

## **DRIVING ADVICE**

Driving is the most dangerous work activity that most people do. Research indicates that around 20 people are killed and 250 seriously injured every week in crashes involving someone who was driving for work purposes. The company encourages employees to follow the guidance given in order to minimise risk to themselves and other road users.

### **Vehicle Maintenance and Checks**

Company vehicles will be maintained by approved companies and in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and schedules.

Employees are required to ensure that their vehicles are maintained in accordance manufacturers recommended service intervals and are in a safe roadworthy and legal condition at all times.

If your vehicle is over 3 years old it requires an annual MOT test.

Regular checks should be carried out on vehicles by drivers, especially prior to undertaking a long journey.

These should include:

- oil, coolant and brake fluid levels
- power steering fluid level
- screen washer fluid level
- wiper condition and operation
- windscreen condition and cleanliness
- tyre pressure, tread depth and general condition
- all lights are working
- seatbelts
- bodywork

If any faults are found that may affect vehicle safety, the vehicle **MUST NOT** be used until they are remedied.

### **Vehicle Breakdown**

Breaking down can be a stressful and worrying experience, particularly if you are alone or in an unfamiliar place. It can also be hazardous. Following the basic safety guidelines below can help to reduce risk.

#### *On motorway*

If at all possible, leave the motorway at next exit or pull into a service station.

If this is not possible then the hard shoulder should be used accordingly:

- use the hard shoulder lane to decelerate before stopping as far to the left as possible, preferably near an emergency telephone
- turn on hazard warning lights along with sidelights if dark or visibility is poor. **DO NOT** display a red triangle or other warning device

- get out of the car by doors on the verge side. Ensure passengers also vacate the vehicle the same way
- take note of marker posts and contact the emergency services, where possible, using an emergency phone instead of a mobile phone
- if walking along the hard shoulder to a telephone, keep as far away from the traffic as possible
- if you feel at risk from another person, return to your vehicle by the passenger door and lock all doors. Leave the vehicle again as soon as you feel danger has passed
- DO NOT attempt even minor repairs
- once the vehicle is repaired, return to the motorway using the hard shoulder to accelerate to merge fully with traffic in the first lane

If you cannot get your vehicle onto the hard shoulder, switch on the hazard warning lights and only leave your vehicle when you can get safely clear of the carriageway.

You must NEVER use the motorway hard shoulder to:

- stop for a break, to eat or drink or to go to the toilet – use the service stations
- use a mobile telephone
- check a route or map

#### *Off the motorway*

If your vehicle breaks down on an ordinary road or carriageway, you should:

- leave your car in as safe place as possible, ideally away from traffic
- switch off the engine
- switch on hazard warning lights along with sidelights if dark or visibility is poor
- display a red triangle, if you have one, on same side of road at least 45 meters (147ft) behind
- find the nearest telephone or use a mobile phone to phone for assistance
- wait for assistance in a safe place, away from your vehicle, keeping clear of the road and traffic
- do not stand between your vehicle and oncoming traffic as you may obscure lights

#### **Tyre Safety**

You need good tyres to drive safely as they affect the steering, braking and acceleration of your vehicle. Faulty tyres work less efficiently and don't last as long; they could also mean a heavy fine and penalty points on your licence. It is against the law to have:

- car tyres with tread worn below 1.6mm
- a mix of radial and cross ply tyres
- over or under inflated tyres
- tyres with cuts, lump, bulges or tears

- the wrong sort of tyre fitted

## Tyre pressures and inflation

Refer to the manufacturer's handbook for guidance on recommended pressures for your vehicle. Care must be taken when inflating a tyre. Only fill the tyre to the manufacturer's recommended pressure for the type of driving to be undertaken. Do not use tyre inflation devices near to cuts / open wounds etc. Tyre pressures should be checked every 2 weeks and when the tyres are cold (pressures are raised when warm).

## Accidents

Any accidents involving physical injury to an employee driving on company business (excluding commuting to and from work), or involving a member of the public must be reported through the company's accident reporting procedures.

## Mobile Phones

Research has shown that the potential for being involved in an accident whilst using a mobile phone can be significantly increased due to the individual concentrating more on the phone conversation than on their immediate surroundings.

The law has now made it illegal to use a hand-held mobile phone when driving, even when you are stopped at traffic lights or in a queue of traffic. This includes making or receiving calls, pictures, text messaging or accessing the internet.

You can also be prosecuted for using a hands-free mobile phone if you fail to have proper control of the vehicle. If you drive carelessly or dangerously when using any phone the penalties can include disqualification, a large fine and up to two years imprisonment.

Mobile phones should be used in accordance to the company's agreed policy when driving on company business.

## Driver Fatigue

Research shows that physical fatigue and tiredness in drivers is a significant cause of accidents, particularly on motorways.

Drivers should recognise the signs of fatigue, which are:

- increased yawning
- not remembering the last few minutes
- jerking your head or body from the brink of falling asleep
- losing concentration
- car veering off the road

If drivers feel sleepy they should get off the road into a safe parking area to take a break. In order to keep awake until reaching a suitable parking place, drivers should turn on the radio, open the window or increase the cold air ventilation.

To avoid fatigue, try the following tips:

- plan your journey to include a 15 minute break every 2 hours
- drink coffee or high caffeine drink
- don't start a long trip if already tired



- ensure you have had sufficient sleep if starting early
- avoid driving between midnight and 6am when you are likely to feel sleepy

## **Driver Eyesight**

Drivers should be able to read a number plate at the legal distance of around 20 meters (65 feet), using any corrective appliances such as glasses or contact lenses. The general recommendation is to have eyesight tested every two years. Having an eyesight test will usually identify the majority of common eyesight conditions and also give clues about other less common diseases.

If there is any problem with the employee's vision, because of either injury or disease or following an eyesight test, the employee must notify their line manager immediately.

## **Adverse Weather**

The British weather is unpredictable and adverse weather can occur suddenly. If you drive regularly for work you should ensure that you are prepared for the weather conditions. When adverse weather has been forecast, relevant details should be obtained to decide whether it is appropriate to travel.

Alternative methods of travel may be more suitable depending on the weather conditions. Driving in adverse weather should take account of visibility, ability to stop when roads are wet or icy and load etc being carried.

### *Poor Visibility*

When visibility is seriously reduced you should drive at a safe distance with dipped headlights on. You may also use front and rear fog lights (in addition to the headlights) but you must switch them off when visibility improves.

### *Wet Weather*

In wet weather, stopping distances will be at least double those required for stopping on dry roads. This is because your tyres have less grip on the road. In wet weather:

- you should keep well back from the vehicle in front. This will increase your ability to see and plan ahead
- if the steering becomes unresponsive, it probably means that water is preventing the tyres from gripping the road. Ease off the accelerator and slow down gradually
- the rain and spray from vehicles may make it difficult to see and be seen. Use dipped headlights

### *Flooded roads*

Occasionally roads becoming flooded when there is a high rainfall over a short period of time.

- don't attempt to cross if water seems too deep
- drive slowly in first gear but keep the engine speed high by slipping the clutch to avoid stalling
- avoid the deepest water
- test brakes after driving through floods

### *Icy and Snowy Weather*

Great care should be taken when driving in icy or snowy weather. Vehicle drivers are advised to carry a spade, warm clothing, a warm drink and emergency food in case your vehicle breaks down.

When driving:

- keep well back from the vehicle in front as stopping distances can be ten times greater than on dry roads
- take care when overtaking gritting vehicles
- watch out for snowploughs, which may throw out snow on either side. Do not overtake them unless the lane you intend to use has been cleared
- drive extremely carefully when the roads are icy. Avoid sudden actions as these could cause a skid

### *Windy Weather*

High side vehicles are most affected by windy weather, but a strong gust can also blow a car off course. This can happen on stretches of road exposed to strong cross winds, or when passing bridges or gaps in hedges. In strong winds your vehicle may be affected by turbulence created by large vehicles. Motorcyclists are particularly affected, so keep well back from them when they are overtaking high sided vehicles.

### **Personal Security**

Lone driving forms part of the company's policy regarding company vehicles, whether the driver is female or male. Below is a checklist for personal security when driving:

- keep the doors of the vehicle locked, especially when in towns to avoid 'car-jacking'
- keep 'valuables' including briefcases etc. out of sight when driving and on parking, lock whatever is to be left behind in the boot
- when parking, if possible, drivers should use a manned car park and park near the exit. Reversing into parking spaces is also advised to allow drivers to drive off immediately
- keep the vehicle well maintained and with a surplus of fuel for the planned journey or to the next planned rest break or refuelling point
- keep a mobile phone with you to summon help or keep in contact with your manager / office
- avoid eye contact with other drivers and do not get into personal confrontation
- if you believe you are being followed, drive to a police station, if possible, or a crowded place
- always approach the vehicle with the key alarm/sender in hand, and be aware of people around you
- carry a torch (integral with the key if possible) to make locating the lock at night easier
- look in the back seat before entering and lock the car once seated

## Alcohol and Drugs

Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs (whether prescribed or illegal substances) is against the law. Drugs and alcohol can both seriously impair your ability to drive and the effects may last for a number of hours (or days). There is no safe limit of alcohol and drugs as their affect can be dependent on a number of factors:

- weight
- sex
- age
- metabolism
- amount of food consumed
- amount and type of alcohol consumed

Before driving, employees must ensure they are fit to drive and have a level of alcohol below the maximum limit allowed, ideally zero and not under the influence of any drugs that may affect ability to drive (check with your pharmacist / GP for the effects of any prescribed or over the counter drugs).

If driving on company business this should be in accordance with the company policy. Consumption of alcohol whilst driving is prohibited both during company time or whilst driving a company vehicle. The possession, use or distribution of drugs / substances for non-medical purposes is strictly forbidden.

## Refuelling of Vehicles

Due to the risks of fire and explosion, when refuelling any vehicle, the following should be adhered to:

- do not use any naked flames whilst on the filling station forecourt
- do not use mobile phones
- do not smoke

Care should also be taken when walking on the forecourt due to the possibility of spilt diesel and petrol being present.

For those using an unfamiliar vehicle check fuel type prior to dispensing. If using diesel, then gloves should be worn when refuelling.

## Safe Speed

One of the most significant risks for drivers and road users is inappropriate speed. This includes both exceeding the speed limits and driving within the limits but in unsuitable conditions.

When driving you should observe the following guidance:

- ensure you know the national speed limits for the roads and vehicle you are driving
- plan journeys allowing for poor weather, traffic delays etc
- obey posted speed limit signs at all times (even if late at night / early morning)
- reduce speeds for poor weather, busy roads, unfamiliar roads, high pedestrian activity etc

## Further Advice and Information

<http://think.direct.gov.uk/>



## **Driving for Work**

Driving is an integral part to some roles within the company and as such requires driving on company business. Driving has inherent risks associated with it which drivers should be made aware of.

The company is committed to reducing the risks its staff face or create when driving at work and requires its entire staff to play their part, whether they use a company vehicle, their own or a hire vehicle.

### **Drivers**

Drivers will remain responsible for their safety and others and must comply with the Highway Code and Road Traffic Act.

It is the responsibility of drivers to inform their manager of:

- anything that could affect their driving e.g. health conditions or injuries, use of prescribed medication
- changes to licence such as; limitations, offences recorded, period bans
- vehicle defects that affect ability / safety to drive
- any accidents / incidents that occurred whilst driving on behalf of the company

Before driving, drivers must

- review the need to travel
- have a valid licence for the vehicle they are driving and for any overseas travel if required
- ensure valid insurance for business use
- carry out a pre-use vehicle check
- allow sufficient time to drive allowing for traffic, poor weather and rest breaks
- ensure sufficient rest
- be physically fit, with zero alcohol level and not under the influence of drugs that may affect the ability to drive

- have had an eye test in last 2 years and be using any corrective appliance
  - adjust their driving position, head restraints and mirrors to ensure maximum comfort and safety
- Whilst driving, drivers must
- drive in accordance with the applicable law and with consideration for the safety of passengers and other road users
  - take regular rest breaks every 2-3 hours or at first signs of tiredness
  - remain in control of the vehicle at all times
  - not smoke in a company vehicle
  - never use any hand held electronic device e.g. mobile phone, satellite navigation, mp3 player
  - never receive or make calls