ROSPA
accidents don't have to happen

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents

Young Drivers at Work
Handbook

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THINK! Road Safety

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Introduction

Each year, around 1,800 people are killed and a further 25,000 are seriously injured on Great Britain's roads.

It is estimated that approximately one in four accidents involves someone driving for work. These crashes are not just due to driving skills and attitudes, but also to the nature of the driving that at-work drivers are required to do.

Young at-work drivers tend to face higher risks because they are still relatively inexperienced as drivers and because driving for work is often very different from driving for personal reasons:

Driving for work	**Driving for own reasons**
Defined schedule	Decide own schedule
Time pressures/deadlines	Set own deadlines
Long journeys	Mostly shorter journeys
Distractions	Similar, but less pressure to respond to calls
Unfamiliar area	Mostly familiar area
Unfamiliar vehicle	Know the vehicle
Get the job done	Less pressure

This handbook is designed to help you to work with your organisation to avoid accidents and injuries to yourself and other people on the road while you are driving for work. Each section contains road safety advice, but is editable, allowing you to insert your organisation's policy, for example, on the use of mobile phones.

Your employer's responsibility

"Health and safety law applies to work activities on the road in the same way as it does to all work activities and you need to manage the risks to drivers as part of your health and safety arrangements." (HSE "Driving at Work" guidance for employers, 2014)

Therefore, your employer needs to ensure that you are legally entitled to drive the vehicle, and are properly trained, competent and fit to drive it safely. They need to have systems to ensure that the vehicle is safe, roadworthy and road legal and policies and procedures to manage the risks involved in driving for work. They also need to monitor vehicle use and investigate and learn from accidents and incidents.

Your responsibility

As a driver, you must play your part, by ensuring that you are properly licensed, insured to drive for work and fit to drive, and that you plan your journeys safely and comply with road traffic laws when driving.

As an employee, you must understand, and follow, your employer's driving for work policies and procedures.

The vehicle

You are responsible for ensuring that the vehicle you are driving is safe and legal, regardless of whether it is a company vehicle or your own vehicle.

Company vehicles

Your employer will have policies and procedures:

- To make sure that your company vehicle is properly registered, taxed, MOT'd, insured and serviced according to the manufacturer's recommendations (although you may be responsible for booking the services)
- To check your driving licence, probably at regular intervals, to ensure that it remains valid for the vehicle you are driving
- On safe driving, including vehicle checks, journey planning, driver assessment and training, driver fitness, speed, alcohol and drugs, mobile phones and other distractions, passenger safety, and reporting accidents and incidents. Make sure you understand and follow these policies and procedures.

Familiarising yourself with a company vehicle

Many young drivers find themselves driving larger vehicles, such as vans, than the car they learned to drive in.

There are some key differences between driving a van and a car:

- Vans are larger and longer than cars, so extra care must be taken when turning corners
- Vans have different speed limits on some roads, such as motorways
- Vans do not have an interior rear view mirror (except on small car-derived vans).

It is also becoming more and more common to find new technologies in modern company vehicles. Young drivers sometimes report being given a set of keys for a van they have never driven, without any accompanying familiarisation or advice on driving it.

If you are given access to a company vehicle, ask your manager to arrange some vehicle familiarisation training or ask a colleague who knows the vehicle well to talk you through how it works. Before driving the vehicle, you should also take a look at the vehicle handbook and do a pre-drive safety check.

The vehicle

Using your own vehicle for work

Even if the vehicle you drive for work is your own private vehicle, your employer has the same legal duty to ensure that it is safe and legal when it is being used at work, as they have for company vehicles.

If you use your own vehicle for work (not commuting), your motor insurance policy must include business use cover. Make sure you inform your insurer that you use the vehicle for work, and how you do so.

Your employer needs to be able to check:

- Your vehicle is properly taxed, MOT'd and serviced
- You have a valid driving licence and business use insurance cover
- Documentary proof of the above, on request (and at specified intervals)
- You conduct regular vehicle safety checks.

Some employers carry out these checks annually (or more frequently); others do random spot checks.

As an employee, you must cooperate with your employer's health and safety procedures and follow their rules and policies in regard to your own vehicle, when it is used for work. You also need to follow the same policies and procedures on safe driving that apply to company vehicle drivers.

Use the next 'Our Policy' page to insert your organisation's policy.

Example policies

Driving licences will be checked:

Insurance will be checked:

MOT certificate will be checked:

Service documents will be checked:

Other:

Our policy

Vehicle checks

You are responsible for ensuring that the vehicle you are driving or riding is in a safe, legal and roadworthy condition.

All drivers must also ensure that their vehicle is loaded safely. It is illegal and dangerous to drive a vehicle that is overloaded or has an insecure load. As the driver, you are responsible for ensuring that any load you carry is legal and safe, even if it was loaded by another person.

It's important to conduct a pre-drive safety check, especially on an unfamiliar vehicle. Many organisations will require drivers to do a check once a week, or before long journeys. Ask if your organisation provides a pre-drive checklist that you can refer to.

Before driving any vehicle, check:

- Tyres are undamaged (no cuts and bulges), are at the correct pressure and have enough tread depth. The legal minimum tread depth is 1.6mm, but above 3mm gives a much shorter braking distance in the wet
- There are no signs of vehicle damage
- When the engine is cold, oil, coolant and windscreen wash levels are correct
- Brakes are working
- Lights and indicators are working
- Windscreen and windows are not damaged
- Windscreen wipers and washers are working
- Mirrors are correctly positioned.

You will also need to ensure that you are able to see and reach all of the vehicle controls comfortably. Good all-round, unobstructed visibility is vital. Check that your view is not obstructed by objects such as stickers or devices such as sat navs. If you do have a sat nav, make sure that it is not placed where it may be hit and flung forward in the event that the airbags go off.

If you are not sure how to check any of the above, read the vehicle handbook or ask a manager or colleague if they can show you. RoSPA's video, vehicle checks (https://bit.ly/3ow6abE), may also help.

If you think that the vehicle is, or may be, in an unsafe or illegal condition, do not drive it until all necessary repairs have been completed. Take photos as evidence of an issue with the vehicle and seek help from a manager.

Use the next 'Our Policy' page to insert your organisation's policy on vehicle checks.

Our policy

Journey planning

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

Consider whether you need to travel at all – mobile phones and video conferencing can be used for meetings and reduce the need for travelling. If you need to make a journey to travel somewhere, for example, for a meeting, then it may be safer to use another form of transport such as the train. Some drivers will claim that they have less control when using public transport than driving, without considering that they have little control over delays on the road either.

If you do need to drive, check weather forecasts and traffic reports before you set off and try to avoid driving in poor conditions. If the emergency services are recommending that people do not travel unless it's absolutely necessary, consult your employer and if you cannot contact them, do not make the journey.

Thousands of crashes are caused by fatigue every year. Crashes caused by fatigue are most likely to occur:

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

Preventing sleepiness is something that your organisation can help you to manage:

- Avoid driving at night, especially after a long shift, or after drinking alcohol or taking medicines that cause drowsiness
- Follow any limits set by your organisation on maximum driving distances or times. Plan where you can take a break about every two hours, and build in enough time to do so. Take rest breaks as planned and avoid the temptation to carry on
- Avoid driving when you would normally be asleep, and make sure that you get plenty of sleep before your shift. Keep meals light before and during your shift; heavy meals can make you drowsy
- If you are feeling tired, find somewhere to stop, drink two strong cups of coffee and take a short nap for 15-20 minutes. But, remember that sleep is the only cure for tiredness. If necessary, find somewhere to sleep overnight
- If you are concerned about your driving hours, journeys or schedules, or you find yourself driving when you feel too tired to do so, discuss this with your employer.

Use the next 'Our Policy' page to insert your organisation's policy.

Our policy

Fitness to drive

Your physical and mental health plays a major part in your fitness to drive. You must inform the DVLA about any medical condition that may affect your ability to drive safely. You should discuss any fitness to drive concerns with your doctor and inform your employer about any health conditions or personal circumstances that may affect your driving.

For more information:

www.gov.uk/driving-medical-conditions

www.gov.uk/health-conditions-and-driving

Eyesight

In good daylight, you must be able to read a vehicle number plate from 20 metres (about five car lengths) or from 20.5 metres for old style number plates. If you require glasses or contact lenses to drive, you must wear them at all times when driving. It is an offence not to do so, and may invalidate your motor insurance.

Have your eyesight checked regularly, at least once every two years, or more often if your optician recommends it.

Alcohol

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

The drink drive limit is 80mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, but lower in Scotland, at 50mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood.

Many drink drivers are caught the morning after they have been drinking. If you were drinking late the previous night, you could easily still be over the limit the next morning. Even if you are under the limit, you may still be affected by the alcohol in your body. The only safe option is to avoid alcohol in the hours before you will be driving.

Fitness to drive

Drugs and medicines

It is illegal and dangerous to drive if unfit to do so because of drugs or medicines. They can affect decision making and driving and riding skills, as well as your physical and mental condition and behaviour, and significantly increase your risk of crashing.

It is illegal in England, Scotland and Wales to drive with certain drugs in the body above a specified limit (even a very small amount would put a person over the limit) or with certain prescription drugs above a specified limit. The law does not cover Northern Ireland but you could still be arrested if you're unfit to drive. Check with your GP or pharmacist whether any over-the-counter prescribed medicines you are taking are likely to affect your driving. If so ask for an alternative that does not, or avoid driving.

Illness

Common conditions, such as colds, flu, migraines, stomach upsets and hayfever can affect your ability to drive safely. Don't be tempted to continue to drive, when it would in fact be safer for everyone concerned, not to drive until feeling better.

If you start to feel unwell while driving, stop the vehicle somewhere safe. If the condition is not serious, you may feel well enough to continue after a short break or taking some medication. But, if you find your concentration is affected, make other arrangements to continue your journey.

If you think that you are over the drink-drive limit or unfit to drive for any other reason, do not drive. Contact your employer to explain and allow alternative arrangements to be made.

Use the next 'Our Policy' page to insert your organisation's policy.

Example policies Alcohol, Drugs, Medicines, Ilness, Eyesight and Fatigue

Our policy

Speed

Many young drivers identify seeking excitement and sensation as causes of speeding, but also work schedule pressures or conflicting goals, such as getting home quicker and getting home safely.

When travelling at higher speeds, you have less time to identify and react to what is happening around you. It takes longer to stop, and if there is a crash, it is more severe, causing greater injury to you, your passengers and any pedestrian or rider hit. Higher speeds may also magnify other errors, such as close-following, fatigue or distraction, multiplying the chances of causing a collision.

Speed limits are the maximum speed for a road, but there are many instances where it is not appropriate to drive at that speed, such as on a narrow road or outside a school. Make sure that you know the speed limit of the roads you are using by checking for speed limit signs and junctions and repeater signs after junctions, especially if the road environment has changed recently.

If you feel pressurised to exceed speed limits (due to a tight schedule, for example), discuss this with your employer.

Use the next 'Our Policy' page to insert your organisation's policy.

Our policy

Driver distraction

Being distracted or inattentive reduces a driver's peripheral vision (they tend to look straight out of the windscreen more, and less to the sides). This means they are less aware of what is happening around them, miss hazards and react more slowly, which increases the chances of being involved in a collision.

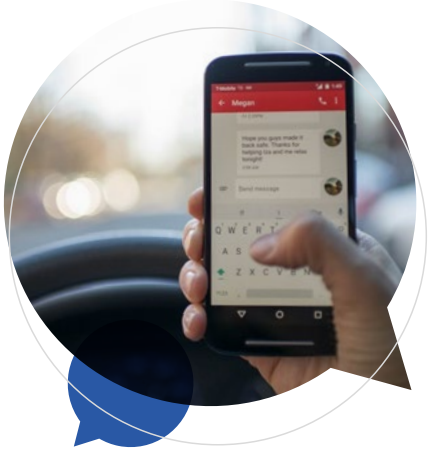
A wide range of things can distract drivers, including using a mobile phone, inputting directions into a sat nav, reading a map or document, eating and drinking.

A distracted driver:

- Is much less aware of what is happening around them
- Fails to notice road signs
- Fails to maintain proper lane position and steady speed
- Is more likely to tailgate the vehicle in front
- Reacts more slowly, taking longer to brake
- Is more likely to enter an unsafe gap in traffic
- Feels more stressed and frustrated.

Research shows that this means the driver is much more likely to crash.

Mobile phones



It is illegal to use a handheld mobile phone while driving. The penalty for doing so is a £200 fine and six penalty points.

Although using a hands-free phone while driving is not specifically illegal, drivers who do so could be charged with "failing to have proper control of the vehicle". The penalty is a fine of up to £1,000, three penalty points and a discretionary disqualification.

Hands-free phones do not significantly reduce the risk because of the mental distraction of taking part in a phone conversation.

There are a number of ways that you can reduce the temptation or need to take hands-free calls while driving:

- Switch off your mobile phone and let it take messages
- Stop in a safe place to return calls
- If you are with another colleague, give your mobile phone to them.

A hands-free phone can be used as a sat nav, but only while held securely in a cradle, with the route programmed before the journey. If the driver needs to input new directions, they should only do so when parked in a safe place, with the vehicle engine switched off.

Use the next 'Our Policy' page to insert your organisation's policy.

Our policy

Accidents, breakdowns and emergencies

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

In the vehicle, keep copies of:

- The emergency procedures
- Contact details for the person(s) to whom you should report emergencies
- If applicable, contact details of the breakdown firm your organisation uses and any reference numbers you may need to quote
- Details of your motor insurance policy and contact details for your insurer.

Make sure you have a fully charged mobile phone to summon help if necessary, but don't use it while driving.

Accidents

In the event of a collision:

- Stop. It is an offence not to stop, if your vehicle is involved and damage is caused to another vehicle or property or someone is injured
- Use your hazard warning lights and switch off your engine
- Call the emergency services immediately; provide them with information about the situation, any special circumstances and if passengers have any additional needs
- 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 are any injuries or the name 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.

You should also record and report the accident to your employer. You may need to discuss the details with your employer at the next appropriate moment to ensure that lessons are learned to avoid it happening again.

Accidents, breakdowns and emergencies

Breakdowns

In the event of a breakdown:

- Move the vehicle off the carriageway (onto the hard shoulder or emergency area on a motorway) and switch on the hazard warning lights. If it is not possible to move the vehicle off the carriageway, move it as far away from moving traffic as you can.
- 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.

If you break down on a motorway, use the roadside emergency telephone if it is safe to do so, as this will enable the operator to pinpoint your location.

Example policies

In the Event of a breakdown

In the event of a collision

Use the next 'Our Policy' page to insert your organisation's policy.

Our policy

Notes

Notes

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