



PRIFYSGOL
ABERYSTWYTH
UNIVERSITY

Driver Safety Handbook

Guidelines for ALL drivers

October 2019



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Introduction

This booklet provides useful information to help keep you safe on the road. Regardless of who owns the vehicle, the driver is legally responsible for it while driving and must have the correct licence and ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and taxed with an MOT and insurance. This handbook provides practical advice and information on how to keep yourself, your passengers and your vehicle as safe as possible.

NON-UNIVERSITY STAFF AND STUDENTS

This handbook must be read and considered best practice for any non-University staff and students who are permitted to drive a University vehicle or use their own vehicle on a University work-related trip.

SAFETY FOR ALL

The advice in this handbook is relevant to all drivers, however, some special considerations apply to drivers of vans and specialist vehicles and these will be highlighted in their own section in this handbook. If you are a car driver only, we would recommend you still read these sections as it will help you to appreciate some of the additional issues these drivers face.

Drivers of specialist vehicles, such as those driven on farms, or by IBERS and Ground Maintenance teams will have their own dedicated handbook. There is an expectation that you read this booklet in conjunction with the Specialist vehicle driver safety handbook.

Because driving a minibus comes with added responsibilities, a separate handbook is provided for all minibus drivers.

This handbook should be read in conjunction with the driver safety policy - www.aber.ac.uk/driver-safety

Before you get in the vehicle

WHAT IS A WORK-RELATED DRIVING JOURNEY?

While the advice provided is relevant for your private driving, the University has legal responsibilities for managing risk of all work-related journeys. A work-related journey is described as any other journey you make on behalf of the University, regardless of the frequency or distance or whether it is made in your own vehicle, if permitted, or a vehicle provided by the University any trip in a vehicle regardless of who owns that vehicle that is not your normal commute to and from your normal place of work.

Note: If you interrupt your commute to or from your normal place of work by attending to an errand on behalf of the University, the whole trip would be considered work-related. Essentially, once you commence a work-related journey you are no longer commuting.

If you do not have a normal place of work or service multiple sites, please contact Human Resources for advice. Drivers need to be aware that the use of University vehicles and/or hire vehicles is strictly for work-related journeys and personal use is not permitted.



Risk Assessments

All work related journeys should have a risk assessment. A generic risk assessment can be reviewed and amended for local use.

Further information on risk assessment along with training opportunities can be found on the HS&E webpages [here](#).

DRIVING TO REMOTE OR UNUSUAL PLACES

Any work related journeys whose risk assessment gives reasonable cause for concern should be discussed with the HS&E Department before undertaking the trip.

Such journeys may, for example, be to remote rural locations, involve unpredictable road conditions and/or involve lone drivers. Common sense should prevail and unnecessary risks should not be accommodated.

EXPECTED DRIVING STANDARDS

You must remember that while driving on University business you are ambassadors for the University and therefore there is an expectation that:

- You will always drive in accordance with the law and the Highway Code
- Be patient and display courtesy to all road users
- Do not engage in any behaviour, be it verbal, by gesture or the way you drive your vehicle that would be considered by most people to be inappropriate and unacceptable

The roads of today are busy and crowded and we are often competing for the same space while all wanting to make progress. It is inevitable that some situations will irritate you or other people may make mistakes, however, this is never an excuse to engage in any irrational, aggressive or confrontational behaviour. You are expected to take a sympathetic, calm and forgiving approach to such situations.

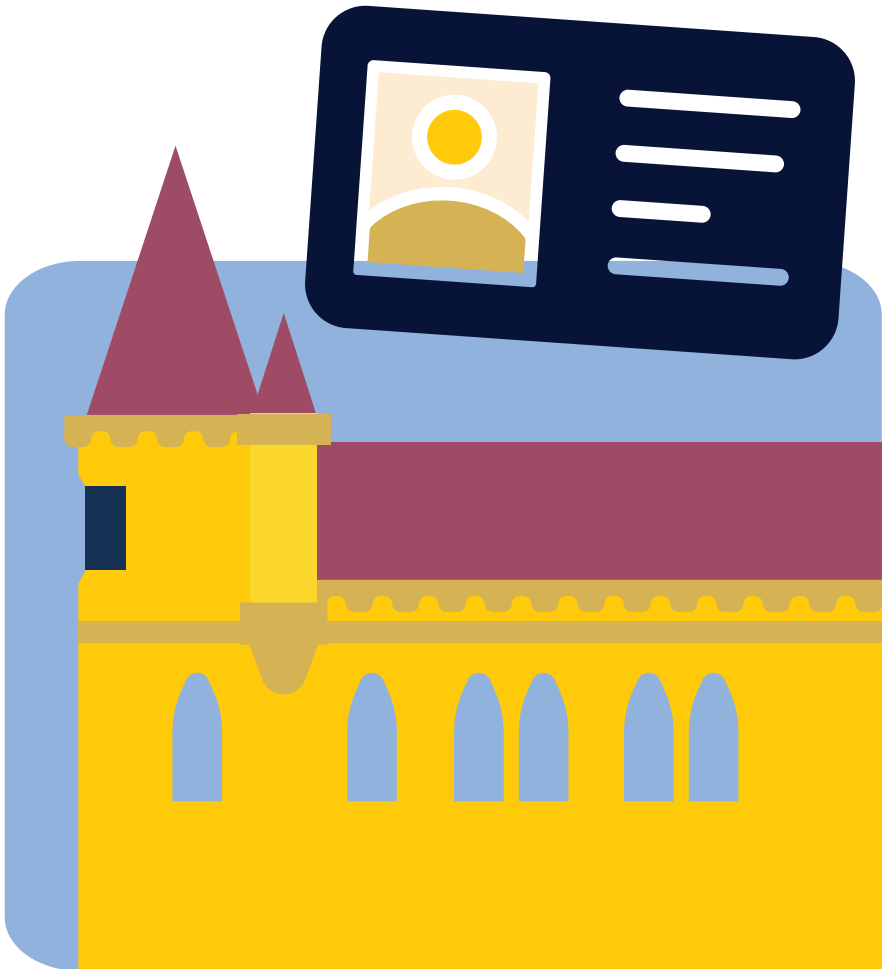
If you find yourself making a mistake that irritates others, you are expected to not engage in any confrontational or over-defensive behaviour based on the other person's reactions, instead do your level best to remain calm and defuse the situation.

Authorisation to drive

Before you can drive on University business you must ensure that you have been authorised to drive, this applies to all staff and non-University staff.

This process requires you to complete a University authorised driver application form and return it to the University Travel & Fleet department.

IMPORTANT - You must not engage in any work-related journeys which involve driving, no matter how short or infrequent, until you have become an Authorised Driver.



Driving your own vehicle on business trips

You should always use a hire vehicle or University vehicle whenever possible. In exceptional circumstances you may be permitted to use your own car, however, you MUST:

- Complete an authorised driver application form, available from: www.aber.ac.uk/driver-safety
- Have insurance that includes *Business use cover

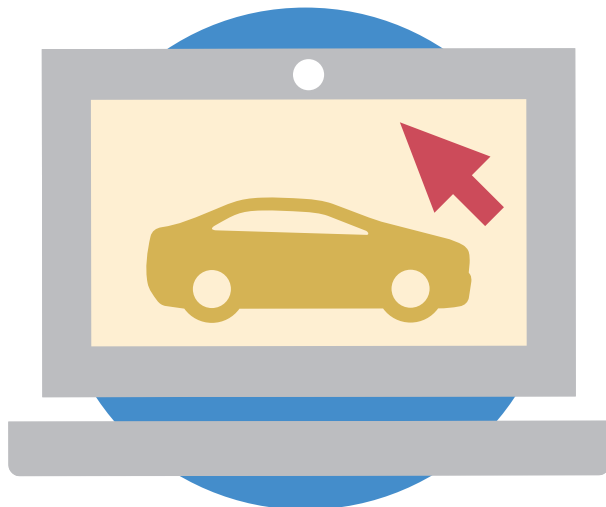
All successful applicants will be added onto the register for a maximum of 12 months. Data will be managed in accordance with the Travel and Fleet GDPR statement.

*Business use cover – by default most insurance policies will cover you for social, domestic and pleasure purposes and for commuting to and from your normal place of work. It will NOT cover you automatically for any business trips. You will need to ask for this cover specifically. In most cases Business Use cover will not increase your insurance premium, it might however attract an admin charge if you add this cover after commencement of your policy.



Important – you WILL NOT be insured unless you have Business use cover included in your policy. This should cover you for use of your vehicle on your employer’s business.

Booking a pool car



The University has a small fleet of pool cars available for use by University staff only. You are advised to plan well ahead and book a pool car rather than use your own vehicle for a business trip, subject to availability.

If you need to book a pool car you must first satisfy the pool car custodian that you possess the relevant approval, see section above re 'Authorisation to Drive'.

It is your responsibility to ensure that a pre-journey safety check is undertaken. A Pre-Journey checklist form must be completed prior to each trip. The form should then be handed to the Pool Car custodian on completion of your journey, having been updated as appropriate.

Any vehicle defect must be reported prior to use, or as soon as practicable to the Pool Car custodian.

When carrying out any checks you should ensure the vehicle is parked in a safe location and there is no likelihood of the engine being started or the vehicle moving.

You are not permitted to take a pool or hire vehicle home unless an early start/finish does not permit enough time to collect/return the vehicle to the University. In this instance, you must not use the pool vehicle for any private journeys, it must remain parked in a safe and legal location until commencement of the business trip or return to base.

You must return the vehicle with a full tank of fuel and in a clean and tidy condition, parking it in any designated area as applicable. Please refer to the section on re-fueling and fuel cards' for further information on purchasing fuel for use in a pool car.

Electric vehicles

The University will consider the use of electric vehicles on fleet and will update this handbook accordingly as applicable.

For any travel using electric vehicles please ensure that

- the battery is adequately charged for the planned trip, and
- the vehicle's range and charging requirements are included in any travels plans.

Journey Planning

All journeys should be planned, this doesn't mean that you must route plan every single journey in detail, particularly if you are making multiple local trips that are familiar to you, it does however mean that you should consider the following:

- Have you had enough sleep the previous night, are you unwell, are you on any medication that might make you drowsy?
- Try to avoid congested areas at peak times, especially around schools
- Where possible, avoid driving in adverse weather

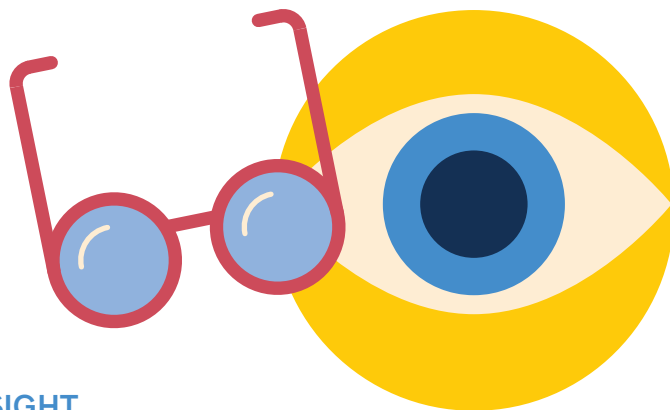
Extra considerations for long journeys:

- Plan your route in detail
- Use Sat Nav if you have it but always carry an up to date road atlas with you, technology can and does sometimes fail!
- Ensure you have enough fuel, at least to get you to a suitable refuelling point
- Plan to take regular breaks, at least 15 minutes in every two-hour stretch of driving



Fitness to drive

It is your responsibility to ensure you are fit enough to drive, this will require you to take several things into consideration:



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 need 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.

It is a good idea to keep a spare set of glasses in the vehicle. Have your eyesight checked regularly (at least every two years, or more often if your optician recommends it).

ALCOHOL

You should never drive or operate equipment or machinery whilst under the influence of alcohol.

Most people accept that it is dangerous and socially unacceptable to drink and drive, however, many drivers fall foul of the law the morning after. This is likely to be as a result of not understanding how many units of alcohol they consumed the night before, meaning that alcohol is still present the next day.

You can never calculate how many units of alcohol would place you over the limit so the safest advice is, don't try, however, you should be aware of a few things about alcohol:

- Alcohol impairs judgement, making drivers over-confident and more likely to take risks
- It slows reactions, increases stopping distances, affects judgement of speed and distance

- Even a small amount, well below the legal limit, could affect your ability to drive safely

For more information, please see the link below:

www.aber.ac.uk/en/hr/policy-and-procedure/drugs-alcohol/

GETTING RID OF ALCOHOL

There's only one sure way to get rid of alcohol, it's time. No amount of caffeine drinks will sober you up because your body can only get rid of one unit of alcohol per hour, so be aware of what you are drinking if you need to drive the next day.

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 skills, as well as your physical and mental condition and behaviour, and significantly increase your risk of crashing. The penalties are the same as for drink driving.

It is also illegal in England and Wales to drive with certain drugs (such as cannabis and cocaine) 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 limits for prescription medicines are higher than normal prescribed doses, so someone taking a medicine under their doctor's advice should not exceed the limit. However, they must still be fit to drive, so anyone taking medicines should talk to their doctor, pharmacist or healthcare professional before driving.

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 for any warnings, and if it says that certain side-effects may occur, assume that they will do so.



DVLA NOTIFIABLE MEDICAL CONDITIONS

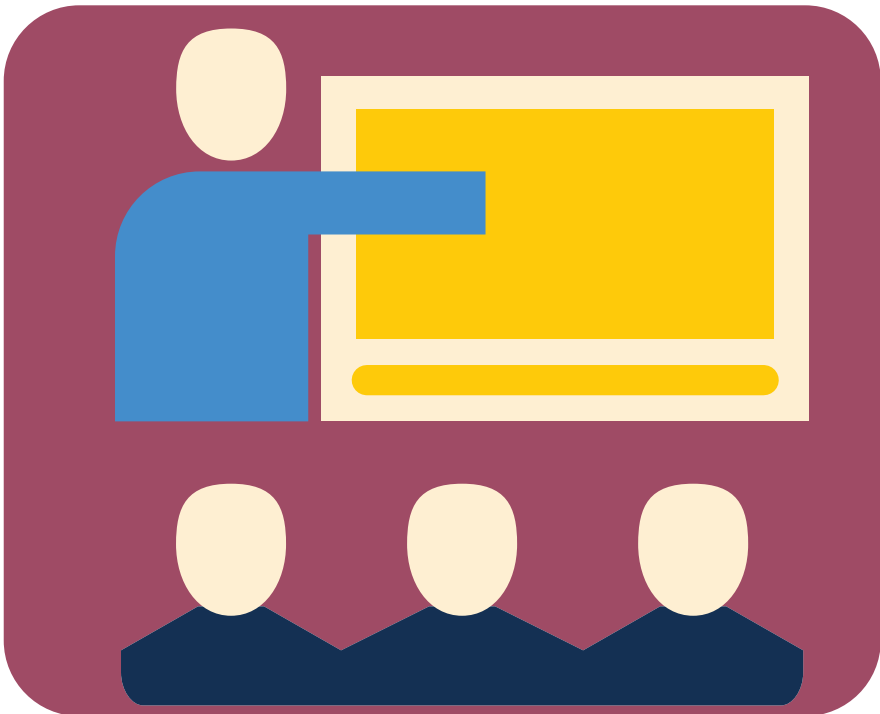
You are bound by traffic law to notify the DVLA if you suffer any medical conditions that might affect your driving. It is your responsibility to check with your GP whether any of your medical conditions are considered 'notifiable' You can obtain detailed information by visiting the Governments official website: www.gov.uk/driving-medical-conditions

The University respects your privacy; however, they have a duty of care towards your safety while at work. For this reason, you must notify your Line Manager if you suffer any medical conditions that might affect your ability to drive safely.

Training

Dependant on your role and/or the vehicle you drive for work, you may be required to undertake a driver risk assessment and training needs analysis following which appropriate training will be organised.

Some roles require drivers to be accredited to drive specific vehicles. Your Line Manager will be able to advise if this affects you, in consultation with the Travel and Fleet team.



Your Vehicle

PRE-DRIVE SAFETY CHECKS

It's very important to understand that regardless of who owns the vehicle, once you take it onto the public highway you are legally responsible. This means that if there is a defect with the vehicle that infringes the law, YOU will be charged with the offence, must pay any fine and may have endorsements placed onto your driving licence.

As well as protecting you from the above scenario, you need to make sure you are taking charge of a safe and legally compliant vehicle, you should therefore always conduct a walk-around and under the bonnet set of checks before first driving a vehicle. Do this every day, especially if someone else previously has driven the vehicle.

The University mandates this practice and have made available a standard pre-drive check form that must be completed before the journey.

Please see the following link for vehicle pre-drive safety check forms:
www.aber.ac.uk/en/hse/proc-prac/vehicle-inspection-sheets/

Line managers should conduct occasional vehicle spot checks typically at least once a month, which should review the records of individual driver's checks to ensure they exist for every journey and that any issues have been addressed expediently, consistent with risk.

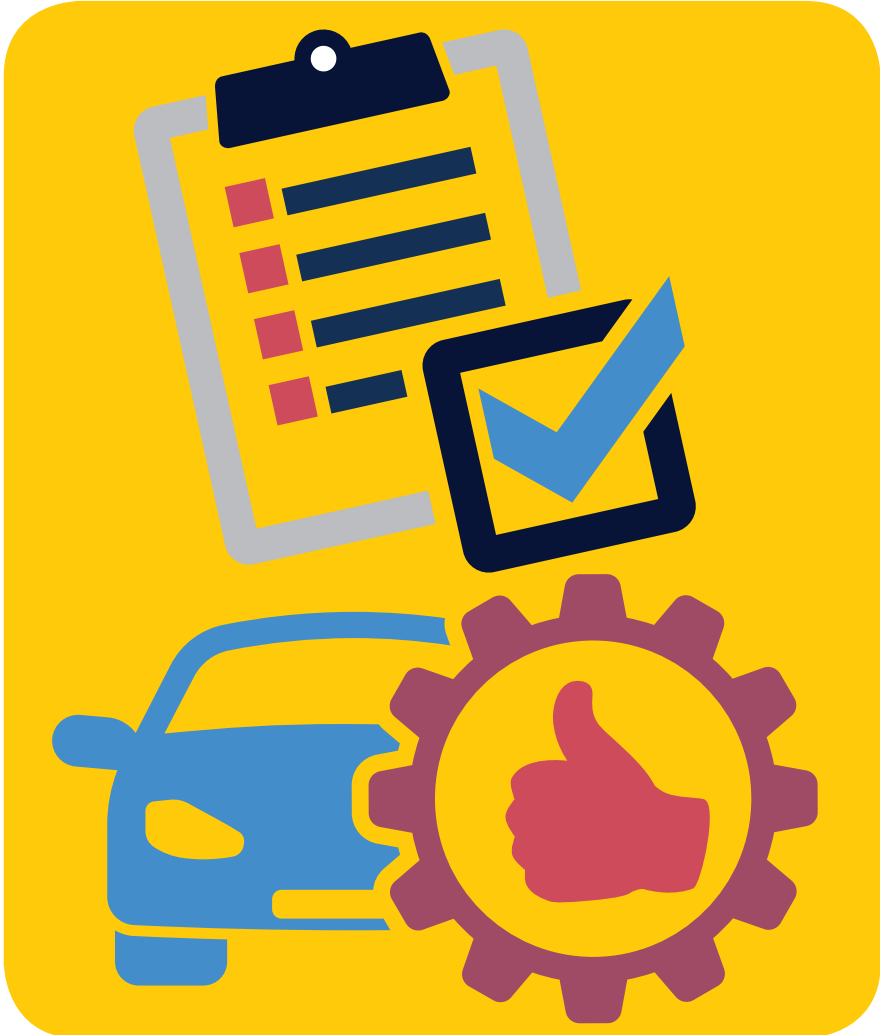
All vehicle spot check forms should be retained by the Department with responsibility of the vehicle and these records should be kept for the lifetime of the vehicle ownership.



Defect reporting

You must report all vehicle defects or observed damage on the pre-drive University vehicle check form. When a defect or damage are present, it is the driver's responsibility to determine the roadworthiness of the vehicle and take responsibility for the decision to drive the vehicle or not.

The University insists that drivers never drive a vehicle that is considered dangerous or not legally compliant, this includes your own vehicle.



While Driving

Driver's Hours

Crashes often highlight fatigue as a common element. We assume that the total working day will be one of the significant factors in determining the duration/distance of any planned journey, and therefore we strongly recommend the following restrictions:

	LIMIT	NOTES
Daily driving	Maximum of 10 hours	This relates to a 24 hour period from midnight to midnight. Driving your own vehicle to and from your place of work is not counted. Also see clauses below relating to breaks.
Daily duty	Maximum of 11 hours	Daily duty is the sum total of all time spent working, including associated driving tasks. For daily duties in excess of 11 hours, you should discuss with your line manager prior to the duties how any risk associated with the extended periods will be mitigated. It is recommended in such circumstances to produce a risk assessment which will consider viable alternatives.
Continuous driving	Maximum of 2 hours	If it is not possible to stop immediately, open a window for fresh air and stop as soon as it is safe and legal. Your concentration will be much improved if you plan your journey with regular breaks for rest and refreshments.
Break period	Minimum of 15 minutes	
Daily rest period	Minimum of 11 hours	This must be between two working days but can be reduced to 8.5 hours only once within any given working week.

Please note the hours displayed above are restricted to the activity of driving only, however due consideration should be given to any additional activities the driver may be engaged in as part of their duties during the period in question.

For example, if an individual drove for several hours, was then required to participate in an activity or meeting for several hours, and was then required to complete a further extended period of driving, consideration should be given as to the range of suitable options to reduce risk to a tolerable level, such as sharing the driving with another colleague or whether an overnight stay would be more appropriate. Guidance on completing Risk Assessments can be found on the HS&E webpages or from the HS&E Team.

Significant and unavoidable delays, eg motorway hold-ups and/or diversions need not restrict the completion of the journey so long as the driver considers it safe to continue.

If your journey is a long one, or if it includes either motorway or particularly remote areas, you should consider

- including a second adult/driver
- planning a route and driver schedule, and agreeing it with your line manager

Where a journey may extend beyond the boundaries of your normal working hours you should discuss with your Head of Department prior to the journey the arrangements for any additional hours worked as a result of the requirement to drive as part of your role, whether this be Time off in Lieu or Overtime.

In all instances, drivers are required to observe the Working Time Directive.

WORKING TIME REGULATIONS:

The following is intended to be a helpful summary but should there be specific advice required please contact the Health, Safety & Environment and/or Human Resources departments.

You cannot work more than 48 hours a week on average, averaged over a 'reference' period of 17 weeks. This means you can work more than 48 hours one week, as long as the average over 17 weeks is less than 48 hours a week.

In general a worker has a right to:

- at least a 20 minute break if they will work longer than six hours;
- 11 consecutive hours rest in any 24-hour period
- One day off each week or two consecutive days off in a fortnight
- A limit on the normal working hours of night worker to an average eight hours in any 24 hour period.

A working week includes:

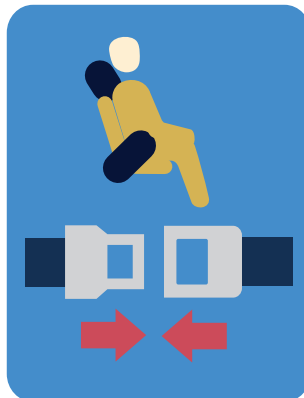
- job-related training
- time spent travelling if you travel as part of your job, eg sales rep
- working lunches, eg business lunches
- time spent working abroad
- paid overtime
- unpaid overtime you're asked to do
- time spent on call at the workplace
- any time that is treated as 'working time' under a contract
- travel between home and work at the start and end of the working day (if you don't have a fixed place of work)

A working week doesn't include:

- time you spend on call away from the workplace
- breaks when no work is done, eg lunch breaks
- travelling outside of normal working hours
- unpaid overtime you've volunteered for, eg staying late to finish something off
- paid or unpaid holiday
- travel to and from work (if you have a fixed place of work)

Seatbelts

Seatbelts must be worn in all vehicles in which they are present. Any animals being transported in a vehicle must be suitably secured in accordance with rule 57 of the Highway Code.



Towing Trailers

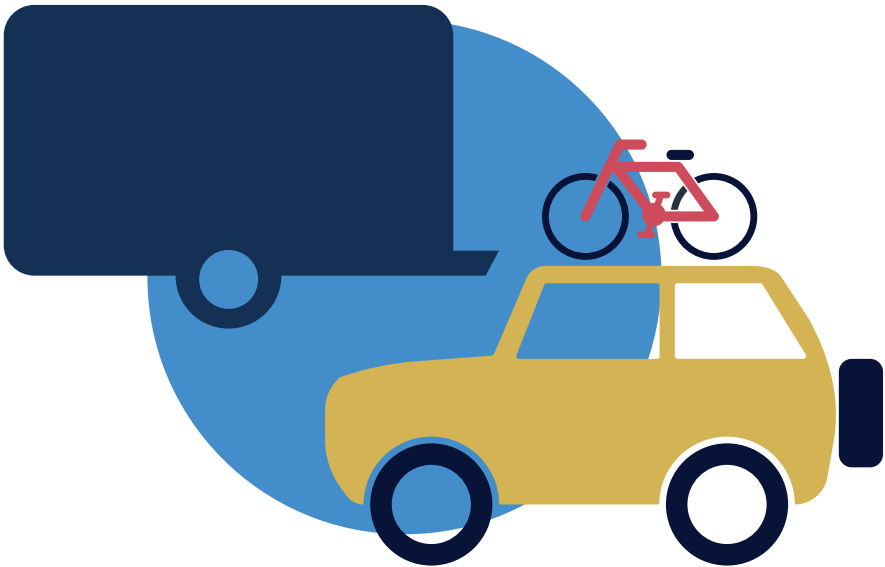
Only use a trailer if you have the correct licence entitlement and are authorised by the University to do so, and, you have been trained to drive with one.

Make sure you know how to connect the trailer, including the electrical connections. Ensure that it is not overloaded and that the weight of any load is evenly distributed and securely covered.

Cars towing trailers are subject to lower speed limits and cannot use the outside lane on motorways with three or more lanes.

For detailed information on towing trailers and the law, please visit: www.gov.uk/towing-rules

You must also read the University policy for towing trailers.



Roof racks

Roof racks should only be used where no other forms of transport are available and there are no suitable alternatives, short of not actually carrying the load. A risk assessment must be undertaken in all cases.

When driving, remember to account for how the extra weight affects the vehicle's handling and stopping characteristics. Remove roof racks when not being used as fuel consumption will be greater if left fastened to the roof.



Children

With the exception of references in the University 'Driving a Minibus - Best Practice Guidelines' handbook, Children are not permitted to be carried as passengers in any University vehicle or hire vehicle as this is typically not covered by the University's insurance policies.

Driving position

You should be able to see and reach all of the 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 SatNavs, and that SatNavs are not placed where they might be hit and flung forward 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 so you know what the different lights mean and the position and operation of the controls.

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 a heavy load or an animal, can you secure it safely?

Lanyards

Drivers and/or passengers are warned not to wear lanyards when driving or travelling in vehicles because of the risk of injury if an airbag goes off. Please be aware that in some applicable traffic accidents across the UK the wearing of identity lanyards has exacerbated the severity of the injuries sustained. Whilst this type of accident may seem unlikely the University hopes that by raising awareness of the potential risk, those who routinely wear lanyards for work purposes will remove their lanyard when travelling in a vehicle.

Satellite navigation systems

It is now very common for drivers to use SatNavs. They can, if used properly, make driving safer and easier, but they can also increase risk (e.g., by distracting you) if not used properly.

Where such systems are used, the following must be observed:

- Do not attach any screen-mounted device in such a place that it would restrict your vision
- Set destinations in the SatNav before the journey starts. If you need to make adjustments or to input new information, only do so when stopped in a safe place.
- Plan your journey through your risk assessment using an appropriate route finder, carry an up to date road atlas in your vehicle in case of technology failure and for long or unfamiliar journeys.
- Always judge for yourself whether any instruction given by the device should be followed, for example, some systems might not recognise No Entry or one-way streets
- Try and keep your map database up to date
- Be careful when using 'shortest' route, the system might take you through some very narrow roads



Mobile phones & other communication devices

You are advised to ensure you have a means of summoning assistance while engaged on work-related journeys, this could be either a mobile phone or radio. The following must always be observed;

- You must only make or receive calls as permitted by law - this means that while on the public highway, unless you need to report an emergency and stopping is not possible, you must not make or receive a call via a hand-held device (mobile phone or radio)
- You must not text or access any apps on a smartphone whilst driving, this includes using any in-vehicle touch screen technology that connects the phone to your vehicle
- Always stop in a safe and convenient place to make or receive a phone/radio call. Ensure that you do not inconvenience any other road users by your choice of location to stop
- You are advised not to engage in any hands-free mobile conversation while driving unless absolutely necessary and must remain in control of your vehicle at all times. The police have the power to stop you if they believe you have been distracted by using a mobile phone while driving, even if it's fully hands-free.
- You are reminded that the penalty for using a phone/or other hand held communication device while driving is a £200 fine and possible points added to your licence. You will be responsible for paying this fine, in addition to any additional remedial action available to the University under its disciplinary procedures.



Smoking, eating & drinking while driving

Smoking in University vehicles is prohibited. All University vehicles will display a no smoking sign.

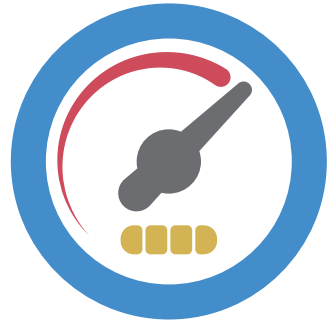
Even when using your own vehicle, the University strongly recommends that drivers should not smoke whilst driving on a work-related trip, especially where you are accompanied by a colleague.

You must always maintain proper control of your vehicle, therefore eating or drinking while driving is prohibited. Plan food stops into your journey and refer to rule 148 of the Highway Code.



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 or where visibility is restricted).



Make sure you know the speed limit of the roads you are using. Speed limit signs tend to be at junctions because this is often where the limit changes. However, junctions are also where you need to absorb a wide range of information (e.g., which way am I going, is that driver going to pull out), so it is easy to miss a speed limit sign. Check for speed limit signs at junctions, and look for repeater signs after the junction, especially if the nature of the road has changed. But be aware that the nature of the road may not indicate the speed limit.

For example, dual carriageways can be 30 mph, 40 mph, 50 mph, 60 mph or 70 mph.

If you are not sure, assume the limit is lower until you see a sign. On roads with street lights, assume the limit is 30 mph until you see a sign saying otherwise. But, remember the limit may be lower – 20 mph.

Also, make sure that you know the speed limits for the vehicle you are driving.

Here is a link to UK speed limit table: www.gov.uk/speed-limits

Driving on-campus

Driving safely on-campus always calls for extra awareness, especially where there are large groups of pedestrians. Stay alert and follow campus driving rules and the rules of the road.

In-vehicle driver safety technology

The University is considering option such as Telematics and this document will be updated as and when any significant changes are applied in this area.

Manoeuvring

Minor knocks and scrapes may appear insignificant, but cost the University money that could have been put to better use elsewhere.

Reversing is one of the most common situations where vehicle damage is sustained, often because the driver acted a little hastily or failed to have a good look around before getting into the vehicle.

Here are a few simple tips:

- Reverse into parking bays so that when you are ready to leave you have greater visibility in the direction of travel
- When manoeuvring in car parks, assume other drivers and pedestrians will continue on their way, best that you control the situation by stopping if necessary
- Assess the space that you intend to park in. You may be able to fit your vehicle in but is it likely to be damaged by the carelessness of others, from opening doors when in bays or front/rear damage when parallel parked
- If you are in a situation where you stop and need to turn around later, it's better to turn around immediately as soon as you arrive as a lot can change while you were away, facing your intended direction of travel is far safer because you have better vision
- Before reversing, stop, look, listen – winding your window down will help you hear oncoming road users, make lots of shoulder checks to overcome blind spots and by stopping several times you will create time to continually assess the situation more accurately
- Reversing sensors are a good aid, however, certain obstructions might be outside of their detection limits, so do not rely solely on them, they are not a substitute for looking
- Reversing cameras, if fitted, should be used only as an additional aid and never as a substitute for looking yourself



- Pay attention to the presence of bollards and the like, gate posts, raised curbs, or anything that might be outside your field of vision. If necessary, before reversing do a walk-around
- Unless you are driving a van, don't be tempted to reverse using only mirrors. You will see far more if you turn around and look through the side and back windows, with occasional mirror glances
- Always manoeuvre very slowly, this aids accuracy and allows time for effective observation
- Consider the swing of your vehicle when manoeuvring, it might become a hazard to other road users, hence the need for good observations and good control
- Be especially careful when manoeuvring in areas where pedestrians are present, they often walk past reversing vehicles. Children especially can be unpredictable

Adverse weather

The weather can cause all sorts of driving hazards, especially reduced visibility, slippery road surfaces and longer stopping distances. We need to adjust our driving accordingly. All drivers should check with their line manager whether any work-related trip is actually required where adverse weather is forecast. If any doubt exists, either do not travel or consult the University Health and Safety team prior to travel.

PREPARE FOR WINTER

Check that your lights are clean and working. Always keep the windscreen and windows clean and the washer bottle filled with screen wash to the correct concentration to prevent the solution freezing.



BEFORE SETTING OFF IN ADVERSE WEATHER

Listen to local/national weather broadcasts and travel bulletins. If conditions are very bad, avoid making your journey unless it is absolutely necessary (See above).

Think about taking warm clothes, boots and a torch - it could be a long walk to a phone, if you don't have a mobile phone. Consider keeping a couple of long life energy bars with you. Clear your windows and mirrors completely of snow and ice before you set off, where it has been agreed by the University that the work-related trip is appropriate in the circumstances.



RAIN

Rain reduces your ability to see and greatly increases the distance required to slow down and stop. You will need about TWICE your normal braking distance. There is an increased risk of skidding and, in heavy rain, aquaplaning. Use windscreen wipers, washers and dipped headlights, and drive smoothly and plan your moves in plenty of time.



AQUAPLANING

Aquaplaning is caused by driving too fast into surface water. When the tyre tread cannot channel away enough water, the tyre(s) lose contact with the road and your car will float on a wedge of water. Aquaplaning can be avoided by reducing speed in wet conditions.

Having the correct tyre pressure and tyre tread depth will maximise your tyres' ability to maintain their road grip. If it happens, ease off the accelerator and brakes until your speed drops sufficiently for the car tyres to make contact with the road again.

DRIVING IN POOR WEATHER

FLOODED ROADS

Avoid the deepest water - which is usually near the kerb. Don't attempt to cross if the water seems too deep. If you are not sure of the water's depth, look for an alternative route. If you decide to risk it, drive slowly in first gear but keep the engine speed high by slipping the clutch - this will stop you from stalling. Be aware of the bow wave from approaching vehicles - operate an informal 'give way' with approaching vehicles.

REMEMBER to test your brakes when you are through the flood.

SNOW AND ICE

Hail, heavy snow and rain all reduce visibility – use dipped headlights. Only travel at a speed at which you can stop within the distance you can see to be clear.

Keep your vehicle well ventilated. The car heater full on can quickly make you drowsy.

Always reduce your speed smoothly and in plenty of time on slippery surfaces. Avoid harsh braking and acceleration, or sharp steering.

Slow down in plenty of time before bends and corners.

To brake on ice and snow without locking your wheels, get into a low gear earlier than normal, allow your speed to fall and use your brakes gently.

Increase the gap between you and the vehicle in front. You may need up to **TEN TIMES** the normal distance for braking.

In snow, stop frequently to clean the windows, wheel arches, lights and number plates.

Keep your speed down and give yourself time!



FOG

Where predictable in advance of a work-related trip (e.g. forecast) avoid driving in fog unless your journey is absolutely necessary. If you must drive:

- Follow weather forecasts and general advice to drivers in the local and national media
- Allow plenty of extra time for your journey
- Check your car before you set off. Make sure everything is in good working order, especially the lights.
- Reduce your speed and keep it down
- Switch on headlights and fog lamps if visibility is reduced
- If you can see the vehicles to your rear, the drivers behind can see you - switch off your rear fog lamps to avoid dazzling them
- Use the demister and windscreen wipers
- Do not 'hang on' to the rear lights of the car in front as you will be too close to be able to brake safely
- Switch off distracting noises and open the window slightly so that you can listen for other traffic, especially at crossroads and junctions
- Beware of speeding up immediately if visibility improves slightly. In patchy fog you could find yourself 'driving blind' again only moments later
- If you break down, inform the police and get the vehicle off the road as soon as possible. Never park on the road in fog and never leave it without warning lights of some kind if it is on the wrong side of the road.

LOW SUNSHINE

In winter and spring the angle of the sun in the sky will frequently be too low for your visor to help. If blinded by glare reduce your speed. You can reduce the effect of glare by keeping both the inside and outside of your windscreen clean and grease free.

If you wear sunglasses (with prescription lenses if necessary) take them off whenever the sun goes in.

HOT WEATHER

STAY COOL!

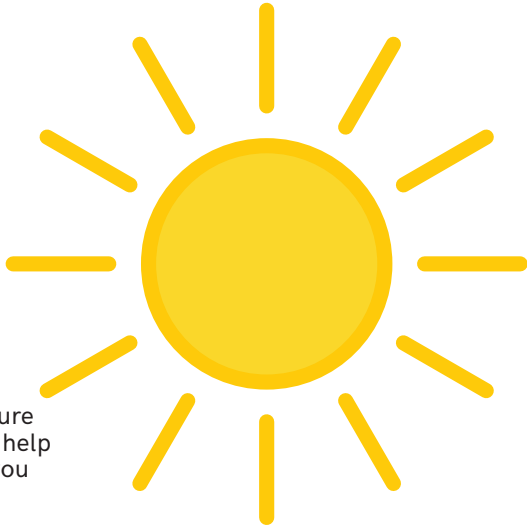
Wear cool, loose, comfortable clothing and keep your vehicle well ventilated. Take regular breaks to stretch your legs, take refreshment and get some fresh air.

Use your visor as the first measure to combat dazzle. Dark glasses help but should be taken off when you can manage without them.

If the sun shines in your mirrors, adjust them to give you the best visibility with minimum glare.

Remember that other drivers will have similar problems and may not be able to see you.

Keep your distance and lower your speed.



ADVERSE WEATHER POLICY

The University do not want to drivers to take risks and drive during periods of excessive bad weather, however, the business needs of the University to need to be considered. Please ensure you are familiar with the University adverse conditions policy (www.aber.ac.uk/en/hr/policy-and-procedure/adverse-conditions/) and this handbook.

Driving at night

Darkness reduces your ability to judge and estimate speed and distance and to assess accurately the position of oncoming traffic. Also, your body naturally slows down at night - especially if you are driving when you would normally be asleep.

Remember that your eyes need time to adjust to darkness, especially when coming out of a brightly lit area, such as motorway service stations, or roads that have street lights.

Keep a particular look out for pedestrians and cyclists who will be harder to see.

Don't wear tinted glasses when driving at night.

VEHICLE LIGHTS

Put your lights on before lighting-up time (dusk) and don't switch them off (at dawn) until you are sure it is safe to do so. Use them with dipped beam to avoid dazzling other road users.

Use dipped headlights in built up areas and watch out for pedestrians or cyclists who may be difficult to see. Approach pedestrian crossings more slowly, so you can stop safely if necessary.

Keep your headlights clean and check them before each night journey. Keep your distance from the vehicle in front. The beam from your headlights should fall short of the rear of the vehicle in front. Any closer and you may dazzle the driver - and you will probably be too close.

Daytime running lights have been fitted to vehicles for several years, they tend to be quite bright now that LED lights are becoming more commonplace. However, for most vehicles the running lights are only on the front. You must therefore be prepared to switch the lights on to dipped in poor visibility, this ensures your tail lights are on.





NOISE

Be considerate.

Only use your horn to avoid an accident, not to rebuke another person or to announce your arrival or departure from an area. The law says that you must not use your horn between 11:30pm and 7:00am in a built up area.

Try to keep noise to a minimum at night. Avoid revving your engine and loud music.

Open and close doors quietly and take care when setting and disarming vehicle alarms.

OVERTAKING AT NIGHT

Be especially careful when overtaking at night. Be sure you can see the road ahead is clear enough for you to complete the manoeuvre safely - remembering that you can see much less and it's more difficult to judge speed and distance. Don't be caught out - if in doubt, hold back.

Don't use full beam in the face of oncoming drivers. Dip your headlights. If you are being overtaken by another vehicle, dip your headlights as soon as the vehicle passes you.

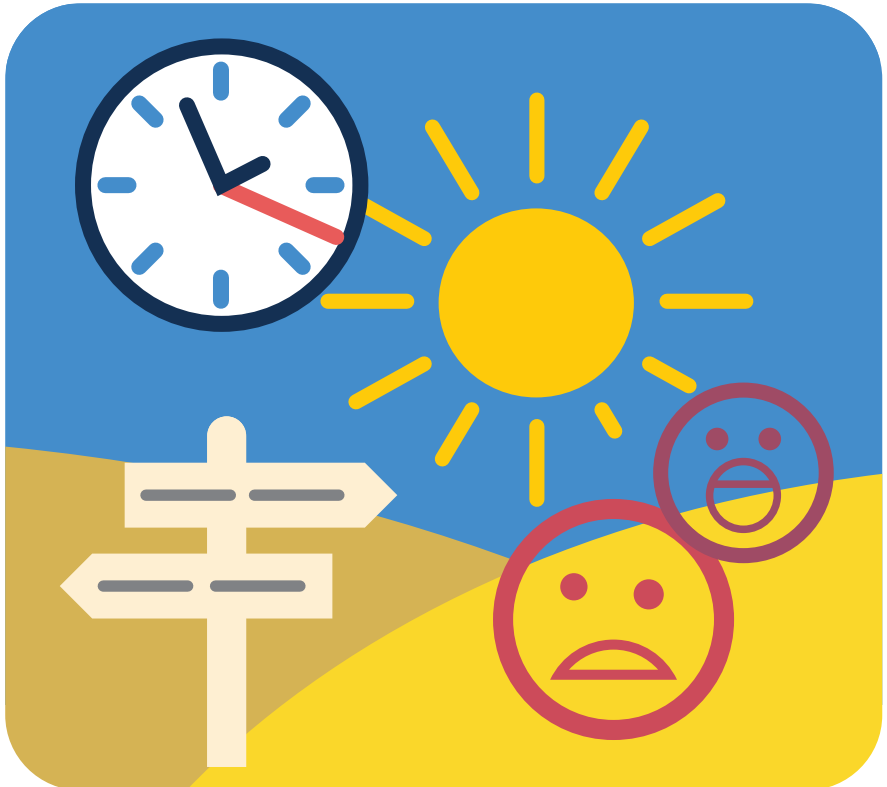


Distractions

As you drive along you are covering more ground than you think and while this may sound obvious, the faster you go the further you are travelling and the longer it takes to stop. It is therefore vital that you concentrate on the driving task, this always needs to be your primary task, however, things can distract the driver and turn their attention away from the driving task, with potentially dangerous consequences, and such distractions could be:

- Reading/following route direction signs
- Road works
- Conversations with passengers, especially arguments
- Being lost or late
- Admiring views
- Looking at vehicles involved in an incident while you pass, 'rubber necking'

You should aim to develop personal strategies so as not to become distracted while driving.



Refuelling & Fuel Cards

Most University provided vehicles will have a fuel card designated for the vehicle. Make sure the card is in your possession before commencing a journey and return the vehicle with a full tank of fuel (Pool cars/hire cars). Fuel cards are to be used only for University vehicles or authorised University tasks.

Pay special attention to the type of fuel required for the vehicle you are driving. Putting the wrong fuel in is not only costly and inconvenient, serious damage can be caused to the engine.

The current fuel cards can be used at:

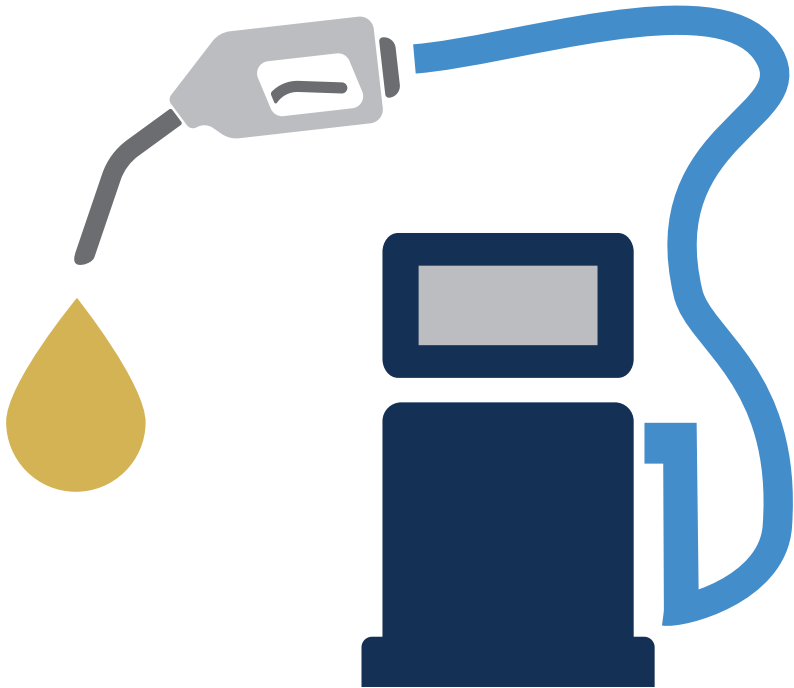
- Morrisons
- Texaco
- Tesco
- UK Fuel



Contact the Travel & Fleet department for details of a mobile phone app that indicates the filling stations that can be used with the University Fuel Card.

Car-washing facilities may be available on fuel cards in situations where a robust case to enable this facility is made to the Travel and Fleet team. Typically car washing is reclaimable via a P1 form.





WRONG FUEL PUT IN

If you realise you have put the wrong fuel in:

- DO NOT start the engine
- Call for breakdown assistance immediately (Information should be present within all University vehicles)
- Speak to a member of the garage forecourt for advice on cordoning off the area while you wait for assistance

IF YOU SUSPECT YOU HAVE PUT IN THE WRONG FUEL AND YOU ARE DRIVING:

- Stop as soon as it is safe and switch the engine off
- Call for assistance immediately - follow the procedures for breakdowns

CLAIMING BACK FUEL

If you are permitted to use your own vehicle for business use, you can claim back the mileage via the University's mileage claim procedure provided you are on the authorised driver register.

Vehicle Breakdown

- Always check that the vehicle contains details of the University breakdown cover prior to travelling. If not present, please contact your line manager or the Travel and Fleet team (During working hours) or Site Security (Outside working hours)
- In the event of a vehicle breakdown on the road, appropriate hazard warning lights should be illuminated
- Whenever possible drivers and all passengers should leave the vehicle and wait in a safe location away from moving traffic
- Special consideration should be given in the event of breakdown on a motorway or high-speed dual carriageway



SHOULD YOUR VEHICLE BREAK DOWN:

- Think of your and other road user's safety
- Ensure everyone wears a high visibility jacket (if available) and appropriate clothing
- Get your vehicle off the road if possible
- Warn other traffic by switching on your hazard warning lights
- If available and safe to do so place a warning triangle at least 45 metres (150 feet) behind your vehicle on the same side of the road
- DO NOT use warning triangles on a motorway or high-speed dual carriageway
- Leave the vehicle sidelights on, especially in poor visibility or if it is dark
- Summon assistance ensuring you give the exact location in detail

DO NOT LET ANYONE STAND:

- Between your vehicle and approaching traffic
- Where they may prevent other road users seeing your lights
- Where your vehicle may be pushed if crashed into

If your vehicle develops a problem on a motorway, if possible, leave at the next exit or service station. If you cannot do this then follow the guide above for any breakdown with the following additional points:

- Pull onto the hard shoulder or Emergency Areas on Smart motorways (those without hard shoulders)
- Stop as far to the left as possible
- Turn your steering wheel to the left to point the wheels towards the side of the road. This prevents your vehicle from being shunted into the road if struck by a passing vehicle.
- Try to stop near an emergency telephone if using the hard shoulder
- Have EVERYONE leave the vehicle by the left-hand doors, with the driver distributing high visibility jackets to all passengers if available.
- Ensure everyone stays away from the carriageway and hard shoulder; the preferable place to stand is well away from the carriageway and moving vehicles, and slightly behind the line of the back of your vehicle
- Do not attempt even simple repairs such as a wheel change
- Once in a safe place use a mobile or emergency phone on the carriageway to report the breakdown - making sure you can describe your location - look out for the driver location signs to help
- Give full details to the Police/Highways Agency, and tell them if you are a vulnerable motorist, such as a woman travelling alone or with young children
- Return and wait in a safe place near your vehicle

If you do feel at risk from another person, get back into your vehicle through the left-hand door and lock all doors; sit in the left-hand seat front seat and wear the seat belt; leave your vehicle again as soon as you feel the risk has passed.

Accident/Incident Reporting Procedure

All drivers need to familiarise themselves with the University's Health and Safety web pages as they relate to incident reporting and the guidance offered by the Travel and Fleet web pages.

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

A summary of the main points to remember is below, but always follow the procedures set down by your organisation.

ACCIDENTS

- 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
- Give your vehicle registration number, your name and address, and that of the vehicle owner (if different) to anyone with reasonable grounds for asking for those details. If you don't exchange details at the scene, you must report the accident at a police station or to a police constable as soon as you can, and in any case within 24 hours
- Use hazard warning lights and switch off your engine
- Do not move someone who is injured 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
- Give first aid if required and if you are competent to do so
- 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 and where any doubt exists, do not continue your onward journey without seeking the advice of the relevant breakdown service first.
- 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.
- Never admit fault. This could be construed as an admission of liability in the event of a subsequent insurance claim.

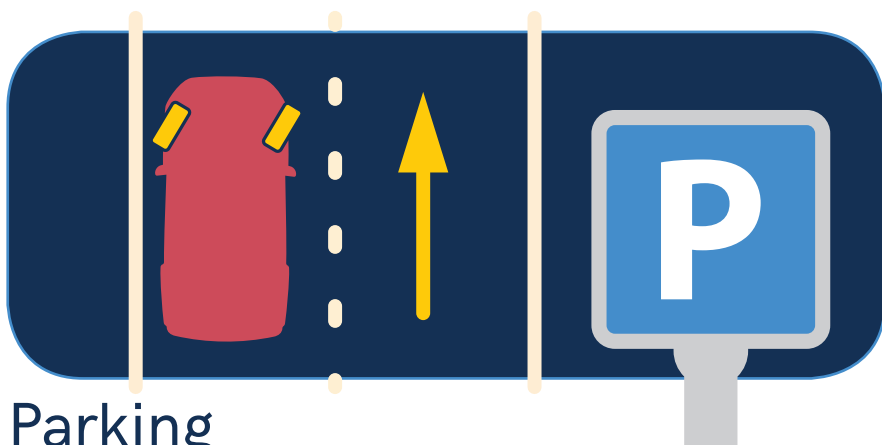


Personal Safety and Violence

All drivers should remain vigilant to personal attack and theft. Ensure that tools and valuable equipment are stored out of sight in the vehicle and that the vehicle is always locked when unattended. Any property visible from outside the vehicle can become a target for thieves or may trigger a 'car-jacking'. This advice applies whether the vehicle is being driven or is parked.

Anything not secured inside the passenger compartment of the vehicle can become a lethal missile during a crash event, so make sure all loads are secure, preferably not carrying anything other than passengers in any of the vehicle seats.

If any passenger's behaviour becomes disruptive or causes distraction to the driver then the vehicle must be stopped, in a safe location, until the situation is resolved.



Parking

When parking, you must ensure that the vehicle is parked legally in an appropriate and safe place. Vehicles must not be allowed to cause any obstruction of the highway (this includes any footpath unless signs indicate to the contrary). Consideration must be given to other road users and pedestrians. The use of hazard lights should be considered where appropriate but never as an excuse for parking somewhere inappropriate.

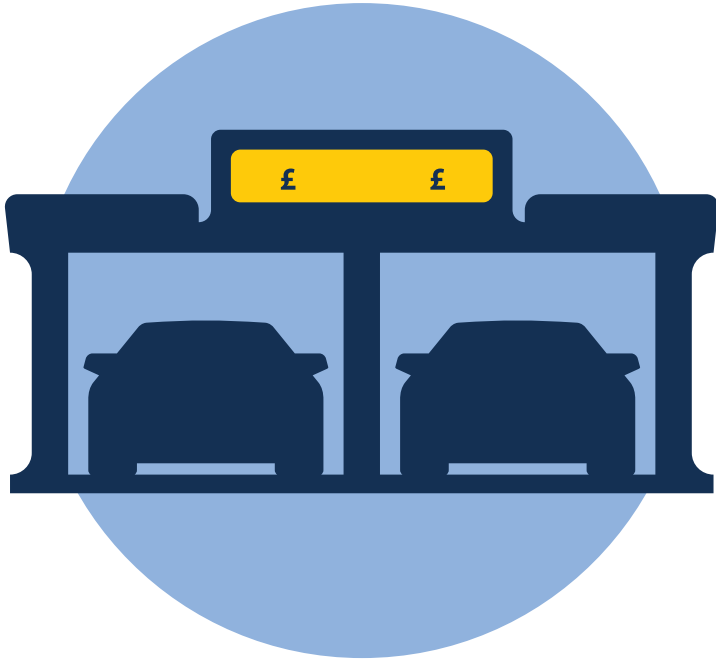
When parking on the left and facing uphill, turn your wheels to the right, when parking downhill turn your wheels to the left.

Vehicles must always be locked when unattended, even for short periods, for example, when making deliveries or at filling stations.

When parking the vehicle for any length of time, especially during darkness, try to use a well-lit area with passing traffic and pedestrians, rather than a secluded location.

Tolls and Parking Charges

Reimbursement for any tolls or parking charges can be made in line with the University expenses policy. This does NOT include any fines for parking illegally. Please note: Some toll charges are collected via Automated Number Plate Recognition, it is the driver's responsibility to either pre-pay the charges before the journey or pay the toll within the required time limit after the journey. This can be done through prior arrangement with their line manager via a University cost centre or paid by the driver and claimed back via the University's expenses policy.



Dangerous Goods

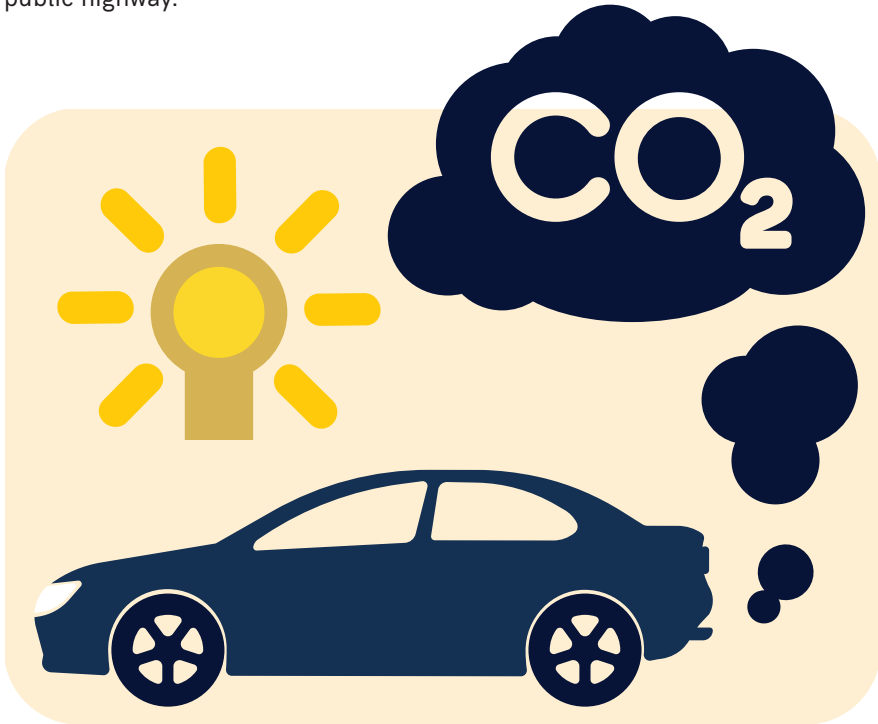
The carriage of dangerous goods as classified by the UNECE Transport of Dangerous Goods Regulations within University vehicles is **ONLY** allowed with prior agreement from the University Health and Safety department.



Slow moving vehicles

Driving a vehicle with restricted low speed comes with a greater need to be aware of how other road users may react. Frustration might cause them to overtake in unsafe locations so whenever possible, pull over and let following drivers pass, consistent with rule 169 of the Highway Code.

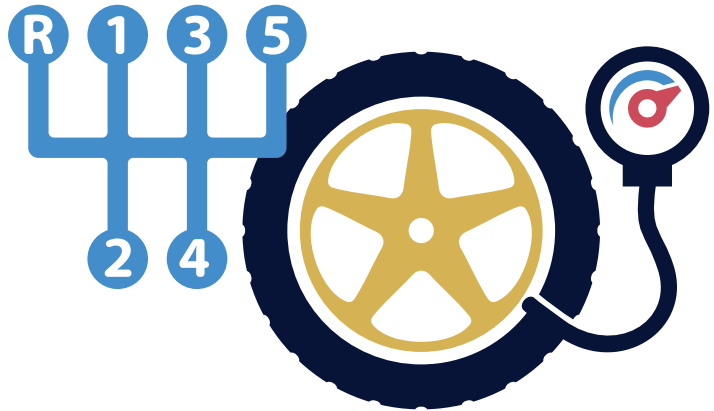
If you have a flashing amber beacon fitted to your vehicle, consider using it whenever you are causing a stationary obstruction or travelling slowly on the public highway.



Eco-safe driving tips

ENGINE - DON'T IDLE UNNECESSARILY

Many newer cars automatically turn off when stationary in neutral. If yours doesn't, turn off your engine when you've stopped for a minute or so to save fuel and reduce emissions.



GEARS

Driving at lower revs reduces fuel consumption so change up a gear at around 2,000 RPM.

DRIVE SMOOTHLY

Assess the road ahead as much as possible to avoid unnecessary braking and acceleration, which increases the amount of fuel you use. Looking further ahead will enable you to anticipate better.

SPEED

Fuel costs will increase the faster you drive, so keep speeds reasonable. Develop an ease and squeeze acceleration sense, avoid harsh acceleration.

WINDOWS VS AIR CONDITIONING

If you are travelling at low speed opening the windows is more efficient. If travelling at 60 miles per hour or above, closing the windows and using the air con will be more fuel efficient.

TYRES

Under-inflated tyres increase your fuel consumption and can be dangerous, so check them once a month and before long journeys.

ROOF RACKS/BOXES

Having these attached to your vehicle when they're not being used will increase drag and increase your fuel costs.

LOAD

Carrying unnecessary loads in your vehicle will increase fuel consumption. Remove excess items from your vehicle before travelling if they are not required.

SLOW TO FLOW

Don't be tempted to accelerate up to hazards, easing off the gas and approaching slowly saves fuel, is more comfortable, far safer and allows time to assess the situation to plan appropriately.

Long journeys requiring overnight stops

If your trip necessitates travelling long distances and/or overnight stops, you need to plan well ahead and take responsibility for ensuring that you are not likely to commit an offence or put yourself or others at risk due to driving whilst tired.



Driving abroad & Overseas Travel

If your trip necessitates the need to travel abroad, you must plan this well in advance and seek the guidance from the Travel and Fleet department before you travel, especially in relation to minibuses.

Working alone

Many of the trips or tasks you undertake on behalf of the University might require you to work alone. Please ensure you are familiar with the University Lone Working policy and consult your Line Manager if you have any concerns. Your safety when working alone can be improved by following these tips:

- Make sure that a colleague or family member knows where you are
- Make sure you have a fully charged mobile phone with you
- Know who to contact in an emergency
- When planning trips to isolated areas, let someone know your route, intended time of arrival and the estimated time of your return



Useful contacts

Travel and Fleet:
www.aber.ac.uk/en/finance/information-for-staff/travel-fleet/

Health, Safety and Environment:
www.aber.ac.uk/en/hse/

Hints and Tips

Did you know?

FATIGUE

This is often referred to as the 'silent killer' and can creep up quickly and unnoticed. The most common reasons for fatigue are lack of sleep or driving for long periods of time, without breaks and where there is little activity to keep the driver's attention at a high level, especially on motorways. Look out for the signs of fatigue...

- Continual yawning
- Tired and heavy eyelids
- Long blinks - eventually your eyes will stay closed!
- Fixed stare
- Head nodding

If you detect any of the above, your body's natural need to sleep is kicking in. Stop as soon as it is safe and take a break. If it's not safe to stop, get plenty of fresh air into the car, turn the heater off or put the aircon on - say out loud what you see as you drive, this will help keep you alert until you can take a break.

The most dangerous time to drive where fatigue can set in is between 2am and 6am and again, 2pm and 4pm so try to avoid taking long trips during these times or if unavoidable, take more/longer breaks and share the driving if possible.

EYESIGHT

Driving with uncorrected vision is an offence and can carry a fine of up to £1,000, three penalty points and possible disqualification.

You should aim to visit your optician every two-years as eyesight deteriorates gradually and often, we do not notice it until someone says, "Can't you read what's on that sign, I can"

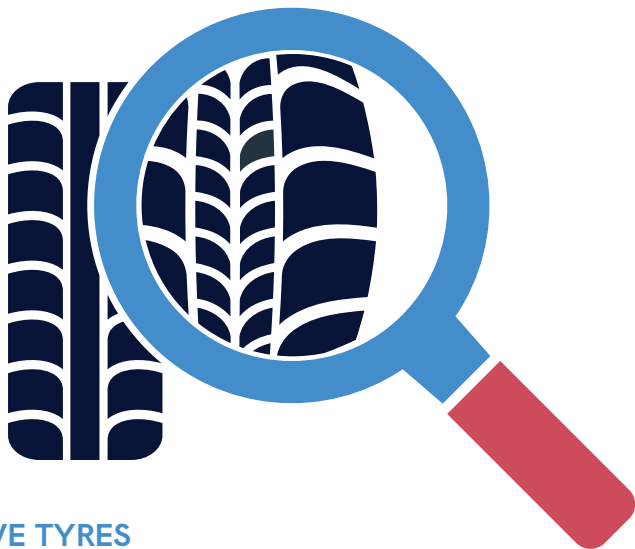
ALCOHOL

A large glass of wine (250ml) is half a pint, one third of a bottle, over 3 units of alcohol - three hours for the body to process! The easiest way to make sure you remain safe behind the wheel is to simply not drink any alcohol at all if you intend to drive.



DRUGS

The Police now have the capability of conducting a roadside drugs test. If found positive, you will be arrested.



DEFECTIVE TYRES

The penalty for having a defective tyre is 3 points being endorsed upon your licence together with a fine of up to £2,500 - if you have four defective tyres, 12 points will result in an automatic 6-month ban!

MOBILE PHONES

The penalty for using a phone or other hand held communication device whilst driving is a £200 fine and six penalty points. You can get 3 penalty points if you don't have a full view of the road and traffic ahead or are in proper control of the vehicle.. You can also be taken to court.

SMOKING

It is illegal to smoke in a car (or other vehicle) with anyone under 18. The law changed on 1 October 2015, to protect children and young people from the dangers of second-hand smoke. Both the driver and the smoker could be fined £50. The law applies to every driver in England and Wales, including those aged 17 and those with a provisional driving licence.

ADVERSE WEATHER

Stopping distances can be 10 times greater in icy weather compared to dry roads.

HEADLIGHTS

Auto on/off headlights use the prevailing light conditions to determine when to switch them on? This means that during poor daytime visibility, rain, fog, snow etc., it may be dull enough to need them but too light for the auto-on to work.

NIGHT DRIVING

The body has two periods where it has a natural desire to sleep, these are between 2am & 6am and again between 2pm & 4pm

STOPPING DISTANCES

If you want to know how many metres you are covering at a given speed in just one-second, simply halve your speedometer reading. For example, if you are travelling at 50mph, you are covering 25 metres per second, for the purpose of this exercise, assume a metre is the same as a yard.

BREAKDOWNS

It's always better to summon assistance using the Motorway emergency phones because the operator will see on a control panel where you are phoning from. If you do use your mobile you will need to describe where you are, ideally giving them the details from the Motorway side marker posts. The letters and numbers will identify which side of the carriageway you are and your location.

ECO TIPS

On a Motorway, driving at 80mph, as well as being illegal, consumes 25% more fuel than at 70mph.



Appendix 1

Extra considerations for drivers of vans

It is important that drivers of vans are aware of whether their vehicle is classified as a van or a car-derived van. For information on car-derived vans, please see section below.

Some small vans may look like car-derived vans when in actual fact they are not. This is important because vans have lower speed limits when on National Speed limit roads.

A van is a goods vehicle of not more than 7.5 tonnes maximum laden weight. Check with the Travel & Fleet department if you are not sure on the classification of your vehicle.

Driving modern vans can feel and handle like a large car, however, there are some special considerations that van drivers, especially people new to driving vans should be aware of:

VISIBILITY - is restricted due to not being able to see through the rear windows and side windows making reversing particularly difficult. If you need to turn your van around after doing a job, it's far safer to turn it around immediately you arrive, a lot can change while you are away.

BLIND SPOTS - all vehicles have blind spots, but vans have more than cars. Because of this you need to make more frequent use of your side mirrors and always be prepared to do a shoulder check/s prior to making any manoeuvre, especially a lane change. Signal in good time and look out for and listen for warning signs from other road users whom you might not have seen.

SPEED LIMITS & RESTRICTIONS

Some vans might have different speed restrictions placed on them due to their size, weight or if they are fitted with a speed limiting device. Check the specification of your vehicle and reference this to the speed limit rules in the Highway Code. Use this link for more information:
www.gov.uk/speed-limits

HEIGHT & WIDTH - Know the height and width of your vehicle, arrange for a sticker to be placed in the vehicle if needs be, both in metric and imperial measurements. Watch out for height restriction bars, in car parks and the like and be careful when looking to go through narrow gaps, your vehicle may be wider than you think, especially side mirrors on larger vans, they protrude out far more than your vehicle. Take account of loads carried on roof racks.

LOADING - OVERLOADING - According to the vehicle inspectorate, 93% of vans stopped were found to be overloaded. It is therefore imperative that you know the carrying capacity of your van. Understanding these can be complicated so you must seek advice from the Travel and Fleet department. Follow this link for detailed information:
www.gov.uk/vehicle-weights-explained

You should know where on your vehicle to find the plate containing weight and load carrying information and know approximately the weight of your intended loads and where the location of your nearest weigh bridge is. Remember, if you get caught driving an overloaded van, you could be personally fined.

Make sure any loads carried are distributed evenly across the compartment and are secure. Be especially mindful of loads that might shift in transit which could adversely affect the handling characteristics of the vehicle, particularly when braking or negotiating bends.

HANDLING CHARACTERISTICS

Most of the time the van will handle a bit like a car, however there are some noticeable differences that should be considered that may affect the way the vehicle handles:

WEIGHT - when fully laden the vehicle may be slower to accelerate and take longer to stop, especially on wet or slippery road surfaces.

CORNERING - high top vans and especially when fully laden will tend to understeer when negotiating bends, particularly if you are approaching too fast. Check your mirrors and slow-down in plenty of time, selecting a gear appropriate to the speed so you can power around the bend at a constant speed - but don't accelerate until on the straight.

SIDE & CROSS WINDS - The higher and larger the van the more susceptible it is to sudden movement when faced with side winds or when passing or being passed by larger vehicles.

SIDE DOOR V REAR DOORS - Consideration should be given as to which door would be best when loading and unloading. When off-road, it doesn't really matter, however, if you are parked on the public highway, using the side doors is safer as you are unloading directly onto the pavement rather than being in a vulnerable place in the road behind your van if you use the rear doors. That said, you would need to do an on the spot risk assessment to determine the safest method based on local conditions. In all cases, be aware that loads can shift in transit so be especially careful when opening any door.

SPEED LIMITERS - Check to see whether your vehicle is fitted with a limiter and what speed it is governed to. Be especially careful when needing to gain speed, to overtake for example, your vehicle might be limited to a speed that restricts your ability to carry out the manoeuvre in the way you intended.

Car-derived vans

CAR DERIVED VANS ARE:

- designed to weigh no more than 2 tonnes when loaded fully
- based on car designs or the vehicle is built from a platform which has been designed and developed to be built as a car or a van by the same manufacturer
- As a rule, from the outside, these vehicles will look like the size of a car, but on the inside the vehicle will look like and function as a van, because:
- there will be no rear seats, rear seat belts or mountings
- there will be a payload area with floor panel in the rear of the vehicle
- there will be no side windows in the rear of the vehicle - or if present, side windows will be opaque and fixed (with no means of opening or closing)

If your van is a CDV, it will be recorded as such under 'body type' on the vehicle's registration document (V5C). If there is any other entry under 'body type' the vehicle is not registered as a car derived van and will be subject to speeds lower than the national limits

Appendix 2

Driving Techniques

Defensive driving techniques

You do not have to be an “advanced” driver, but we do require you to be a responsible driver – always safe, alert and in control, making smooth and efficient progress, and courteous to other road users.

These should be apparent in your every-day driving anyway. COAST, Concentration, Observation, Anticipation, Space and Time if applied to your everyday driving, is an excellent technique for driving defensively and in a fuel-saving way.

Key skills for every driver are concentration, effective observation and anticipation. Many drivers rely on little more than a fixed view ahead, reacting to situations rather than being pro-active and responding to developing situations ahead in good time allowing themselves plenty of space and time. You’ll need to constantly plan and scan all around you – checking the middle ground, the far distance, the sides, and the rear. Make sure you are using both door mirrors effectively and frequently, and checking blind spot areas, especially before signalling or moving to left or right. “Not seeing it” is the first stage in “not missing it”!

Check yourself when you’re driving your car. Nothing should overtake you by surprise. Smaller and vulnerable road users are at particular risk because your vision is more limited in a minibus.

Check, too, that you’re seeing all the road signs and markings. Do you understand them all? Change of speed signs are frequently missed, perhaps because they are often at roundabouts or road junctions where your attention can be distracted.

An all around awareness is essential too, especially in a vehicle with quite limited visibility. It’s not much good seeing if you’re not putting it all together so as to be aware of exactly what is happening all around you. This is critical at busy roundabouts, on motorways, in urban areas where other road users are near, etc.

You are an experienced car driver which means you should be good at anticipation – the ability to draw on your experience and, from your observation and awareness, know what is likely, or might, or could happen next. The trouble is we can get lazy in our driving and these skills demand a high level of concentration.

A hazard warning sign may require a reduction in speed, or a change in direction, so always check your mirrors in good time. If your anticipation is correct you will have the information to deal more safely with following traffic as well as the hazard itself.

Good anticipation is a hallmark of the good driver. Anticipation means you are much more likely to be in the right position, at the right speed, and in the right gear to handle hazards safely. Good anticipation is the way you will avoid any sudden change of speed or direction, the way you will have an exit from any potentially dangerous situation, the way you will instil confidence in your passengers, and the way you will always have an uneventful journey.

Control: braking, steering, speed, etc

The way you operate the controls of the vehicle is important for the safety and comfort of your passengers.

You will need to be familiar with the clutch and gears so that you always move off smoothly but do you always follow the Highway Code advice in Rule 159, especially the last part? Many collisions and near misses happen at low speed in places like car parks, either because of inadequate observation or poor control.

You can tell a lot about a driver's observation and anticipation by watching their braking. Aim to use your brakes only when necessary. Most braking can be avoided by looking further ahead and anticipating. Think about releasing the accelerator in good time and, if appropriate, changing gear. You should, though, consider the value of a light touch on the brakes if it would help to warn following traffic that you are slowing, remember, the most common type of collision is a rear-end shunt!

Good braking aims to balance the suspension as the vehicle stops, and requires three stages. First, a very gentle application to avoid an initial snatch. Then, once the brakes are working, an increasingly firm pressure, sufficient to stop a few metres short of the final stopping point. Finally, just as the vehicle is stopping (literally the last metre or two), gently relax some of the pressure on the brakes. It's this last step that vastly improves the quality of your braking, plus giving you a margin of safety should you have misjudged your braking or the grip on the road.

Steering is another key area of control and probably one of the most important. You need to demonstrate accuracy in a deliberate and unhurried manner, and understand that pulling rather than pushing is the better option when steering around a hazard. Of course, if a lot of steering is needed, you will both pull and push. Crossing your hands may be appropriate in some manoeuvring situations but is best avoided, and especially at speed. Since steering often involves steering one way followed by steering the opposite way, you really need both hands on the steering wheel for smooth and accurate steering. In a multiple hazard situation such as a busy high street you won't always know which way you'll need to steer first so, again, both hands available is best.

Try not to get too involved with gear changes or signalling at the same time as steering – they should normally have been done earlier if they were required. Remember, too, the length of the vehicle and the additional problems this creates when turning sharp left corners. Practise sufficiently to ensure you don't catch the rear wheel against the kerb, using the left mirror appropriately.

Driving smoothly is not only more comfortable but it reduces the wear to the transmission system. Remember, the vehicle rides on a suspension system and any sudden change in acceleration or braking will pitch the vehicle forwards and backwards on its suspension.

The control of speed is obviously very important for safety reasons and you must demonstrate a clear understanding of a safe and responsible speed for any situation you meet. Not only does a higher speed mean you have less time in which to react, but any crash damage will be more severe.

Know the speed limits. Pay particular attention to keeping within the 30mph limit. This is the one that gives most drivers a problem. Many drivers use the accelerator just to increase speed. It can and should be much more than that. As soon as you see any hazard ahead, including brake or indicator lights, stop accelerating! Only resume when the hazard is under control. If possible, use gentle acceleration around bends – don't approach too fast, and select the right gear well beforehand.

Most of your driving involves moving out of one hazard and towards the next, and sometimes having to deal with several hazards at the same time. A general guide, then, on approach to each hazard is

- look well ahead, anticipate events and plan for each (signal if necessary)
- get into the best position - this confirms your intention, and maximises your view without comprising your safety
- reduce speed if appropriate - by releasing the accelerator and, if necessary, braking (as gently as possible)
- select the gear you need for the hazard (preferably no more than one gear change so as to keep both hands on the steering wheel as much as possible)

Try not to do anything suddenly; the more other road users are aware of your intended action, the safer you will be.

Finally, do you use the handbrake when the vehicle comes to rest? Or do you wait, perhaps in gear, and foot on the footbrake? You could be waiting for pedestrians to cross, or at traffic lights. What if a vehicle approaching from behind runs into you? It's the most common collision. As your vehicle is pushed suddenly forwards, you will be thrown backwards - possibly with considerable force. The result is that your foot will lift off the brake allowing the vehicle to move into the pedestrians or dangerously into a road junction. Use the handbrake instead. You can always use the footbrake as well if you want, for instance if you want to warn traffic approaching behind that you're stationary.

Manoeuvring

Most motor insurance claims are for incidents when manoeuvring, so it's important that you can reverse safely and smoothly.

Get lots of practice manoeuvring in a confined space, or around buildings or vehicles in a car park.

Your level of observation is every bit as important as your accuracy, and a constant watch in all directions is expected throughout any manoeuvre. Anticipation and consideration for other road users is always characteristic of a good driver.

Try to always be moving when you turn the steering wheel - it's less damaging to the tyres and steering system.

The manoeuvres you should be familiar with are:

- i. turning at a sharp corner - understand how much the rear wheel cuts the corner
- ii. reversing within a confined space, or into a narrow width - confident to drive within 30cm (1 foot) of any obstruction
- iii. reversing around a corner - reasonably close to the kerb without scuffing it
- iv. turning the vehicle around (commonly called the three-point turn) - know how much road width you need

Junctions, including roundabouts

If we define a junction as the place where two or more roads meet, we can include roundabouts as being a particular type of junction.

Junctions are relatively dangerous sections of road, probably because they require not only the major controls of brakes, gears, steering and acceleration but all the higher driving skill levels of observation, judgement and anticipation. Even when these skills are well-developed, they are often applied in a haphazard way.

In addition, all these skills are always affected by a lack of concentration so even a skilful driver can 'lose it' when distracted.

Assuming then a high level of concentration, your first priority should be the initial observation. Are there particular hazards at this junction? Are there warning or mandatory road signs? How many roads? Who has priority? How good is the vision? Any problems with the road surface? How much traffic? What is your speed? What is following, and how close? As you continue to approach, you may acquire further information to update decisions and actions you are taking.

Do you know which route you intend to take? Do you need to change lane? Is a signal necessary? Could other drivers be misled by your timing of steering or signalling?

As an example, if you need to move to the lane on your right and another vehicle is close to overtaking you, signalling early may cause the other driver to brake, unsure if you're going to change lane in front of them. Would it be better to let them get level with you before signalling?

Early positioning is important but may be influenced by the volume of traffic, the position of parked vehicles, and any other hazards around or developing. If you are approaching a junction on your left, and it is safe to do so, consider moving towards the crown of the road. It creates additional space, and therefore time, in which to react if a vehicle emerges, and it creates a much better angle to see into the junction, and for waiting cars to see you. You don't want to be too close to the vehicle ahead, either. It can severely restrict your view, especially if it's a 'solid' vehicle like a Transit van.

Your next priority should be your approach speed, probably too high at present. Think about how you are going to slow down. One option is to use the lower gears, and this may be the way you were taught to drive. All professional instructors now teach that you should use the footbrake as the primary way to slow the vehicle, for the following reasons:

- it immediately warns following drivers
- Following vehicles can sometimes be slow to react. By using the gears you are relying on the following vehicles noticing that they are catching up with you, and this always takes longer than if they see brake lights.
- it allows you to keep your hands on the steering wheel as you approach a hazard
- it balances the vehicle better by applying a decelerating force to all the wheels

The footbrake acts on the wheels on both axles, not just the driving axle. However, use of the lower gears is still valuable when descending steep hills, and when driving on particularly slippery roads.

By now, you may have further information, e.g. approaching traffic at the junction, their distance, speed, and likely course, and there may be developments behind you or to the side.

You may have decided you will be stopping anyway, you may be planning to emerge into a gap in the traffic, or you may be approaching cautiously keeping both options open. Whichever, you should be deciding on your final approach speed and therefore the gear you will need for the junction. Ideally, it should be just one gear change, and selected whilst not turning the steering wheel so that you maintain the steering input.

With a final observation to left and right, and confirmation that it is safe to emerge, you plan to accelerate away from the hazard. Gear changes whilst not steering, of course!

Higher speed roads

You need to be comfortable driving on faster roads, up to the posted speed limit if the conditions are appropriate, the vehicle is capable and it's safe to do so. This includes, if available in your area, motorways and high speed dual carriageways, you should be able to demonstrate:

- a knowledge of basic motorway regulations - Highway Code rules 253 - 273
- safe use of the slip roads for entry and exit - Know your vehicle and its limitations in accelerating
- good lane discipline - It can be reasonable to stay in lane two if you'd need to move out again within, say, ten seconds to reduce lane switching, but dependent on your effect on following traffic
- a safe following distance - Two-second rule (Highway Code, Rule 126) Increase the distance if the road is wet
- effective observation of all traffic - Look even further ahead than normal. Use your mirrors frequently, and be aware of the blind-spot areas
- anticipation of all other traffic - Judging speed and distance, and identifying vehicles likely to change lane
- correct signalling - Understand the value of signalling in good time (several seconds before acting)
- safe overtaking if appropriate - Blind-spot check (Highway Code, Rule 163)
- a knowledge of safety issues - Preparation, vehicle breakdown and passenger safety. Effect of crosswinds, and turbulence from large vehicles

In the section giving advice if your vehicle breaks down there are some specific points about higher-speed roads, including motorways. The effects of speed are to give everyone less time to see and react, and more severe damage or injury in the event of a collision.

Overtaking

Overtaking is considered a high risk manoeuvre. Most drivers will recognise two levels of overtaking:

- passing an obstruction in the road, or some kind of slow-moving road user
- overtaking a vehicle travelling at a moderate speed, or more

In each case you will have to move closer to, and possibly onto, the opposite side of the road and this risk needs assessing. Observation is always the first stage, and the earlier you can see the problem the better you should be able to react.

If your observation is limited, say by poor weather or night driving, you will have to take extra care, e.g. proceed more slowly.

The issue with any obstruction is whether or not it poses hidden risks, e.g. the car door that may be opened unexpectedly, or the pedestrian who walks around the front of a bus to cross the road. And what about the vehicle following you? Have they seen the risk ahead? Might they overtake you thinking you're just moving rather slowly? It's often a good idea to use a signal before starting to overtake, especially in a larger vehicle like a minibus which can block views, and then to make a further mirror check before steering out.

Use your experience to decide when it is safe to pass and how much extra room you need to allow, and travel at a speed where you can stop if necessary.

Slow moving road users are often either vulnerable people or very large vehicles. If you need to follow for a while, perhaps because your view ahead is obscured, keep a good distance behind. If it's a vehicle with mirrors, position yourself so you can be seen. If it's farm traffic be aware that the indicators may not exist, may not work, may be hidden, etc. Beware of vehicles turning right!

Overtaking a vehicle travelling at speed is probably the most dangerous manoeuvre on the road, particularly on a single carriageway, and crashes that result are often fatal because the impact speeds are so high.

Clear vision and good judgement are obviously essential, but so is knowing the capability of your vehicle. Also essential, though we don't always think about it, is having the need to overtake. Why do you want to overtake the vehicle ahead? There is always a risk. What is the gain? Is the gain worth the risk?

It's different on a dual carriageway or motorway where vision is usually better and you don't have on-coming traffic. Both these factors reduce the risk considerably and mean you can take your time building speed.

All vehicles have blind spots (areas not fully covered by your mirrors). When you plan to overtake, take a moment to check your right-hand mirror, signal (if necessary) in good time, then check your mirror again and your blind spot by looking over your right shoulder. Do ALL this BEFORE you start turning the steering wheel. It reduces risk substantially.

Vulnerable road users

They are everywhere! And many of them do not realise how vulnerable they are. They may be young or inexperienced. Or they may be much older and suffering a deterioration in the key senses of sight or hearing. Who knows ... they may be just like us but for some reason inattentive or distracted for the moment.

They may not be looking around, and they usually don't have rear mirrors! In fact, this is usually the first problem - they may not be not aware of your approach.

They may be in a busy town area where there is a lot of traffic movement and obstructions to vision. They may be in rural areas, on the road, around the next bend or over the next hill.

Often they have little or no protection against a motor vehicle. And in the case of a horse rider, or a farm worker with cattle, they have limited control. All drivers have an obligation towards slower and more vulnerable road users. You must do more than see them - you must anticipate where they might be and what they might do.

Use of the horn can be appropriate on some occasions but it can also startle and cause a further problem, so it needs to be used with care.

The only safe action when vulnerable road users are ahead is to

- slow down & be patient
- wait until you have their attention
- pass with extra space, low speed, and minimum noise

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have any specific questions or need advice that is not covered in this handbook, you should consult your Line Manager or the Travel & Fleet department.

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Travel and Fleet

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