 for people driving trailers

Insurance cover

Any person driving for work purposes using their own vehicle must have a motor policy which includes cover for 'business use'. The mileage allowance includes a proportion towards insurance and other running costs.

Most insurers recognise three common classes:

- Social, domestic and pleasure. This is the standard cover that most people buy if they don't use their car for their business. It also covers you for trips to and from work.
- Social, domestic, pleasure and business. This would also cover you if you were travelling between different offices or workplace locations.
- Commercial travelling. This would give you social, domestic, pleasure and business cover, but would also insure you if you are delivering goods.

People who transport service users may require extra insurance cover that permits the transportation of service users in the course of their employment. Staff in any doubt about the adequacy of their insurance policy should check directly with their insurance provider.

Any driver using a hire car will be insured on the County Council insurance cover from the requested start time of hire to the requested collection time. An extra six hours insurance is built in to allow for delays in collection.

Vehicle security

The vehicle should be locked, windows closed and all keys removed whilst unattended. Movable valuables, owned by the council or driver, should be removed

from the vehicle or locked in the boot out of sight when the vehicle is left unattended. Where it is possible the vehicle should be garaged overnight, or at least parked in a safe, secure area.

Personal injury

In the event of an injury following a collision, the driver and their passengers are covered for emergency medical costs if charged by the NHS. These costs can be recovered from your insurance company. If the collision is the fault of a third party, claims for personal injury may be possible.

Disclosure of material facts

Failure to disclose any pertinent facts could invalidate your insurance.

It is imperative that the driver informs their line manager of any licence endorsement or motoring conviction (other than parking) as soon as possible.

It is better to disclose too much than too little. In the majority of instances it will not be the conviction that nullifies the insurance, but the non-disclosure of any such conviction.

Failure to notify the DVLA of any impediment that may affect driving ability is an endorsable offence incurring up to six penalty points.

The vehicle

Permitted use of council provided vehicles

Council owned, leased and hire vehicles are to be used only for business or authorised personal use. Commercial vehicles may not be used for personal use.

Drivers of lease cars should also follow the individual guidance provided as part of the lease agreement.

Employees using hire cars should also refer to the 'Car Hire User Guide' at **intouch.ccc/eLibrary/Content/Intranet/536/39920103044.doc**

Service and maintenance

Servicing of Council owned/leased vehicles must be carried out as per the manufacturer's guidelines. Services must be kept as near to the specified mileage, time and/or intervals as possible. Failure to do so could result in warranties being invalidated. The driver must ensure that the service book is completed and stamped when the vehicle is serviced.

Particular care must be taken in regularly checking tyres for pressure and wear & tear. Premature wear at the inner or outer edge of a tyre could indicate that the steering is out of alignment, which will wear the tyres more quickly and affect the handling of the vehicle.

Tyre tread must be at least 1.6mm across the central width throughout the entire circumference. The remaining tread pattern must be visible. Tyre pressure must be maintained to the correct pressure including spare (see vehicle handbook for details).

The vehicle must not be driven while it has illegal tyres. Cumbria County Council will not accept any liability for vehicles driven in this condition.

Windscreen/glass replacement

In the event of a cracked/damaged windscreen or a broken window the driver must arrange for a repair or replacement windscreen.

Condition of vehicle

All drivers have a responsibility to drive any vehicle safely and to comply with all vehicle operating requirements as stated in law, this guidance, and the manufacturer's handbook.

Drivers of County Council provided vehicles are expected to keep the vehicle in a clean and tidy condition at all times. Kept in good order, the vehicle will reflect a

good image of both the employee and the Council. If a driver allows vehicle condition to deteriorate through neglect, it could be dangerous, and cause serious injury.

Routine checks

The checks set out in the vehicle handbook are essential. It is the driver's responsibility to ensure the following checks are carried out:

- engine oil **at least weekly**
- windscreen washers **at least weekly**
- coolant level **at least weekly**
- tyre pressures and tread condition **at least weekly**
- lights, including indicators **at least weekly**
- brake fluid **at least monthly**
- power steering **at least weekly**

Road fund licence/MOT

Failure to display a current tax disc is an offence subject to minor exemptions related to delivery of new tax discs.

When the driver receives the new tax disc for their vehicle they must check that all details are correct.

An MOT is first required when a car becomes three years old and thereafter must be renewed at annual intervals. It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that the vehicle has a current MOT (where applicable).

The journey

Loads and goods

Cumbria County Council recognises the problems that unsecured loads can cause in the event of a collision and requires drivers to check that any loads, equipment and goods carried in their vehicle are within the design capabilities of the vehicle and are properly restrained.

- Under no circumstance should heavy goods or loads be carried on the rear seat
- It is the responsibility of the driver to ensure that any goods or equipment carried are correctly restrained within the vehicle. If necessary to facilitate this, the driver should request an alternative method of transportation from their manager.
- Under no circumstances must the vehicle be loaded beyond its design capabilities. Refer to the axle weight in the vehicle handbook
- The driver must comply with safe manual handling procedures when loading or un-loading the vehicle. Particular care should be taken when handling or lifting goods as this involves bending and stretching. Further guidance is available in Cumbria County Council Safety Procedures Manual **intouch.ccc/elibrary/Content/Intranet/535/615/984/37708144254.pdf**
- The driver is reminded that correct load distribution is also a factor in vehicle safety as it affects the handling and stability of the vehicle

Trailers and towing

The ability to tow a caravan or trailer will depend on the driving licence you hold. The category entitlement on your driving licence will determine the type of trailer you can tow.

Anyone required to tow a trailer for work purposes must ensure that they have the correct permissions on their driving licence. See appendix 5 for further details.

Off road driving

Some employees within the council may have to do some off road driving. In these cases, individuals will require instruction on the safe handling of 'off road' vehicles and a risk assessment must be completed for the specific activity.

Personal safety

It is vital that the driver adopts a sensible approach to their own personal safety.

Cumbria County Council recognises the risk to the personal safety of drivers

whilst driving on council business and has developed the following guidelines.

- If you have a mobile phone always ensure it is fully charged
- Always leave room between your vehicle and the one in front whilst driving to manoeuvre in case of emergency. (You should be able to see tarmac and tyres in front of you.)
- Avoid conflict with other road users and the public, which includes the use of:
  - Verbal abuse
  - Aggressive body language
  - Aggressive use of the vehicle or its equipment
- Always have your keys to hand before leaving the building to go to the car
- The ignition key should always be removed and the vehicle locked according to the manufacturers recommendations whenever and wherever the vehicle is left unattended
- Wherever possible avoid parking in areas with poor lighting or unlit car parks
- Always check round the outside of the vehicle for persons or suspicious objects before leaving it or entering it
- Wherever possible reverse into parking spaces in order to enable a safe exit
- If concerned about being followed, find a safe place to stop, leave the engine running then sound the horn and flash the lights to attract attention. Safe places to stop include well lit areas of service stations, hospitals, Police stations and other large locations such as supermarkets that have 24-hour activity and are well lit.
- Always keep the doors locked whilst travelling
- Never pick up hitchhikers
- When stopping at motorway services always park in a well lit area as close to the main entrance as possible
- Ensure that all doors, windows and the sunroof are secured before leaving the vehicle
- Always remove all personal items containing addresses when leaving the vehicle. If broken into, this could lead a thief to an address, or to identity fraud
- In the event of a breakdown tell a colleague, friend or family member the vehicle location and keep them informed of progress of the situation

Driving guidelines

Driving carefully and remembering simple principles ensures safety on the roads. All drivers must be fully conversant with the Highway Code which can be viewed online at **direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Highwaycode/DG_070190**

Driving speed

A speed limit gives the absolute maximum speed and does not mean it is safe to drive at that speed irrespective of conditions

The driver must not exceed the maximum speed limits for the road and for their vehicle (see table in Appendix 6).

Driving at speeds too fast for the road and traffic conditions can be dangerous. The driver should always reduce speed when:

- the road layout or conditions presents hazards, such as bends
- sharing the road with pedestrians and cyclists, particularly children, and motorcyclists
- weather conditions make it safer to do so
- driving at night as it is harder to see other road users

All vehicles must be driven sufficiently far enough behind the vehicle in front to enable an emergency stop in any circumstances.

Under conditions where the road surface is poor, such as level crossings, vehicles must be driven slowly to prevent mechanical damage to the vehicle.

Seatbelts

- Seatbelts must be worn at all times by all passengers
- Children must use a restraint/seat suitable for their age and size (see table over page. If in any doubt about the suitability of seat belts for children drivers should seek an expert opinion.
- All pregnant women must wear seatbelts by law, this applies to front and rear seats and pregnancy does not in itself automatically provide exemption from the law. ROSPA provides the following advice for the safest way for pregnant women to wear a seatbelt.
- The diagonal strap should be between the breasts, over the breastbone, resting on the shoulder, not the neck. The lap belt should be placed on the thighs, fitting beneath the abdomen and over the pelvis, not the bump. The belt should be worn as tightly as possible. Pregnant women should never wear lap-only belts.
- Studies from Volvo show that pregnant women benefit from the protection of a front airbag, Insurance companies have taken the same stance and urge pregnant drivers to keep airbags enabled, ROSPA give similar guidance.

The seatbelt law in respect of cars, vans and goods vehicles:

	Front seat	Rear seat	Who is responsible?
Driver	Seat belt MUST be worn if fitted		Driver
Child under 3 years of age	Correct child restraint MUST be used	Correct child restraint MUST be used. If one is not available in a taxi, may travel unrestrained.	Driver
Child from 3rd birthday up to 1.35 metres in height (or 12th birthday, whichever they reach first)	Correct child restraint MUST be used	Correct child restraint MUST be used where seat belts fitted. MUST use adult belt if correct child restraint is not available in a licensed taxi or private hire vehicle, or for reasons of unexpected necessity over a short distance, or if two occupied restraints prevent fitment of a third.	Driver
Child over 1.35 metres (approx 4ft 5ins) **in height or 12 or 13 years**	Adult seat belt MUST be worn if available	Adult seat belt MUST be worn if available	Driver
Adult passengers aged 14 and over	Seat belt MUST be worn if available	Seat belt MUST be worn if available	Passenger

Prosecution

Responsibility for motoring offences (for example speeding, careless driving, drinking and driving) is firmly placed with the driver. Cumbria County Council accepts no liability for fines incurred.

The driver is breaking the law if driving a vehicle that has:

- defective seat belts
- defective exhaust
- defective brakes
- defective steering
- defective tyres (minimum tread depth = 1.6mm (Jan 1992))
- defective speedometer
- defective lights, including indicators, brakes lights etc
- defective horn
- windscreen that is not completely transparent
- no valid tax disc on display
- damaged bodywork that could be dangerous to others
- no number plates, or number plates which are not visible
- no current MOT (if applicable)

The driver can be prosecuted in all the above instances, even if the defect is due to bad workmanship by a garage.

Production of documents

If requested, the driver must produce any of the following documentation at the driver nominated Police station within five days:

- Insurance certificate
- V5 registration document
- MOT certificate
- Original driving licence

Remember – if an employee for whom driving is an essential part of their job loses their licence, they may also lose their job.

Mobile phones

The Road Traffic Act 1988 says that a person who drives whilst using a hand-held mobile phone or other hand held interactive communication device (e.g. Blackberry) is guilty of an offence. It is also an offence to 'cause or permit' a driver to use a hand held mobile phone whilst driving.

Using a hands free phone whilst driving, does not significantly reduce risks, because the problems are caused mainly by distraction and divided attention. Therefore use of mobile phones whilst driving on Council business is prohibited other than those circumstances highlighted below.

Whilst use of hands free kits is not recommended, there may be certain ***very limited*** circumstances where there is a ***legitimate*** need for their use as identified by risk assessment. Such an example would be where an officer has a requirement to receive emergency instructions on their way to an event. Cases will be assessed individually and where the need for a hands free kit is identified, a legally compliant system will be provided. A Council provided hands free kit will be the only means allowed for hands free mobile phone use.

Drivers of vehicles who use a mobile phone for work purposes and where there is no hands-free facility provided must never answer calls whilst driving. The phone must be switched to voicemail before starting the journey.

In a genuine emergency and where it is unsafe or impractical to stop it is permitted to use a hand held device to call 999 or 112.

The following principles must be followed for those individuals who are permitted to use hands free phones whilst driving:

- Only use a Council provided hands free kit
- The only calls to be instigated are those in the event of an emergency where the individual driving the vehicle has to respond immediately and the situation cannot be managed by any other suitable means.

- If a call is not urgent wait until you can stop, or make the call before you set off.
- Keep calls brief and call back when safe to do so. Using the telephone to increase productivity whilst driving is not permitted.
- Plan journeys to include rest stops when messages can be checked and calls returned.
- Suspend ***ALL*** calls in heavy traffic or in bad weather — you need to focus even more under hazardous conditions.
- Never take notes, send texts or look up phone numbers while driving
- Never engage in stressful or emotional conversations

Other hand-held units

- The driver must never look at or attempt to download information whilst driving
- The unit must be stowed securely in the vehicle whilst driving
- A PDA or similar device should not be left in an unattended vehicle
- To send or access information via the device whilst in the vehicle, the driver should be parked in a safe place with the engine switched off

Satellite Navigation devices

A well used satellite navigation system can help drivers plan routes and prevent drivers from making last minute lane changes of hesitating because they are not sure of directions. However a badly used sat nav can cause a distraction and increase the risk of an accident. It is important that you understand how best to use your sat nav and learn not to use it when it may be dangerous to do so.

- Plan your journey in advance, make all the inputs to the unit before setting off and whilst parked in a safe place
- Position the sat nav safely, out of the way of airbags and not obstructing a driver's vision
- Never attempt to touch the unit to make adjustments whilst driving
- Find a method of using the sat nav that is not distracting to you
- Always make the same observations to keep you safe that you would do without the sat nav
- Do not solely rely on the sat nav instructions and still check for signs and road markings

Semi permanent fixing types:

- When attaching the mount, the driver should position it as low as possible and away from the driver's central field of view, to minimise the area of the windscreen obscured
- Where possible the driver should remove the windscreen mount and navigation unit from the vehicle when left unattended and stow away any charging leads.
- The driver should ensure the inside of the screen is wiped to remove the tell-tale sign that a suction cup attachment has been used – thieves might think the device is hidden on board

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted in any vehicle owned by, leased or hired to the County Council and all vehicles that meet these criteria must display the appropriate signage. Smoking is not permitted in privately owned vehicles whilst being used on council business.

The driver must also be aware that the Police could prosecute on the basis that "smoking while driving constitutes failure to be in proper control of the vehicle".

Drugs and alcohol

A driver must never drive whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The residual effects of alcohol are likely to affect the speed of reaction, judgement and co-ordination, even if the driver is legally within the drink driving limit.

Any amount of alcohol affects the ability to drive. There is no foolproof way of drinking and staying under the limit or of knowing how many drinks an individual can consume and still drive safely. The only safe option is to not drink alcohol if planning to drive. (It takes one hour for one unit of alcohol to leave the system …. One pint of normal strength beer or lager is approx 3 units; one 175ml glass of wine is approx 2.1 units depending on the strength).

It is a very serious matter to be convicted of a driving offence such as driving while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

In the event of a conviction, the driver's status in relation to the use of a Council owned, leased or hired vehicle will be re-assessed.

The penalties for driving whilst impaired by drugs are the same as for drink driving, a minimum one year driving ban, a fine of up to £5000 and up to six months in jail. Causing death by careless driving whilst under the influence of drink or drugs carries a maximum prison sentence of 14 years. UK law allows Police to charge someone driving on illegal drugs if they can prove driving is impaired.

In order for Cumbria County Council to meet its duty of care under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, and more importantly to ensure its employees own safety the following must be adhered to:

- You **MUST NOT** drive under the influence of alcohol, drugs or certain medicines. Check the instructions or ask your doctor or pharmacist. Using illegal drugs is highly dangerous; the effects are unpredictable, but can be even more severe than alcohol and may result in fatal or serious road crashes.
- If taking medicines causes drowsiness, employees must inform their manager as they must be taken off driving duties.
- Employees required to drive on council business must declare any drug or alcohol problems to their line manager, and co-operate with any training and testing procedures within the workplace.

Failure to comply with these measures will be in breach of the Council Alcohol and Substance Abuse Policy; a serious disciplinary matter.

Care and attention of service users

Many Council employees have occasion to carry service users in the course of their work and assessments must always be made regarding health and safety regulations and recommended good practice. When allocating routes consideration must be given to the vehicle to be used and the passengers and/or equipment to be carried, the length of the journey, the age, needs and comfort of the passenger. Additional attention must be paid to matters such as boarding and alighting locations as well as preparation with regard to actions to be taken in emergency situations.

Some Council employees may in the course of their work be called upon to convey service users with particular special requirements because of age or disability.

All passengers must be properly restrained in their seats whether that seat is a wheelchair or conventional seat. The equipment used must be suitable for the needs of the passenger regarding their size and adjusted to fit each passenger, the type of seat they are using and the postural support that they need. All equipment used must have been tested and have passed the relevant test required for that equipment in the way it is being used. Professional training must be given to all staff involved in transporting or monitoring the transport to ensure that they have the necessary knowledge to fulfil their duty of care towards their passengers. Professional Drivers and Escorts have a duty of care clearly set out under various pieces of legislation. The safety of their passengers must at all times be paramount and must override all other factors.

Further guidance on operational procedures and policies relating to the transport of such passengers within the Council can be found in *Local Authority Passenger Transport Operational Procedure: Code of Practice Guidelines for Education and Social Services.*

Preparing your car for winter

Drivers are advised that the following checks should be arranged when preparing their car for winter:

- Check ignition, brakes, wiring, hoses and fan belts
- Change and adjust spark plugs
- Check air fuel and emission filters
- Inspect the distributor (if applicable)
- Check the battery
- Check the tyres for air, sidewall wear and tread depth
- Check antifreeze levels
- Ensure you have your car serviced
- Ensure tyres are inflated to the manufacturers' recommended pressure
- Make sure wiper blades aren't worn so

you can keep your windscreen as clean as possible for the extra spray, ice and rain.

Driving in winter conditions

Winter motoring requires special care and a little preparation if you are to avoid a breakdown or accident.

If conditions are severe consider if your journey is really necessary or whether it can be delayed. If you have to go out make sure you allow extra time for your journey and are prepared in case you get stuck or delayed.

If you must go out drive in bad weather conditions make sure your car is well prepared and that you know how to handle it in dangerous conditions.

- Is your journey absolutely essential?
- Consult your owner's manual for tips specific to your vehicle in slippery conditions.
- Check weather forecasts and travel information.
- Be equipped with appropriate equipment e.g. blanket, spade, food and drink, etc.
- Clear any snow off the roof of the vehicle before you drive off. It can slip down over the windscreen and obscure your view or blow into the vehicle behind you.
- Always ensure that ice and snow is completely removed from the windows before starting the journey.
- Keep to major roads, where possible, as these are more likely to have been gritted.
- Ensure that someone is informed of your route, destination and estimated time of arrival.

Driving in fog

- use dipped headlights and keep your windscreen clear and drive so that you can stop in the distance you can see. Use fog lights if visibility is less than 100m.

Driving in rain or hail

- Use dipped headlights, keep your speed down and keep well back from the vehicle in front. If you come to a flood, don't attempt to drive through water if you are unsure of the depth.
- If you do proceed drive slowly and steadily to avoid creating a bow wave, and allow on-coming traffic to pass first
- Don't drive through fast-moving water, such as at a flooded bridge approach – your car could be swept away
- Beware of slush after a hail storm

Driving in snow

- If the sun dazzles, reduce speed and use your visor
- If your tyres won't grip, there may be a salt/grit heap or bin nearby. Spread salt/grit in front of your driving wheels and set off in the highest gear you can
- If you are caught in heavy snow, wrap

up warm and stay inside your vehicle if possible

Driving safely on icy roads

- Keep your lights and windscreens clean
- Turn on your lights to increase your visibility to other motorists
- Using low gears will help you keep traction, especially going down hills.
- Higher gears and low speeds can be used for better overall control
- Don't use cruise control on icy roads
- Decrease your speed and leave yourself plenty of room to stop. You should allow at least times three times more space than usual between you and the car in front of you.
- If your tyres are making virtually no noise, this could be a sign that you are driving on ice.
- Brake gently to avoid skidding, if your wheels start to lock up ease off the brake
- If your vehicle skids, depress the clutch and turn the steering wheel in the direction of the skid. When the vehicle straightens, steer along the road. Do not brake – it will just lock up your wheels and you will skid further.
- Be especially careful on bridges and infrequently used roads. Even at temperatures above freezing, if the conditions are wet, you might encounter ice in shady areas or exposed roadways like bridges.

The latest information on road conditions on UK motorways and trunk roads is available for the Highways Agency website at **highways.gov.uk** or from the Highways information line on **08457 50 40 30.**

Safe driving in road works

- Keep to the speed limit – it is there for your safety and that of the workforce
- Get into the correct lane in good time – don't keep switching
- Concentrate on the road ahead, not the road works
- Be alert for works traffic leaving or entering road works
- Keep a safe distance – there could be queues in front
- Observe all signs – they are there to help you

Refuelling

It's estimated that at least 150,000 drivers put the wrong fuel in their car each year – one every three and a half minutes!

Diesel fuel pumps operate on very fine tolerances and are lubricated by the diesel fuel itself. Petrol in diesel acts as a **solvent** – it reduces lubrication and can cause damage to the pump through metal to metal contact. Many systems use a low-pressure electric pump in the tank or sender unit and this begins to work as soon as the ignition is switched on, circulating the contaminated fuel through the pump and rail – ***so it's important not to turn the ignition on.***

Petrol in diesel

Do not turn on the ignition or start the car.

If the car's still under warranty you must check with the franchised dealer regarding their advice and correct remedial action – running with even a small amount of petrol in the tank might invalidate the warranty while some manufacturers advise that seals and filters must be renewed even if the engine has not been run.

Generally a small amount of incorrect fuel should not damage the engine as long as you have not started the car and top up fully with diesel fuel.

If you've added more than 10% (5 litres in a 50 litre tank) petrol – Drain the tank and refill with diesel.

If you've added less than 10% petrol (5 litres in a 50 litre tank) – Top up with diesel and run normally unless the manufacturer has advised otherwise.

Diesel in petrol

Do not turn on the ignition or start the car.

This is much less common because the standard diesel nozzle at fuel stations is larger than the fuel filler neck on modern petrol cars – you have to be pretty determined and patient to mis-fuel with diesel as a result.

If the car's still under warranty you must check with the franchised dealer regarding their advice and correct remedial action.

Generally a small amount of incorrect fuel will not damage the engine as long as you have not started the car top up fully with petrol.

If you've added more than 10% (5 litres in a 50 litre tank) diesel – the car shouldn't be run and the tank should be drained.

If you've added less than 10% (5 litres in a 50 litre tank) diesel – the tank can be topped up with petrol and the car run normally unless the manufacturer has advised otherwise.

Advice on the safe storage of fuel

Storing petrol or other fuels in a car, workplace or more importantly at home present a potential hazard. This page therefore explains on how to reduce the risks associated with storing fuel.

Petrol and other fuels give off vapours which are extremely flammable and must be treated with the utmost care.

The law

Storage of fuel at home or the workplace (unless specifically licensed) is restricted by law to either metal containers with a maximum capacity of 10 litres or approved plastic containers of a maximum 5 litres capacity. These containers must be designed for the purpose and must be fitted with a screw-cap or closure to prevent leakage of liquid or vapour.

Petrol and diesel fuel must be stored in no more than two 10 litre metal containers or two 5 litre plastic containers. They must be clearly labelled as to their contents.

Petrol filling stations operate under licence conditions, which do not allow drivers to dispense fuel into other types of container.

When fuel is transferred from a container into a vehicle – follow basic health and safety precautions:

- No smoking and no naked lights in the vicinity
- Decant in the open air – not inside the garage
- Use a pouring spout or funnel; and
- If clothing is splashed with fuel, change it immediately.

Filling up

Take care when filling your vehicle's fuel tank or appropriate approved container. Spillages or leaks pose a number of hazards, so do not overfill your tank and make sure that the filler cap is securely in place and not leaking. Fuel expands and vapour can build up in hot weather, so avoid filling to the brim. Equally, approved containers must not be overfilled and must be securely fastened during transit to prevent them falling over and leaking. Spillages on the road surface, particularly of diesel, create slippery conditions that are a major hazard to other road users especially those on two wheels.

How to deal with a breakdown

On the road (excluding motorway)

The driver should:

- Try to get the vehicle safely off the road
- Switch on hazard warning lights
- If the vehicle is not situated safely, ensure everyone leaves it as a precaution against being struck by another vehicle
- If there is a warning triangle supplied with the vehicle place it at least 100 metres behind the car to warn approaching traffic

On the motorway

The driver should:

- If possible leave by the next exit. Otherwise switch on the hazard warning lights and pull onto the hard shoulder, stop as far to the left as possible
- Use the emergency phone or your mobile phone, the nearest emergency phone is indicated by arrows on the motorway marker posts this will be at most half mile away. Then return to a safe position near the vehicle; patrols cannot work on unattended vehicles.
- Where possible get all the passengers safely out of the vehicle and onto the bank or nearby land
- Children and vulnerable clients must be kept under constant supervision
- **Do not use a warning triangle, as the hard shoulder is a dangerous place.**
- Leave any animals in the vehicle

The driver should not sit in the vehicle unless they feel at risk from attack, in which case they should return via the passenger side and keep the doors locked.

Punctures

In the event of a tyre puncture, it is not advisable to attempt to fit the spare wheel at the side of the road. After stopping safely, if the driver has breakdown cover it is best to make use of this service. If the vehicle is fitted with a 'run-flat' tyre then the driver may continue at the speeds as indicated in the manufacturer's handbook, after phoning to arrange for subsequent repair/replacement. Some car makers supply a tyre sealant and inflator pack instead of a spare wheel. The sealant and compressed gas are injected through the tyre valve though the result will depend on the cause of the puncture and how far the tyre has run in a deflated condition.

Carrying a can of tyre sealant can bring peace of mind if you regularly drive alone, but it is vitally important that you spot the puncture early and stop quickly – running in a partially or fully deflated condition will cause weakening of the tyre structure and irreparable damage.

Incident procedure

In the event of an incident or theft, the driver should call their insurance provider who will be available to advise and provide appropriate assistance. They should also notify their line manager as soon as possible.

Reporting incidents

An incident must be reported to the Police if:

- There is an injury to a person or animal (i.e., dog or larger).
- The third party refuses to give their details or fails to stop after the collision (however slight). This includes damage caused to the vehicle whilst parked.
- The driver is unable to give their name to a third party at the scene of the collision

In the event of an incident, the driver must:

- Stop and switch off the engine to avoid fire and switch on the hazard warning lights
- Call an ambulance in case of injury or the fire brigade if there is danger of fire or where someone is trapped. The first priority must be the safety and care of any persons involved.
- Not discuss what happened.
- Not admit liability, apologise or offer any payment, even if he/she considers the collision was their fault. To do so could invalidate any insurance claim. Even a simple apology can be misconstrued at a later stage of the proceedings.
- Conversely, no offer to pay for any damage to the employee's vehicle should be accepted

The driver must write down/obtain the following details:

- Start and intended finish time of journey
- Purpose of their journey
- The date and time of incident
- Exact location of incident
- Sketch or photograph of scene
- Environmental/driving conditions at time of incident
- A brief but adequate account of the incident
- Names, and telephone numbers of any witnesses
- The registration number of any vehicle whose occupants may have seen the incident
- Name, number and station of any attending Police officers

The driver must obtain and write down third party(s):

- Names, and telephone numbers of driver(s) and, if not the owner of the vehicle, names, and telephone numbers of owner(s)
- Insurance company(s) including policy numbers
- Make, model, colour and registration of vehicle(s)
- Details of all damage
- The number of people in the vehicle(s)

REMEMBER The driver does not have to make a statement to the Police. In fact it is better not to as the driver may be in a state of shock and could incriminate themselves. If the driver decides to make a statement they should keep a copy.

Theft/attempted theft

As soon as a theft or attempted theft is discovered the Police must be informed immediately and the driver must make a note of the incident number.

Reporting incidents internally

Any incident must be reported internally using Safety Procedure No 6 (Reporting and investigation of Accidents, Incidents, Occupational Ill health and Dangerous occurrences). The Insurance Section must be notified of any incident involving a council owned, leased or hired vehicle which may give rise to an insurance claim (i.e. loss/damage to the vehicle or to third party property or injury to third parties, passengers or drivers).

Appendices

Appendix 1: How to obtain a UK driving licence – advice for ex-pats

Before driving in the UK, the driver must check with the DVLA about the legal status of their foreign licence. Some licences can be exchanged for a full UK licence without the need to take a UK driving test; this particularly applies to many of the Commonwealth countries.

Others such as the US, entitles the driver to drive for 12 months after which time he/she needs to have obtained a full UK licence by taking the relevant tests.

The 12 months begins from the driver's first point of entry into the UK i.e. the date they first became a resident in the UK, which is confirmed by the start date of your UK Entry Clearance Work Visa that can be found in your passport.

Before the 12 months expire, the driver is required to obtain a UK driving licence which will involve taking both theory and practical tests.

The driver needs to start the process as soon as possible as the process can take some weeks.

Appendix 2: Driving abroad

The following guidance is provided for people who either drive abroad for work purposes or who use a Council provided lease car whilst abroad.

Some examples of things to take when travelling abroad:

- The driver must have their full UK driving licence with them when travelling abroad
- Everyone in the party must have a valid passport or visa if required
- First aid kits must be taken, as they are compulsory in some countries
- Spare bulbs and warning triangle, as these are also compulsory in some countries
- Reflective jackets (for all occupants) as these are becoming increasingly compulsory throughout Europe
- If the vehicle's registration plates do not include the GB euro-symbol the a separate GB sticker will be required, when travelling outside the EU a separate sticker is required even if the car has euro-plates

There are a multitude of different legal requirements in the various European countries, so before travelling the driver

may wish to check **theaa.com/motoring_advice/overseas/atoz.html** for further advise about rules for driving specific countries

Appendix 3: Vehicle checks

Vehicle maintenance should be carried out at least once a week.

Staff using privately owned vehicles should ensure vehicles are roadworthy and it is recommended that the following checks are undertaken although they need not be recorded.

Washing and cleaning your car

This is especially important in winter, to ensure that the windows, lights and door mirrors are clean. Driving with restricted view makes you a danger to pedestrians and other road-users and is punishable with a £1000 fine.

Cleaning your car also gives you a chance to check for chips in your windscreen. In winter this is particularly important as water can get into these tiny chips, then when the temperatures drop and the water freezes, it expands, and can cause your entire windscreen to crack irreparably. This can be avoided by keeping a close eye on your windscreens and by making sure that any small chips that you find are fixed quickly.

Checking and topping up fluid levels

You always keep enough fuel in your car for it to run, so do the same with all the other fluids and keep them above the minimum level. Brake fluids, engine oil and engine coolants don't top themselves up, and if they drop below the minimum required amount it can be dangerous – so you need to get used to doing it on a regular basis.

Checking your brake fluid:

- Find your brake master cylinder. Usually this can be found under the bonnet near the driver side of the car, moving towards the back of the engine. It's only small and is a rectangular metal piece with a reservoir – usually plastic, with a rubber cap that may say something like – 'only use brake fluid'. There should be a couple of small tubes coming from it. It's a good idea to check your manual first to familiarise yourself with it before you go rooting about.
- If you've got a newer car you might find that you don't need to do much else other than locate the reservoir. On most new cars it's translucent so you can see it and where it's up to in relation to the fill line without taking any more action. Check that the brake fluid goes up to the 'full' line and you're done!
- With an older car, you might have to take the top off to check the levels as the whole cylinder might be made of metal. If it's held down by a clamp you'll need a screwdriver to take the clamp off and lift up the lid.

- If it's low, you'll need to add brake fluid so that it rises up to the 'full' line. Make sure you use the right brake fluid for your car – again refer to your owner's manual because there are lots of different types for different car systems.

Checking your power steering:

- Unclip the bonnet and secure.
- Locate the power steering belts. The power steering pump usually has a clear plastic reservoir on it and wording on the cap will usually indicate that it is part of the power steering system. Check your owner's manual first so you know what you are looking for.
- Check the fluid levels – look at the reservoir if it is the translucent plastic reservoir or unscrew the cap and check if it's a metal one.
- If there is a little dipstick just underneath the top cap. Remove the dipstick, wipe it clean with a paper towel or cloth, and put it back into the reservoir. Pull it out cleanly and read the gauge.
- There may also be a choice of reading the levels when 'hot' or 'cold', and if so, you'll need to choose the appropriate reading.
- If the fluid is below the minimum level you will need to top it up. Replace the fluid as required.

Checking the tyres

When checking your tyres you need to check the pressure, any damage to the tyres, and tread depth.

Checking tyre pressure

Your owner's manual will provide you with the recommended pressure for your tyres – both front and rear (sometimes these will be different depending on the type of car you drive). You should always check your tyre pressures when the tyres are cold. Under driving conditions the tyres will warm up and give you a false reading so if you have driven further than roughly a mile leave your car for an hour or so for the tyres to cool down.

If the tyres are "hot" when they are checked:

- Add 4 to 5 psi (0.3 bar) to the pressures recommended by the vehicle manufacturer.
- Never reduce the pressure of a "hot" tyre, even if the pressure is above the recommended level.
- Re-check the pressures when the tyres are cold.

If your tyre pressure is outside that recommended by the manufacturer, you could suffer from handling and turning problems as well as excessive wear and damage to your tyres, and heavy vibrations. If you have to add air regularly to get your tyres to the correct pressure, you should go and have them checked out by a specialist, as you may have some sort of damage that requires an immediate replacement.

Checking for damage

Some will be obvious – like nails or objects sticking out of the tread that would alert you to a puncture. There may be cuts and splits in the rubber, or bulges under the tread. Tread can also separate from the fabric and all of these things require professional advice immediately.

Checking for tread

Depth

The minimum legal tread depth in the UK is 1.6mm although most experts believe that this figure is too low and it should be 3mm. The deeper the tread the more grip you have. If your tyres are worn below 1.6mm tread and you are stopped by police you face a 3 point penalty and £2,500 fine – per tyre. So if all four tyres are worn or 'bald' then you could face a £10,000 fine and the loss of your driving license. So don't risk it.

Don't forget your spare tyre either. You never know when you might need it and it is a legal requirement for your spare tyre to be roadworthy, whether you are using it or not.

Lights

Check that all lights – including headlights, sidelights, indicators, fog lights – all work and there are no bulbs that need replacing. Check your fuses too to make sure that all your dashboard indications (such as petrol warning light) are functioning properly. This is easier to do with someone else as you can write a checklist before you go out to the car and get him or her to shout out instructions and confirm that each light is working properly before ticking it off the list.

Windscreen Wipers and Washer Fluid

Make sure that your washer fluid bottle is full. Don't use washing up liquid as it can smear and lather too much – use a proper washer solution which can be bought quite cheaply from supermarkets, garages and car accessory shops. It is recommended that you use a washer solution as this avoids the risk of the growth of the legionella bacteria in the fluid bottle and spray heads

Make sure that the wiper blades are clean and don't drag across the windscreen. If there are lines or streaks across the window when you operate the wipers, then lift the wiper and clean the blade by wiping it with a cloth soaked in windscreen washer solution. If that doesn't work, it's time to replace the blade(s).

Exhaust

Check that your exhaust sounds normal, and if there are any strange or unfamiliar noises or emissions, then get it checked out by a professional, as this can be an indication of a more serious problem.

Appendix 4: Towing trailers with vehicles up to 3.5 tonnes

Category B: Vehicles up to 3.5 tonnes Maximum Authorised Mass (MAM) and with up to eight passenger seats

Category B vehicles may be coupled with a trailer up to 750kgs MAM (allowing a combined weight up to 4.25 tonnes MAM) or a trailer over 750kgs MAM provided the MAM of the trailer does not exceed the unladen weight of the towing vehicle, and the combination does not exceed 3.5 tonnes MAM. For example:

- a vehicle with an unladen weight of 1.25 tonnes and a MAM of 2 tonnes coupled with a trailer with a MAM of 1.25 tonnes could be driven by the holder of a category B entitlement. This is because the MAM of the combination does not exceed 3.5 tonnes and also the MAM of the trailer does not exceed the unladen weight of the drawing vehicle
- Whereas the same vehicle with an unladen weight of 1.25 tonnes and a MAM of 2 tonnes when coupled with a trailer with a MAM of 1.5 tonnes would fall within category B+E. This is because although the combined weight of the vehicle and trailer is within the 3.5 tonnes MAM limit, the MAM of the trailer is more than the unladen weight of the drawing vehicle
- Vehicle manufacturers normally recommend a maximum weight of trailer appropriate to their vehicle. Details can usually be found in the vehicle's handbook or obtained from car dealerships. The size of the trailer recommended for an average family car with an unladen weight of around 1 tonne would be well within the new category B threshold.

Category B + E: Vehicles up to 3.5 tonnes MAM towing trailers over 750kgs MAM

Category B+E allows vehicles up to 3.5 tonnes MAM to be combined with trailers in excess of 750kgs MAM. In order to gain this entitlement new category B licence holders have to pass a further practical test for category B+E. There is no category B+E theory test. For driver licensing purposes there are no vehicle/trailer weight ratio limits for category B+E.

Car licences obtained before 1 January 1997

If you passed a car test before 1 January 1997 you keep your existing entitlement to tow trailers until your licence expires. This means you're generally entitled to drive a vehicle and trailer combination up to 8.25 tonnes MAM. You also have entitlement to drive a minibus with a trailer over 750kgs MAM.

Car licences obtained on or after 1 January 1997

If you passed a car test on or after 1 January 1997 you're limited to vehicles up to 3.5 tonnes maximum authorised mass towing a trailer up to 750kgs, or a vehicle and trailer combination up to 3.5 tonnes MAM providing the MAM of the trailer doesn't exceed the unladen mass of the towing vehicle. You will need to pass an additional driving test in B+E if you wish to tow a caravan or trailer combination which exceeds these weight limits.

The car and trailer practical driving test
The car and trailer test (B+E) is based on the lorry driving test and lasts for approximately one hour. Please note that B+E tests are conducted at vocational (bus and lorry) driving test centres.

The towing test (B+E) includes vehicle safety questions, an off-road reverse manoeuvre, a controlled stop, uncoupling and coupling of the trailer and driving on the road.

Appendix 5: The Fell Road Code

- Adapt your driving to the appropriate type and conditions of the road you are on. Remember there may be a pedestrian, cyclist or animal around the next corner.
- Please avoid fell roads if there is a ROAD CLOSED sign or in poor weather – you may find yourself isolated
- KEEP A SAFE DISTANCE BETWEEN CARS
- Overtake only if you can see far enough ahead to do so safely and take care when approaching or overtaking walkers or cyclists.
- Please comply with the requests from country event marshals and give way to participants.
- Be tolerant of slow moving agricultural vehicles
- Please give way to vehicles coming up the hill towards you
- Please look for alternative routes if you drive a HGV, mini bus or commercial vehicle.
- Be aware that livestock may be on the open fell roads and give way to them. Take special care at dusk and dark

If you hit livestock you are required by law to report it. Telephone Cumbria Police as soon as safely possible, on **0845 3300247**

Appendix 6: Speed limits

These are the national speed limits and apply to all roads unless signs show otherwise.

Type of vehicle	Built-up areas*	Single carriageways	Dual carriageways	Motorways
				
	MPH	MPH	MPH	MPH
 **Cars and motorcycles** (including car derived vans up to 2 tonnes maximum laden weight)	**30***	**60**	**70**	**70**
 **Cars towing caravans or trailers** (including car derived vans and motorcycles)	**30***	**50**	**60**	**60**
 **Buses and coaches** (not exceeding 12 metres in overall length)	**30***	**50**	**60**	**70**
 **Goods vehicles** (not exceeding 7.5 tonnes maximum laden weight)	**30***	**50**	**60**	**70****
 **Goods vehicles** (exceeding 7.5 tonnes maximum laden weight)	**30***	**40**	**50**	**60**

* The 30 mph limit applies to all traffic on roads in England and Wales (only class C and unclassified roads in Scotland) with street lighting unless signs show otherwise.
** 60 mph if articulated or towing a trailer.

cumbria.gov.uk
August 2010

JXXXX Design Cumbria County Council Tel: 01228 221731/221727