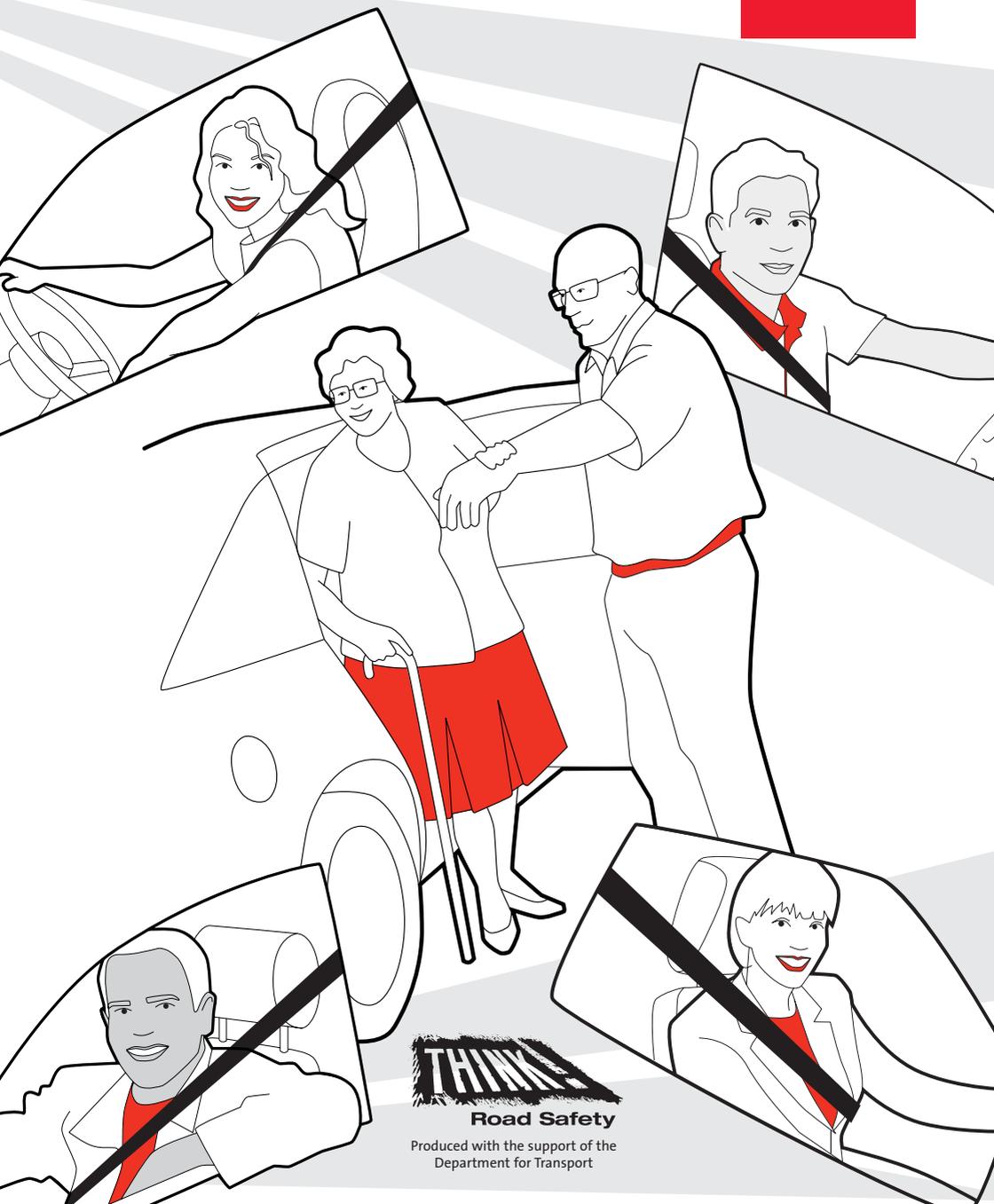


Volunteer Driver's Handbook

ROSPA
The Royal Society for the
Prevention of Accidents



Produced with the support of the
Department for Transport

CONTENTS

Introduction

Legal Matters

Journey Planning

Fitness to Drive (inc. drink, drugs, medicines, fatigue, stress)

Safe Speed

Distractions (mobile phones, eating, drinking, smoking, etc)

Driver Training

Occupant Safety

Safe Vehicle

Emergency Procedures

Resources

Useful Websites

Seat Belt Laws

INTRODUCTION

Thousands of people provide their time and services as volunteer drivers to help others. This is vital, community-spirited work. However, it does involve a certain amount of risk.

Driving is one of the most dangerous activities that we do, and driving for work tends to be riskier than driving for private reasons. For this reason, HSE Guidelines, “Driving at Work”, state that “health and safety law applies to on-the-road work activities as to all work activities and the risks should be effectively managed within a health and safety system”.

Voluntary organisations have a duty of care under health and safety law to ensure the safety of their staff, volunteers, passengers and anyone else (e.g., other road users) who may be affected by their activities. They have the same legal responsibilities toward their volunteers as to their paid staff, and this applies whether the vehicles used are owned by the organisation, by the volunteer or by any other party.

When anyone drives for work, including people who do so as volunteers, both the employer and the individual employee or volunteer share the responsibility of making sure that the risks are properly identified and managed. This requires effective planning.

It is essential that volunteers play their part, and this booklet is designed to help you work with your organisation to avoid accidents and injuries to yourself, your passengers and other people on the road while you are driving as a volunteer.

This booklet will help to make you aware of your organisation’s policies on driving practices and there is space provided on each page to make notes about those policies and how they apply to you. You can then refer back to them at any time.

You can also keep note of any road safety problems that you encounter – including incidents such as near misses and other vehicle issues. By keeping a record, it will help you when you report back any issues to your line managers.

LEGAL MATTERS

Your voluntary organisation needs to know that you are:

- legally entitled to drive the vehicle you are using
- using a vehicle that is safe and road legal
- properly trained and competent to drive it safely
- using it for suitable purposes.

If the organisation provides the vehicle, they will ensure that it is properly registered, taxed, MOT'd, serviced and insured. They may wish to check your driver's licence when you start as a volunteer driver and at intervals afterwards.

Minibus

If you gained your driving licence after 1 January 1997, you may need to have a D1 entitlement on your licence to drive a minibus. Some, but not all, volunteer drivers who drive a minibus for a non-commercial organisation are exempt from this requirement. Check with your organisation.

Using Your Own Vehicle

Even if you are using your own vehicle, the voluntary organisation has the same legal duty to ensure it is safe and legal when it is being used to provide a service for them. Therefore, they may wish to check that your vehicle is taxed, MOT'd and serviced and that you are insured to drive it for voluntary purposes.

Motoring offences

Motoring offences, including cautions, summons or convictions, should be reported to your line manager.

Use the space below to insert your organisation's policy.

Our policy:

Driving Licences will be checked _____

Insurance will be checked _____

MOT certificate will be checked _____

Service Documents will be checked _____

Other _____

JOURNEY PLANNING

It is important to plan your route before every journey. The more planning in advance you can do, the less that unforeseen and risky circumstances will arise, and you will be better prepared to deal with them if they do.

If a journey is to travel somewhere, rather than transporting people or items, then it may be safer to use another form of transport – such as the train.

Avoid driving in poor conditions and check the weather forecast before you set off, especially if there has been recent bad weather. If the reported advice is to only make essential journeys then you should follow it.

Preventing driver sleepiness is something that your organisation can help you manage. Crashes caused by driver fatigue are most likely to occur:

- On long journeys on monotonous roads
- Between 2am and 6am
- Between 2pm and 4pm
- After having less sleep than normal
- After drinking alcohol
- After taking medicines which cause drowsiness
- On journeys home after night shifts.

As a general rule, drivers should take a 15-minute break after driving for 2 hours. You need to examine work schedules in advance to ensure that you will not be pressured by time.

Driving at night, especially after a long shift, should also be avoided. Overnight stays can be arranged in order to help drivers stay within daily and weekly driving limits, and avoid crashes due to fatigue.

Use the space below to insert your organisation's policy.

Our policy is:

FITNESS TO DRIVE

Your voluntary organisation needs to know that you:

- are fit to drive at all times
- do not drive when affected by alcohol, drugs or medicines
- do not drive when affected by illness
- do not drive when you are too tired to do so safely.

You should inform your organisation about any health issue or personal circumstances that may affect your driving (your organisation may make this a requirement). You are also legally required to inform the DVLA of any medical condition that may affect your ability to drive safely.

Eyesight

The minimum legal eyesight standard for driving is that you can read a new style number plate (eg AB 123 ABC) at a distance of 20 metres (around 65 feet), or an old style number plate (eg A 123 ABC) at a distance of 20.5 m (67 feet). If you have to use glasses or contact lenses to do this, then they must be worn when driving.

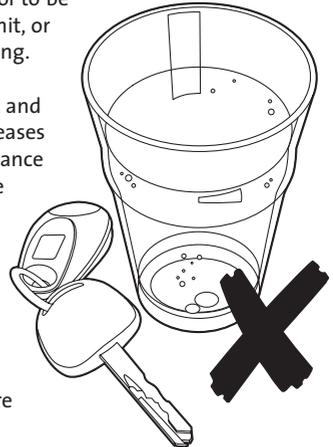
It is strongly recommended that you have your eyesight checked regularly (at least every two years, or more often if your optician recommends it).

Alcohol

Avoid drinking alcohol in the hours before you will be driving (for example, at lunchtime). It can take several hours for alcohol to be removed from your body, and you may still be over the limit, or affected by alcohol the morning after you have been drinking.

Alcohol impairs judgement, making drivers over-confident and more likely to take risks. It slows their reactions, increases stopping distances, impairs judgement of speed and distance and affects vision. Even a small amount, well below the legal limit, seriously affects the ability to drive safely.

The legal drink drive limit is 80 mg of alcohol per 100 ml of blood. Drivers with a blood alcohol concentration between 50 and 80 mg per 100ml of blood are 2 to 2 1/2 times more likely to crash and 6 times more likely to be in a fatal crash. The risk increases massively when over the limit. A driver who is double the legal limit is 50 times more likely to be in a fatal crash.



The advice is always 'have none for the road'.

Drugs

Do not drive if you have taken any illegal drugs. They can affect your decision-making and driving skills, as well as your physical and mental condition and behaviour.

FITNESS TO DRIVE

Medicines

Check with your GP or pharmacist whether any over-the-counter or prescribed medicines you are taking are likely to affect your driving (for example, by causing drowsiness). If so, ask for an alternative that does not, or avoid driving.

Always check the label of medicines and the Patient Information leaflet to see if there are any warnings. If the label says that certain side-effects may occur, assume that they will do so.

Illness

Illness can also affect our ability to drive. We can often be tempted to 'soldier' on, when in fact it would be safer for everyone concerned, not to drive until we are feeling better.

Fatigue

Consider whether you are likely to be drowsy or sleepy while driving. Tired drivers are more likely to crash, especially on long monotonous journeys, and in the early hours of the morning.

If you are driving as a volunteer in the evening after a full day's work in your normal job, you may also be more tired.



Discuss any problems with your line manager.

Use the space below to insert your organisation's policy.

Our policy on Fitness to Drive:

Alcohol _____

Drugs _____

Medicines _____

Illness _____

Eyesight _____

Fatigue _____

SAFE SPEED

Drivers who travel at higher speeds have less time to identify and react to what is happening around them. It takes them longer to stop. And if there is a crash, it is more severe, causing greater injury to the occupants and any pedestrian or rider they hit.

Higher speeds also magnify other driver errors, such as close-following or driving when tired or distracted, thus multiplying the chances of causing a crash.

Excessive speed contributes to 26% of collisions in which someone is killed, 18% of crashes resulting in a serious injury and 12% of all injury collisions. This means that around 900 people are killed each year on Britain's roads because drivers and riders travel too fast, and over 6,000 are seriously injured.

Speed Limits

Always stay within speed limits (including variable limits and temporary limits at roadworks) even if you think the limit is too low.

Speed limits set the maximum speed for that road. But, there are many circumstances when it is not safe to drive at that speed (for example, around schools at opening and closing times, on busy, narrow roads, on rural roads which are bendy and hilly and visibility is restricted).

Make sure you know the speed limit of the roads you are using. Far too many drivers who have been caught speeding, complain that they thought the road had a higher speed limit (40 mph instead of 30 mph).

In many cases, the nature of the road does not indicate the speed limit. In urban areas, for example, dual carriageways can have limits of 30 mph, 40 mph, 50 mph, 60 mph or 70 mph.

When driving on street-lit roads, assume the limit is 30 mph until you see a sign saying otherwise. But, remember the limit could be lower – 20 mph.

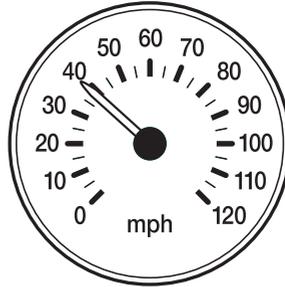
Speed limit signs tend to be placed at junctions because this is often the point at which the limit changes. However, junctions are also where you need to absorb a wide range of different information and it is easy to miss a speed limit sign when concentrating on one or more other things (e.g., which way am I going, is that driver going to pull out, etc). So you need to get into the habit of checking for speed limit signs at junctions, and looking for repeater signs after the junction, especially if the nature of the road has changed.

If you are not sure, assume the limit is lower until you see a sign.

SAFE SPEED

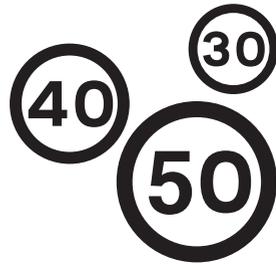
Staying Within the Limit

If you struggle to keep your car within 30 mph when driving in a 30 mph zone, try driving in 3rd gear (or lower when necessary). If you can comfortably travel at 30 mph in 3rd gear without feeling that the engine is laboured, adopt 'no higher than 3rd in 30 mph' as a principle.



We all have our 'speed triggers' – things that make us more likely to speed up and perhaps exceed the limit unintentionally. This could be feeling the need to keep up with other drivers, feeling stressed by a driver too close behind; it could be something as simple as going down hill.

Learn to recognise your own 'speed triggers'. This will make it easier to avoid being 'pushed' into speeding. It will also make driving less stressful and more relaxing.



Give Yourself Time

Plan your journey to allow sufficient time to complete it (include rest breaks and take account of foreseeable weather and traffic conditions) at safe speeds and without needing to exceed speed limits.

The time it takes to complete a journey is determined much more by your average speed during the whole journey, rather than the maximum speed you achieve for part of it. This is especially true in urban areas, where you constantly have to slow down for junctions, traffic lights and other road users. The faster you drive, the sharper you have to brake. This also uses much more fuel and so makes driving more expensive.

Knowing that you have plenty of time to complete your journey will help you to relax and avoid the temptation to push your speed.

Use the space below to insert your organisation's policy.

Our policy is:

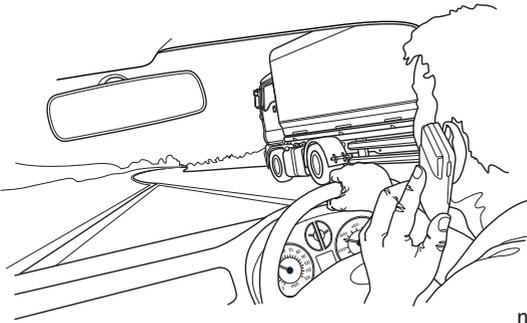
DISTRACTIONS

Driving requires your full concentration all of the time. Trying to do something else while driving will distract you, slow your reactions and increase the risk of crashing.

Mobile Phones

A substantial body of research shows that using a hand-held or hands-free mobile phone while driving is a significant distraction, and substantially increases the risk of the driver crashing.

It is illegal to use a hand held mobile phone while driving (this includes any activity that involves holding the phone such as dialling a number or writing a text message). It can also be illegal to use a hands-free phone while driving. Depending upon the circumstances, drivers could be charged with 'failing to have proper control of their vehicle', or careless or dangerous driving if they are distracted because they are using a hands-free phone.



Using a hands-free phone while driving does not significantly reduce the risks because the problems are caused mainly by the mental distraction and divided attention of taking part in a phone conversation at the same time as driving.

It is also an offence to "cause or permit" a driver to use a hand held mobile phone, and so your organisation should have policies to ensure their drivers do not use a mobile phone while driving.

Other Equipment

An increasing number of vehicles are being fitted with various devices designed to help the driver, with SatNavs being the most common. While these devices can, if used properly, reduce the risk of drivers crashing, they can also increase the risk (e.g., by distracting the driver) if not used properly.

If your vehicle is provided with any technology (such as SatNavs) ask your manager for training in how to use it safely. In particular, you should not adjust or operate devices while actually driving. For example, routes in the SATNAV should be set before the journey starts. If it is necessary to make adjustments or to input new information, only do so when stopped in a safe place.

DISTRACTIONS

Eating, Drinking, Smoking, Tuning the Radio

Many other things, that might seem simple and innocent, can be distracting when driving. Fatal crashes can, and do, occur because a driver chose to unwrap a sweet, take a drink or light a cigarette while driving.

Safe driving needs concentration; avoid unnecessary distractions.

Use the space below to insert your organisation's policy.

Our policy is:

Mobile Phones

Other Devices

Eating, drinking

Smoking

DRIVER TRAINING

Almost all crashes are caused by, or involve, driver error. This ranges from simple mistakes and mis-judgements to careless, reckless or aggressive driving. Our ability to anticipate and cope with the mistakes and misbehaviour of other people is just as important as our own driving skills and attitudes.

We all develop our own driving style and habits over time, and often do not realise that we could improve our driving.

Organisations that have clear driving standards, excellent driver training, and a policy to try and learn from driving accidents have lower accident rates than those that do not. Driver training can help us to avoid making mistakes, and to better anticipate and cope with the unexpected, including the errors of other road users. It can make driving safer, less stressful and more enjoyable, as well as reduce costs, such as fuel consumption, vehicle wear and tear and, often, lower insurance premiums.

Check your organisation's policies on assessment and training – they may be able to assist you in undertaking some refresher or further training. This can take many forms, ranging from classroom sessions to in-vehicle training.

They may provide driver assessment or driver training when you start as a volunteer, on a regular basis, after an accident or motoring conviction.

Driver training is particularly important if you are driving a vehicle, such as a minibus, that you do not normally drive.

Learning from experience, including near misses, is an important part of safe driving. If you have been involved in a near miss or were unhappy with something that happened when you were driving, think about what else you could have done. Try and identify common themes and whether it was partially due to the way you or the other driver acted and what you might have done better.

Use the space below to insert your organisation's policy.

Our policy:

OCCUPANT SAFETY

Seat Belts

The most effective way of protecting people inside vehicles is to make sure that every occupant always wears a seat belt on every journey, no matter how short the journey. It is just as important for passengers in the rear to wear seat belts as those in the front.

In a crash at just 30 mph, an unrestrained person is thrown forward with a force 30 to 60 times their body weight. They are thrown about inside the vehicle, injuring themselves and quite possibly seriously injuring (or killing) other people inside the vehicle. They could also be ejected from the car through one of the windows. **Seat belts save lives.**

Child Seats

Seat belts on their own are less effective for children because they are mainly designed for adults. In a crash, a child may slip out of their seat belt because it is too big, and an ill-fitting belt could even cause injuries.

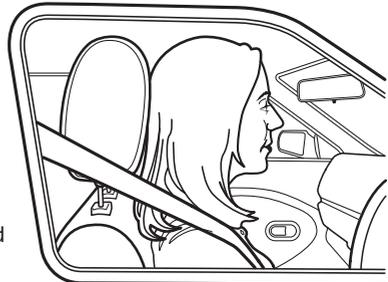
It is a legal requirement that children up to their 12th birthday or under 135cm in height (whichever comes first) use the correct child restraint for their weight. In cars, vans or goods vehicles, it is the your responsibility, as the driver, to ensure that children under 14 are using the correct restraint or seat belt.

The law does not require child restraints to be provided in taxis, private hire vehicles, minicabs, minibuses, buses or coaches, although they must be used if they are available. Seat belts must be worn, if fitted.

If you are carrying children, ask your organisation about child seats, and about training so you know how to check that the right ones are being used for your child passengers and you are able to fit them correctly.

Head Restraints

Adjust your head restraint correctly, and check that every passenger has their head restraint correctly adjusted. Properly adjusted head restraints help to protect against whiplash, and prevent long-term injuries. The top of the head restraint should be level with the top of your head and it should be as close to the back of your head as possible.



Use the space below to insert your organisation's policy.

Our policy:

Seat Belts _____

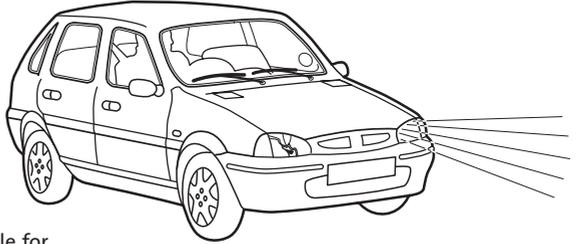
Child Seats _____

Head Restraints _____

SAFE VEHICLE

Vehicle defects are only involved in a small proportion of crashes. However, the type of vehicle also has a major influence on the likelihood and severity of injuries when there is a collision.

Your organisation should have a clear rule that any vehicle that is, or suspected to be, in an unsafe or illegal condition will not be used until all necessary repairs have been completed.



As the driver, you are also responsible for ensuring that the vehicle you are driving is safe and legal.

Before driving any vehicle, check:

- tyres are undamaged (no cuts or bulges), are at the correct pressure for the number of passengers or equipment being carried, and have enough tread depth. The legal minimum is 1.6mm, but above 3mm gives much shorter braking distances in the wet
- there are no signs of vehicle damage
- oil, coolant and windscreen wash levels are correct (check when cold)
- you know the correct type of fuel for the vehicle
- brakes are working
- lights and indicators are working
- windscreen and windows are not damaged
- washers and wipers are working
- mirrors are correctly positioned
- all occupants are using their seat belts and head restraints are adjusted correctly
- loads are securely restrained.

If in any doubt how to check any of the above, read the vehicle's handbook, and/or ask someone to show you.

Ask your organisation if they provide a pre-drive checklist.

If you find any problem during the check, report it to your manager immediately.

SAFE VEHICLE

Driving Position

You should be able to see and reach all of the controls comfortably. Good all-round, unobstructed, visibility is vital. Check whether the pillars between the front and side windows and the space taken up by the door mirrors still allow you to see forward without moving your head.

Also check that your view is not obstructed unnecessarily by objects such as stickers or devices such as SatNavs, and that SatNavs are not placed where they might be hit and flung forwards by an airbag.

Look at the dashboard when you start the car, check which lights illuminate and then go off. If you are not familiar with the vehicle, check the handbook to ensure you know what the different lights mean.

Finally, consider whether the vehicle is suitable for the task – for example,

- If carrying passengers, is there a seat belt for each occupant
- If carrying children, is there an appropriate child seat for each child that needs one?
- If carrying a heavy load or an animal, can you secure it safely?

Use the space below to insert your organisation's policy.

Our policy is:

Vehicle Condition

Pre-drive Checks

ACCIDENT, BREAKDOWN AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Your organisation should have procedures for emergencies, such as accidents or breakdowns. It is essential that you are familiar with, and follow, these procedures, if an emergency occurs.

In the vehicle, keep copies of :

- The emergency procedures
- Contact details for the person(s) to whom you should report emergencies
- Contact details of the breakdown firm your organisation uses and any reference numbers that you may need to quote.

Make sure you have a fully charged mobile phone to summon help if necessary. Do not use the phone while driving.

A summary of the main points to remember is below. But you should always follow the procedures set down by your organisation.

Accidents

- use hazard warning lights and switch off your engine
- do not move injured passengers unless they are in immediate danger of further injury from other vehicles or from fire or explosion
- call the emergency services immediately; provide them with information about the situation, any special circumstances (for example, if carrying oxygen bottles) and if any passengers have special needs
- if child passengers are present, ensure an adult remains with them
- if the emergency services are called, stay at the scene until they allow you to leave
- obtain the names and addresses of all independent witnesses (if possible)
- ensure the vehicle is roadworthy before continuing the journey
- if there is any injury or the names of people involved are not exchanged, you must report the accident to the Police as soon as possible or in any case within 24 hours.

Following an accident you may need to discuss the details with your line manager at the next appropriate moment. This will help them ensure that any risk assessments that they have made are relevant and up to date.

ACCIDENT, BREAKDOWN AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Breakdowns

- Move the vehicle off the carriageway (onto the hard shoulder on a motorway) and switch on the hazard warning lights
- If this is not possible, move it as far away from moving traffic as you can
- Move passengers out of the nearside of the vehicle and as far away from it and other traffic as possible. No one should stand between the vehicle and oncoming traffic
- On motorways or other busy roads, passengers should be taken onto the embankment or grass margin and as far from the traffic as is practicable
- Keep passengers together, keep children under constant supervision
- Telephone the emergency services, or breakdown firm, giving them accurate details of the vehicle's location, and whether children or passengers with mobility problems are being carried
- Telephone your nominated contact person to tell them what has happened
- On a motorway, use the roadside emergency telephone as this will enable the Police to pinpoint your location.

Use the space below to insert your organisation's policy.

Our policy is:

RESOURCES

The Highway Code

Make sure that you are familiar with the Highway Code, which contains frequently updated advice on traffic law and how to stay safe on the roads.

- <http://www.highwaycode.gov.uk>

Managing Occupational Road Risk in Voluntary Organisations

A resource to help voluntary organisations assess the safety of their road transport operations, and to identify measures that can be adopted to manage and reduce or eliminate those risks.

- http://www.rospace.com/roadsafety/info/voluntary_morr.pdf

Driving for Work

A series of RoSPA Guides about many of the aspects covered in this booklet, and sample policies for organisations to put into practice.

- <http://www.rospace.com/roadsafety/resources/employers.htm>

Managing Occupational Road Risk (MORR™): The RoSPA Guide (£25)

The RoSPA guide explores the issue of MORR in depth, and is an invaluable tool for organisations. It explains how to put the people, policies and procedures in place to successfully manage occupational road risk.

- http://www.rospace.com/morr/information/morr_guide.htm

Other Resources

A full list of other MORR advice can be found on the Occupational Road Safety Alliance website.

- <http://www.orsa.org.uk/resources/list.htm>

USEFUL WEBSITES

**Association of Industrial Road
Safety Officers**

www.airso.org.uk

Brake

www.brake.org.uk

Community Transport Association

www.communitytransport.com

Confederation of Passenger Transport

www.cpt-uk.org

Department for Transport

www.dft.gov.uk

www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk

www.highwaycode.gov.uk

**Department of Environment
(Northern Ireland)**

www.doeni.gov.uk

**Disabled Persons Transport
Advisory Committee**

www.dptac.gov.uk

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

www.dvla.gov.uk

Driving Standards Agency

www.dsa.gov.uk

Guild of Experienced Motorists

www.roadsafety.org.uk

Health and Safety Executive

www.hse.gov.uk

www.hse.gov.uk/roadsafety/index.htm

www.hse.gov.uk/sources/index.htm

Institute of Advanced Motorists

www.iam.org.uk

**Institution of Occupational Safety
and Health**

www.iosh.co.uk

**Lancashire County Council At-Work
Road Safety Website**

www.lancashire.gov.uk/environment/roadsafety/dif.asp

**Local Authority Road Safety
Officers' Association**

www.larsoa.org

National Assembly for Wales

www.wales.gov.uk

Occupational Road Safety Alliance

www.orsa.org.uk

**Parliamentary Advisory Council for
Transport Safety**

www.pacts.org.uk

Roadsafe

www.roadsafe.com

Road Safety Scotland

www.road-safety.org.uk

Road Safety Wales

www.roscow.org.uk

RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders

www.roada.org

**Royal Society for the Prevention
of Accidents**

www.rospace.com

www.rospace.com/roadsafety/index.htm

www.rospace.com/drivertraining/index.htm

www.rospace.com/morr/index.htm

Scottish Accident Prevention Council

www.sapc.org.uk

Scottish Executive

www.scotland.gov.uk

SEAT BELT LAWS

From 18 September 2006 in cars, vans and goods vehicles

	Front seat	Rear seat	Who is responsible?
Driver	Seat belt MUST be worn if available.		Driver
Child up to 3 years*	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 135cms in height (approx 4'5") (or 12th birthday whichever they reach first)**	Correct child restraint MUST be used***.	Where seat belts fitted, correct child restraint MUST be used. Must use adult belt if the correct child restraint is not available: in a taxi; for a short distance for reason of unexpected necessity; two occupied child restraints prevent fitment of a third. A child 3 and over may travel unrestrained in the rear seat of a vehicle if seat belts are not available.	Driver
Child over 1.35 metres (approx 4ft 5ins in height) or 12 or 13 years	Seat belt MUST be worn if available.	Seat belt MUST be worn if available.	Driver
Adult passengers (ie 14 years and over)	Seat belt MUST be worn if available.	Seat belt MUST be worn if available.	Passenger's own responsibility

Check the advice and information at www.childcarseats.org.uk.

RoSPA also have advice about Carrying Other People's Children Safely, available to download free at www.rospace.com/roadsafety/carryingchildren/index.htm.

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