

Minibus Driver's Handbook

This handbook contains useful information regarding the operational use of a minibus and should be carried with you whenever driving.



Introduction to a Minibus Handbook

As a leading UK minibus insurer QBE has a long track record in this specialist arena and insures a wide variety of risks and trade sectors.

Over the years I have been impressed with this sector's ability to match the needs of the passenger. With the growth of the bus network and the advent of the people carrier it seemed for a while that minibuses were being squeezed out of their niche. However, the sheer practicality and cost effectiveness of a minibus cannot be denied. That's why we continue to support this vital travel sector and see it as a natural complement to our wider bus and coach insurance involvement.

Of course legislative advances have meant that in the minibus sector there is now a plethora of requirements operators must adhere to and their practical implementation do require operators to have an attention to detail. Their introduction is vital to continue to improve our minibus industry safety record. There have been too many instances in the past where retrospective legislation has been introduced to solve a problem. We need to be one step ahead in ensuring we introduce our own initiatives.

At QBE we are committed to this sector and we hope that this minibus handbook will give you an insight into some of the practical ways in running a minibus. Those customers who are proactive in putting strong risk management practices into place that protect their passengers and employees should be encouraged. As a consequence getting it right first time improves health and safety as well as making economic sense.



Matthew Crane

Managing Director - Motor

QBE Insurance (Europe) Limited

Minibus and small fleet insurance

QBE is a leading minibus and coach insurance company in the UK.

This position has been attained by having a thorough understanding of the marketplace and the wide embracing legislative practices that apply.

Our own claims service specialises in dealing with minibus related incidents.

We work closely with our partners particularly the AA who are the UK's largest breakdown organisation, repairing more breakdowns by the roadside than anyone else, plus a host of approved garages and repairers - ensuring total support from the beginning of the journey to the end.

We insure minibuses for a wide variety of uses:

- Schools, colleges and universities
- Nursing homes
- Charities and Community transport
- Private hire
- Public hire
- Youth groups
- Private individuals
- Hotel/courtesy buses
- Places of worship/religion
- Commercial use
- Part of a bigger fleet

We offer fleet insurance for all these areas and much broader commercial use.

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- Uninsured loss recovery
- Pan-European cover
- Personal accident cover for driver and passengers
- Optional public liability cover for private and public hire operators

Finance packages

Premium finance packages available on request, subject to approval.

Contact: +44 (0)845 609 0326

Visit: www.QBEurope.com/motor

QBE is one of the world's top insurers and reinsurers. We have offices in 47 countries within our four operating divisions of Australia, Asia Pacific, European Operations and the Americas, and a presence in all key insurance markets. We are specialists in every line of business that we write, and aim to be a leader in every one of our territories.

Why choose QBE?

Our size allows us to tailor packages to a client's precise needs. It also means that we can settle claims quickly and fairly, which all adds up to a great service for you and your clients. We believe in taking an independent approach, and we encourage our people to think for themselves and look for innovative solutions to business challenges. This has allowed us to develop a healthy appetite for risk, and to take on business other insurers might refuse.

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- Standard & Poor's insurer financial strength and counterparty credit rating for QBE's main insurance subsidiaries is A+ (Stable).
- Fitch Ratings insurer financial strength rating for QBE's main underwriting subsidiaries is A+ (Stable), and the agency has also affirmed a long-term credit rating at A. Their outlook for all ratings is Stable.
- A.M. Best assigned the financial strength rating of the QBE Group of companies A (Excellent).

QBE across the UK

Our minibus underwriting centre is based in Stafford and covers all business in the UK. Previously operating under the brand of MBP there is a long track record of minibus insurance specialism and experience.

Contact:

For more information, visit:

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The information in this handbook has been prepared for QBE by Minimise Your Risk and is for guidance only and represents an understanding of certain aspects of law, regulations and operational issues at the time of issue.

Minimise Your Risk is an independent motor and risk management consultancy and their contact details are:

Minimise Your Risk on **+44 (0)1273 580 189**
or e-mail **qbe@minimiseyourrisk.co.uk**

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This handbook is not a legal document and is issued for guidance only. However, it is worthwhile to read and fully understand before considering whether you should drive one of your organisation's vehicles

1. Preface

This handbook has been prepared as general guidance for minibus drivers and is not intended to be a legal document. It has been prepared to give you some practical advice for on the road driving and is not a high level technical document.

It will be supplemented by quarterly newsletters from QBE.

Remember, the most dangerous activity most of us participate in on a daily basis is driving. There are several times more deaths and injuries involving road traffic crashes than normal work-related accidents.

There are other books that should form the reference resources for all minibus drivers, including The Highway Code. This contains "The rules of the road" and includes advice, guidance and some legal aspects for all drivers, including minibus drivers. There are more specialist books for PCV licence holders such as "The official DSA guide to driving buses and coaches" -ISBN 978-0-11-552900-9 priced £15.99.

It is difficult to know who the driver reading this handbook could be driving the minibus on behalf of - it could range from a volunteer for a charitable organisation to an employee of a commercial company or an "owner operator".

Further assistance and advice on health and safety, risk assessments, road risk issues, driver CPC periodic training and other practical driving issues can be obtained through Minimise Your Risk. Contact details are:- e-mail **qbe@minimiseyourrisk.co.uk** telephone +44 (0)1273 580189 or mobile +44 (0)7905 365717

2. Minibus operation in the UK – A short guide

Definition of a minibus

A minibus is generally a passenger carrying vehicle having more than 8 seats but not more than 16 seats in addition to the driver's seat. If your vehicle has over 17 seats then you will need to seek separate advice.

Hire or reward

It is important that you are aware of what is meant by hire or reward as this affects who can drive it and what it can be used for.

Hire or reward encompasses any payment in cash or kind by (or on behalf of) passengers which gives them a right to be carried.

Therefore if a payment exists for the use of the vehicle by persons being carried then hire or reward exists. Direct payment in return for travel is covered, but the courts have ruled that hire or reward exists in other situations as well e.g. where petrol money has been taken for taking children to school every day or where courtesy coaches have been provided by a hotel as part of their amenities.

If you are in any doubt, you should therefore take advice on whether hire or reward exists in your particular situation.

For assistance contact Minimise Your Risk on +44 (0)1273 580189 or e-mail qbe@minimiseyourrisk.co.uk or your local Traffic Commissioner directly.

If you operate for hire or reward you will need to either have a Public Service Vehicle (PSV) Operator's Licence (you will need to apply to your appropriate Traffic Commissioner and fulfil the legal requirements) or instead have a permit (details are outlined below).

Section 19 permit

A Section 19 (Transport Act 1985) permit allows a minibus to be operated for hire or reward by organisations concerned with education, religion, social welfare, recreation or other activities of benefit to the community on a non-profit making basis. Applications are made to the Traffic Commissioner. A driver of a Section 19 permit minibus can either be paid or an unpaid volunteer. The lower limit of 8 seats was changed in April 2009 to allow small Multi Purpose Vehicles (MPV's) and cars to be used so long as separate fares are charged. If a small vehicle is hired out as a whole for single payment it is likely to fall within the private hire vehicle (PHV) licensing regime.

Section 22 permit

A Section 22 (Transport Act 1985 and Local Transport Act 2009) permit allows a bus of any size to be operated by bodies on a local bus service. Drivers may be paid. Application needs to be made to the Traffic Commissioner for your area.

The Section 19 and Section 22 Permit system is only applicable to the UK.

Taking a minibus abroad

Generally any journey outside the UK with a vehicle of 8 seats and above will need to adhere to the EU/AETR drivers hours and tachograph rules. Further information is also available from the Department for Transport, Zone 2/11 Great Minster House, 76 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DR. For general enquiries on taking a minibus abroad you should telephone +44 (0)20 7944 2773.

AETR – Journeys to, or through, some European countries outside the EC are subject to an international agreement on drivers' hours known as AETR.

Further information about permit operations:-

The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency publishes a guide to Passenger Transport provided by voluntary groups under the Section 19 or 22 permit system (PSV 385). This is obtainable from their website – <http://www.vosa.gov.uk> or Vehicle and Operator Services Agency, Berkeley House, Croydon Street, Bristol BS5 ODA
Telephone: +44 (0)117 954 3200

Drivers' hours rules for minibuses

Vehicles with 9 to 16 passenger seats are now subject to EU rules when used commercially except when used on regular services which are 50kms or below.

Where EU drivers hours rules apply then all vehicles must be fitted with a tachograph, which for vehicles registered after 1 May 2006 will be a digital tachograph.

A vehicle which is being used on a Section 19 permit is still a public service vehicle and is subject to domestic drivers' hours rules when a person is driving in the course of his/her employment. Therefore if payment to the driver has taken place (unless it is out of pocket expenses) then domestic drivers' hours rules apply.

Domestic drivers' hours rules do not apply for the private use of a minibus or when permit vehicles are driven by volunteer (i.e. unpaid) drivers.

If a vehicle is being used as a PSV on a Regular Service (local/non local) then the relevant domestic drivers' hours rules apply (or in the case of a route exceeding 50 km, EU Hours' Rules). Further information on both the EU and Domestic Drivers' Hours Rules is at Section 7.

Driving licences for minibuses

The driving entitlement for a minibus is now referred to as a D1 licence. It will depend on when you passed your driving test as to whether you have the entitlement or not (for non hire or reward work).

If you passed your test before 1 January 1997 then you can drive a minibus (but not for hire or reward except under a permit) provided that you are over 21 and the vehicle has not more than 17 seats (including the driver). If you are driving a vehicle under a Section 19 permit then you can do so under this arrangement irrespective of whether you are being paid or not. Your licence will be a category B and D1 (not for hire or reward) on a photocard licence. For further clarification please contact the DVLA. The DVLA advise that all entitlements shown on British licences will be accepted by EU countries on temporary visits abroad.

When your licence is renewed, your minibus entitlement can only be issued if you make a special application, which will involve meeting higher medical standards.

If your minibus entitlement is renewed, at the age of 70, you will normally be granted a licence for three years that will allow you to drive a minibus not for hire or reward. If your minibus entitlement is not renewed, the entitlement will no longer appear on your licence.

If a driving licence does not have the minibus entitlement (i.e. you passed your test after 1 January 1997) then you may drive a minibus with up to 16 seats in the UK (but not the rest of the EU) if you drive on behalf of a non commercial body for social purposes but not for hire or reward unless under a permit; You are aged over 21; You have held a car (category B) licence for at least 2 years; You are providing your services on a voluntary basis (i.e. you are not being paid anything other than out of pocket expenses) and the minibus maximum weight is not more than 3.5 tonnes excluding any special equipment for the carriage of disabled passengers. Minibuses up to 4.25 tonnes are permissible in certain circumstances.

If you are aged 70 and over you will need to meet the health standards for driving a vehicle (i.e. minibus) which comes with the D1 class.

With regard to permit operations if you had entitlement to drive cars prior to 1 January 1997 DVLA, advise that you will continue to be able to drive minibuses provided that your entitlement to drive minibuses (Category D1 not for hire or reward) remains in force and that you are not being paid to do this.

If you are being paid to drive a minibus for hire or reward under a Public Service Vehicle Operator's Licence you can only do so if you have full Category D1 entitlement obtained through the passing of the theory and practical test for this class of vehicle irrespective of when you passed your car test.

If you passed your driving test for cars (Category B entitlement) after 1 January 1997 and you are driving for hire and reward under a Section 19 permit and you are being paid – then you can only do so if you have passed a further test to obtain Category D1.

If you wish to take a minibus (8 seats or larger) outside the UK in the EU/EEA area, irrespective of the purpose of the trip you will need to have the full Category D1 entitlement (obtained through examination) unless all four of the criteria below are met:

- (a) It is not for hire and reward;
- (b) You passed your driving test before 1 January 1997 and have the Category D1 entitlement (not for hire and reward) on your licence
- (c) You are not being paid
- (d) The visit is a temporary one

A minibus can be driven in the UK for hire and reward at the age of 18 by the holder who has passed a Category D1 test provided that it is operated under a Public Service Vehicle Operator's Licence or permit. Also it is permissible to drive a minibus at age 18 whilst training for a Cat D1 entitlement with a provisional licence or the vehicle is not engaged in the carriage of passengers.

If you are driving a minibus in the rest of the EU the minimum age is 21.

For further information on driving licence eligibility you should contact:

Driver Enquiry Unit, Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), Longview Road Swansea SA6 7JL Tel: +44 (0)870 240 0009

The DVLA website also contains further information on driving licence eligibility at <http://www.dvla.gov.uk/>

Seatbelts

Every minibus first used on or after 1 October 2001 must be provided with seat belt anchorages to every forward and rearward facing seat. Side-facing seats do not need anchorages or belts.

A bus weighing less than 3.5 tonnes GVW must have 3 point belts at all forward – facing position (2 point belts may be acceptable if there are no obstructions in the “reference zone” or they meet the energy absorbent criteria) and at least 2 point belts at rearward facing positions.

Generally an inertia reel belt, a retractable lap belt, a disabled person’s belt or a child restraint belt is permitted. A retractable lap belt is not permitted for the forward facing seats of buses under 3.5 tonnes GVW (because it is only a two point belt).

The regulations do not require operators to fit additional anchorages or belts to existing vehicles (i.e. retrofit).

However if anchorages are fitted after 1 October 2001 to an existing vehicle on a voluntary basis the anchorages will need to comply with the technical and installation (but not testing) requirements of existing EU Directives.

On minibuses first used on or after 1 October 2001, a child can occupy a rearward facing seat fitted with a 2 (or 3) point belt. Children are not permitted to sit in rearward facing seats of pre October 2001 minibuses.

The Community Transport Association website is at www.communitytransport.com/ and contains details of a range of advice leaflets on minibuses.

The address of the Community Transport Association is:-
Highbank, Halton Street, Hyde, Cheshire
SK14 2NY Tel: +44 (0)870 774 3586

With regard to the safety of minibuses the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents produce a range of publications. The (ROSPA) website is <http://www.rospa.com/CMS/index.asp> and their publications including “The Safety of School Transport” and a “Code of Practice” are available as PDF downloads. (ROSPA) also offer advice and run training courses for drivers.

The (ROSPA) Address is:
353 Bristol Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham
B5 7ST Tel: +44 (0)121 248 2000

All the Traffic Commissioners are now centralised at the following office:
Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane,
Leeds LS9 6NF. – Tel +44 (0)113 249 8142

For matters concerning the theory and practical tests for the Category D1 entitlement contact the Driving Standards Agency (DSA), The Axis Building, 112 Upper Parliament Street, Nottingham NG1 6LP
Tel +44 (0)115 936 6666. The DSA website is www.dsa.gov.uk

Please note that many transport related issues are now covered on the Government website www.businesslink.gov.uk

3. Code of conduct

Health and safety at work

Under section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, all employees have personal responsibilities, besides those of your organisation.

These include: -

- Exercising “reasonable care” to look after your own health and safety.
- Ensuring that what you do, or fail to do, doesn’t harm others.
- Using work items, including personal protective equipment (PPE), correctly.
- Not interfering with or misusing “equipment”.
- Reporting faults and defects.

Driver’s hours regulations

It is your responsibility to know the driver’s hours regulations and to comply with them when you are driving. Your organisation is responsible for scheduling your journey properly, but cannot foresee every circumstance that may arise on a journey. You must ensure that daily rest periods, as well as driving breaks are taken and that daily driving hours (as well as all other driving requirements) are not exceeded. If you are approaching or have experienced a problem that will or may lead to any breach, you must immediately report it to your employer. Further details on driver hours are detailed in Section 7.

Daily/weekly rest (readiness for duty)

Whenever you commence to drive it is your responsibility to be rested, within the way in which a Court of Law would interpret that term. Driving a minibus over long periods or distances, sometimes in difficult conditions during unsocial hours, requires professionalism and alertness of a high degree. It is vital therefore that rest periods immediately prior to work are used for that purpose only.

You have a responsibility to be fit to drive and properly rested.

Tachographs

The proper use of tachograph equipment is essential for anyone undertaking EU work. Drivers (except when told in writing not to), must use a tachograph on every occasion you drive. You must know the rules and it is your responsibility to comply with them.

Further details about the use of tachographs are included in Section 7

Daily walk-round checks

It is a legal requirement that you must carry out a first use daily walk-round safety check before a vehicle is used. Use a checklist, which includes all safety critical equipment.

If applicable, the functioning of items that may not be safety related, but which are important to your passengers, should also be checked. These include audio and video equipment, PA system, air conditioning and toilets.

Daily walk round checks are vital and a legal requirement – enough time must be devoted to carrying them out thoroughly and completing your organisation’s documentation relating to these checks.

Remember, if a defect is discovered during inspection by a Police Officer or Vehicle Examiner and it was something the driver should have identified on the vehicle first use check, you are liable to a fixed penalty and possible prosecution (besides the operator). See section 9 for a sample minibus walk round checklist.

Drivers defect reports

- You must report promptly any defects or symptoms of defects.
- Any defects found either during the daily check, whilst the vehicle is in use, or when it returns to base, must be reported in writing using the vehicle defect reporting system.
- Reports should include registration or fleet number, date, details of the defects or symptoms and the driver’s name.

Driving effectively

- Do not over-rev the engine.
- Avoid excessive idling – switch the engine off if standing for more than a couple of minutes.
- Avoid harsh braking.
- Avoid harsh acceleration.
- Do not overspeed.
- Think ahead and anticipate the road.
- You can reduce costs by driving carefully to avoid accidents and reduce wear and tear.
- Watch out for overhead obstructions, soft verges, height, length and width restrictions.
- When driving in a multi-vehicle movement, avoid unnecessary overtaking, as it may give the impression to customers that the minibuses are racing.

Safe parking

- You are responsible for parking your vehicle legally and you will be liable for any penalties or fines received whilst in charge of a vehicle.
- When away from base, always find a safe and secure place to park the minibus overnight and lock all doors and lockers.
- Ensure the vehicle master switch is turned off.

Breakdowns

If you breakdown follow the breakdown procedure and inform the appropriate people

- Your primary concern is the comfort and safety of your clients and the quick and efficient continuation of their journey.
- Immediately follow your breakdown procedure and communicate with your contact point(s), giving your exact location, passenger numbers and a contact number together with a concise report as to the possible cause of failure. Keep your passengers informed about what is being done to resolve the problem.

Emergency exits and evacuation

- If you need to evacuate the vehicle, make sure your passengers follow your instructions.
- Emergency exits must always be kept unlocked and kept clear whilst in service.
- If any emergency exit involves a “drop” other than kerb height, make sure that your passengers are warned.
- If you need to evacuate the vehicle, make sure that you do not direct passengers into traffic lanes.

First aid and fire extinguisher equipment

- Make sure that you know where safety equipment is located.

Cleanliness of the vehicle is very important

- Keep your vehicle clean and tidy throughout the day.
- Try to encourage tidiness and cleanliness.
- Check out your vehicle before you pick up passengers.
- A tidy vehicle is a safe vehicle.
- You may be required to clean the interior and exterior of the vehicle used on return to base.

Calling the Emergency Services

Give the emergency services the relevant information: -

- Vehicle location – on motorways look out for identification posts.
- Number and status of passengers involved.
- Details of any injuries.
- Special needs, e.g. disabled or blind persons, or children.
- What actions you have already taken.
- Listen to the advice given by emergency or breakdown services.

Mobile telephones

It is a legal requirement that mobile telephones must not be used whilst the vehicle is in motion. Please ensure that you find a safe place to stop before making or answering a call. Do not use hands-free or blue-tooth – they are just as dangerous for distraction as a hand held phone and you can be prosecuted for using any sort of communication equipment whilst the vehicle is in motion or has the engine running.

Highway code

As a professional driver you should be familiar with the Highway Code and abide by it at all times.

Speed limits for minibuses

Minibus drivers must observe the following national speed limits which are:

Motorway	70 mph
Dual carriageway	60 mph
Single carriageway	50 mph
Built-up areas	20, 30 or 40mph

Minibus Towing Trailers:

Motorway	60 mph
Dual carriageway	50 mph
Single carriageway	50 mph

The driver must report any malfunction of speed limiting equipment, where fitted, to the workshop with immediate effect.

Although it may be legal to use the outside lane of a 3 or 4 lane dual carriageway, many members of the public think that it is not and seeing a minibus using the outside lane might create a negative image.

Conveying passengers who use wheelchairs

- (a) It is important that only staff who are competent to do so assist wheelchair passengers, whilst boarding, riding in or alighting from a vehicle. Drivers should ensure that all wheelchair movement is carried out by themselves or the escort. This is the only way to be sure of passenger safety.
- (b) Drivers must ensure that there is sufficient space to locate wheelchairs. For full size wheelchairs a minimum space of 1200mm long by 700mm wide is required.
- (c) Wheelchairs must not be located in such a way as to block any vehicle exit or gangway. On no account must they be placed in the central aisle.
- (d) Exits must not be blocked by wheelchairs as this would contravene the safety regulations.
- (e) All wheelchairs must have pneumatic tyres fully inflated, their brakes applied and be securely anchored to floor tracking preferably by means of 4-point webbing restraints, or by double-button Quicklock clamps. In addition, a second means of securing the wheelchair to the vehicle must be used, either with straps affixed to the side of the vehicle, or by using two or three point harnesses on the floor tracking. Electric wheelchairs must only be anchored by 4-point webbing restraints.
- (f) Passengers must be secured in wheelchairs, preferably by means of a lap-diagonal belt attached to the floor tracking. A lap belt may be used as a minimum, and attached to the floor tracking. As appropriate to the passenger, an inertia reel full harness or static harness may be used.
- (g) If in doubt about how to secure a wheelchair passenger, consult the appropriate manager or supervisor. DO NOT TAKE RISKS - it is the driver's responsibility to ensure the safety and security of passengers.
- (h) Similarly, if a passenger in a wheelchair refuses to wear a safety belt or appropriate restraint and/or have the wheelchair secured appropriately to the vehicle they should not be transported. Inform the manager or supervisor. Wheelchair passengers must not be transported without appropriate restraint of both wheelchair and occupant.

The safe use of tail lifts

- (a) All persons required to operate tail lifts must be trained in manual handling and in the safe operation of tail lifts.
- (b) The engine must be switched off when the hoist is being operated.
- (c) Wheelchairs placed on the hoist must have their brakes applied and must be facing into the vehicle.
- (d) Care should be taken to ensure that clients do not have their feet at the edge of the platform where it meets with the floor of the vehicle.
- (e) When the platform is returned to the "Parked" position make absolutely sure that it is secure.
- (f) Electric wheelchairs must have engaged neutral and should be wheeled manually on to the lift platform.
- (g) The lift platform must have the safety stop raised.
- (h) This equipment can be dangerous if not operated correctly and must only be used by staff who have been properly trained. It is a requirement that one operative stands on the lift platform behind the client whilst the other remains on the ground using the lift controls.

Driving licences

As a condition of your employment you must be in possession of, carry with you at all times and, if required, must make available for presentation to a recognised official at any time a signed current driving licence for the category of vehicle which you are to drive. This must include both parts of a photocard licence, including the paper counterpart licence details. Licences will be checked periodically and duplicate licences will be verified with DVLA for authenticity. You will be required to sign a mandate for the release of information.

Smoking policy

It is illegal to smoke in any vehicle that is a workplace, which includes all minibuses and associated vehicles such as taxi's, vans and your organisation's cars.

School minibus contracts

School contract vehicles are issued with a front and rear school minibus sign. When carrying groups that are made up of a majority of children under the age of 15, a driver is required to display these school minibus signs at the front and rear of the vehicle. They must not be displayed when not conveying children on such duties, other than when complying with local requirements in foreign countries. (see section 8 for further details)

All drivers who transport schoolchildren may have to complete a Criminal Records Bureau mandate to receive clearance to carry schoolchildren.

4. Customer care

Quality

The customer is at the centre of action and attention.

The customer will receive a reliable, consistent, safe and friendly service.

Customers who choose your organisation expect to travel enjoyably and comfortably, and should at all times have value for money.

A driver is the main link with the customer

- Customers will judge your organisation by the contacts they have with you.
- You are close to the customer – let your manager know where you think improvements can be made.
- First impressions count!
- If asked, run through any customer information data they may have (e.g. paperwork, safety cards etc.)

Some customers have special needs

- Disabled customers need to be treated as people.
- Speak direct to people with disabilities – don't carry out your communication through a third party by talking about them rather than to them.
- Elderly people need to be understood and taken seriously.
- Treat everyone the same and do not be prejudiced or favour individual passengers.
- Remember you are legally required to give assistance to disabled passengers under PCV conduct regulations, including the operation of features such as wheelchair ramps, where fitted.

Customer complaints

All complaints must be handled in a civil, helpful and polite manner. You are expected to own the problem and all reasonable effort should be used to solve it yourself, if this is not possible you should:-

- Take the passengers name and address.
- Record details of the problem.
- Ask the client to write to your office fully outlining the content of complaint.
- Never offer your own opinion or make any prejudicial comments.

School children are sometimes a problem but they are customers

- Take care in dealing with problem school children.
- Never evict a school child from a vehicle – you might place them in grave danger and never manhandle a school child, no matter how much you are provoked.
- If conduct of school children is so bad, seek assistance from the your organisation. Assess the whole situation. If there are escorts for the children, suggest to them that they sit throughout the vehicle (not all together at the front) and, if possible, near to an emergency exit.
- Always report any problems to the traffic office on return to the depot.

Recognise the dangers of alcohol and drugs

- Alcohol is banned on minibuses when travelling to and from designated sporting events (see Section 5 – operating procedures).
- Never place yourself or other customers at personal risk by taking on unruly people who might be under the influence of drink and drugs.
- If problems are severe it is best to involve the police.
- If the journey has a “no alcohol” policy in force (such as a sports event) point this out at the start of the journey. It is easier to talk to sober passengers – be polite but firm.
- Personally observe legal and your organisation’s rules about alcohol and drug consumption. Further details of your organisation’s policy should be detailed in the organisation’s drugs and alcohol policy.

A driver is part of a team

- Create a good relationship with group leaders.
- Work in harmony with escorts.
- Never let the customer see any disharmony between you, other people, escorts or your organisation’s staff.

Present a good image

Personal appearance

- Always be smart, clean and tidy.
- Take pride in your own personal appearance and hygiene.
- Always be aware of your personal hygiene and breath.

Welcome customers

- Be friendly without being over familiar.
- Be courteous at all times.
- Greet customers when you meet them and bid them farewell at the end of their journey.

Personal conduct

- Remember that you are always 'on stage' when wearing your organisation's uniform or driving one of their vehicles.
- Take pride in your own professionalism.

Promote your organisation

- You can help by knowing the range of products and services offered by your organisation.
- Repeat business plays a big part in your organisation's success.
- If customers are happy with you, they will come back.

Driver/Safety announcements

Your passengers are to be kept informed throughout the journey. When all passengers have boarded:-

- Introduce yourself.
- Introduce the minibus facilities, including heating/ventilation and operation of seats and seat belts (incl. seat belt extensions).
- Make the passengers aware of all of the emergency exits and the location of the fire extinguishers.
- Make the passengers aware of the journey plan and keep passengers well informed of items and places of interest.
- Only play music and videos which are suitable to the passengers and which will compliment their enjoyment of the journey.
- At the end of the journey thank all passengers for travelling with your organisation, adding that you hope they enjoyed their journey and look forward to seeing them again.
- Remind them to take their personal belongings with them.

5. Operating procedures

Some basic legal points

Your organisation places safety and legality at the top of its operating agenda. Here some of the most important elements of the law are summarised to provide guidance and comfort for drivers.

Lost property

All customer's property is carried entirely at the passenger's own risk, never accept liability or responsibility for any item left on the vehicle, even if it's locked.

Anyone who finds lost property on your vehicle must hand it to you, the driver, or your organisation's representative.

You have a responsibility by law to search the vehicle for lost property either before or at the end of a journey, where practicable.

A driver has a legal duty to keep lost property safe until it can be returned to the office, clearly identifying the journey and vehicle.

You have the right to open packages, bags or other containers to identify the owner.

Perishable goods may be destroyed or disposed of after 48 hours if not claimed, or earlier if it becomes objectionable.

Sporting events – ban on alcohol

It is a serious offence for alcohol to be carried on minibuses that are used to carry passengers to or from certain designated sporting events. Your organisation, the hirer of the vehicle, and the driver, are all liable to prosecution if they knowingly cause or permit intoxicating liquor to be carried anywhere on the vehicle.

It is an offence for a person to be in possession of alcohol while on the vehicle and for a person to be drunk on the vehicle.

The police have powers to stop and search minibuses and drivers must co-operate fully.

Heavy penalties with maximum fines can be imposed, and a possible prison sentence in certain circumstances can also be imposed on summary conviction.

Always check with your organisation when taking a minibus to a sporting event to see if the ban applies.

6. Accidents

If you are involved in an accident you must stop, ensure that all your passengers are unhurt and inform the office. Keep as calm as possible and give particulars to any person having reasonable grounds for requiring them. Under no circumstances should a comment be made as to blame.

Legal requirements

Below are detailed the legal aspects of accidents as required by the various Road Traffic Act(s) these are:

Damage only accidents – you must give:-

- Your name and personal home address.
- Name and address of the owner of the vehicle.
- Registration number of the vehicle.

In the case of personal injury

- Each of the items mentioned in connection with “damage only” listed above plus:-
- Particulars of insurance.

A police officer can require you to produce your driving licence and a certificate of insurance. If neither is immediately available, it is acceptable to produce them within 7 days at a nominated police station. It can be

a defence to prove that it was not reasonably practicable to produce them before the day on which any proceedings for producing them were commenced, but this should never be relied upon as an excuse not to produce within 7 days.

Reports to police

If for any reason it is impossible for information to be given at the scene of the accident, you must in person, within 24 hours of the accident, report the accident at a police station or to a police constable.

Offence and penalty

If there is an accident involving damage and/or injury, it is an offence:

- If the driver fails to stop.
- If the driver does not produce a certificate of insurance and does not report it as above.

There is a defence for a driver to show that he did not know an accident had taken place, but this must never be used as an excuse not to report any accident.

7. Drivers hours and tachographs

Most commercial minibus operations are governed by either UK domestic or EC rules on drivers' hours. Always check with your organisation to see which set of rules you might be operating under.

EU drivers' hours rules

These rules were revised commencing 11 April 2007, when Regulation EC 3820/85 was replaced by Regulation 561/2006.

Breaks and rest

A break is a period of no less than 15 minutes during which a driver may not perform any other work and is exclusively used for recuperation. The break may be on or off duty. It is permissible to take a break on a moving coach that someone else is driving (although a digital tachograph cannot be set to "rest" for the second driver.)

Rest is always off duty and is any uninterrupted period of at least one hour during which the driver may freely dispose of his or her time.

Rest can only be taken on a vehicle if it is stationary and is fitted with a bunk.

Duty time

Duty time includes time spent on duty by an employee in employment which involved driving or being available to drive, a passenger vehicle. However, duty is not limited to driving time or to time spent working on or in connection with the vehicle. It can include other time spent acting under the employer's specific instructions. (e.g. travelling to and from a vehicle pick up point in a travel vehicle).

The working day

The working day is a period not exceeding 24 hours. It starts from when a driver commences work after a daily or weekly rest. Where multiple manning takes place the working day may be extended to a maximum period of 30 hours.

The working week

The working week is the seven days commencing at 0000 hrs on Monday until 2400 hrs the following Sunday.

Daily rest

A driver must take a continuous period of 11 hours rest in each period of 24 hours.

The period of 11 hours may be reduced to 9 hours on not more than three occasions between any two weekly rest periods. There is no compensation required.

Where a driver takes daily rest periods away from base, they may be taken in a vehicle, provided that there are suitable sleeping facilities for the driver and the vehicle is stationary.

Split daily rest

As an alternative to daily rest of 11 or 9 hours, daily rest can be split into two or three separate periods totalling 12 hours, the first must be at least 3 hours and the second period must be at least 9 hours.

Multiple manning

Multiple manning of a vehicle allows an extension of the working day from 24 to 30 hours.

This period of 30 hours must contain a daily rest period of 9 hours, being the final part of the 30 hour period.

Except for the first hour, drivers must be together on the same vehicle for the full duration of the period during which multiple manning rules are being used. Multiple manning rules cannot be used to rotate drivers working vehicles in convoy, e.g. 3 drivers sharing the driving of 2 vehicles. In these circumstances, each driver must obey single manning rules.

Weekly rest

In each fixed week a driver must take a weekly unbroken rest period of at least 45 hours. It is possible to reduce the weekly rest 45 to 24 hours.

In any two consecutive weeks, a driver must take at least one uninterrupted 45 hour weekly rest (Regular) and at least one other weekly rest (Reduced), which may be reduced to as little as 24 hours, regardless of where it is taken. Compensation for reduced weekly rest must be given en bloc,

and attached to another rest period of at least 9 hours, before the end of the third week, following the week in which the reduction is taken. A maximum of 144 hours (6 x 24 hours) can elapse between the end of one weekly rest period and the beginning of the next.

Weekly rest may overlap the midnight Sunday boundary separating working weeks. It can apply to either week in which it falls. However, there must be no doubt about as to which week the rest applies. A single week rest period cannot be applied to more than one week.

Where a driver takes weekly rest periods away from base, they may be taken in a vehicle, provided that there are suitable sleeping facilities for each driver and the vehicle is stationary.

Daily driving

Daily driving is a maximum 9 hours. On no more than two occasions in a fixed week it may be extended to a maximum 10 hours without any need for a compensating reduction.

Weekly driving

There is a weekly driving limit of 56 hours.

Fortnightly driving

There is a driving limit of 90 hours in any two consecutive weeks.

Maximum period of driving and minimum breaks

The maximum period of driving under EU rules is 4½ hours (continuous) which must be followed by a break of at least 45 minutes unless the driver is starting a daily or weekly rest period.

As an alternative to a continuous break of 45 minutes, up to two separate breaks can be taken, the first of which must be at least 15 minutes long and the second of the breaks must be at least 30 minutes, making a total of 45 minutes.

Once a 45 minute break has been taken either as a single break or as two separate breaks, the calculation on driving time begins again and no account is taken of previous driving periods and breaks.

Under working time regulations, it is possible to continue to work (on “other work”) up to 6 hours, so long as the four and half hours driving is not exceeded.

Maximum number of daily driving periods or driving days

A weekly rest period must be taken after no more than 6 daily driving periods.

It should be noted that it is possible to work 12 consecutive days, so long as there is a 24 hour rest period between the 6th and 7th period. This can be achieved by finishing before twelve noon and commencing the following day after 12 noon. However, the consequential compensatory rest would be up to 66 hours in such cases. In effect, it is not possible for drivers to routinely work 6 day weeks.

Interrupted Rest-ferry/train

When a vehicle is transported by ferry boat or train, and the accompanying driver takes a regular rest period (not less than 11 hours) this rest period may be interrupted on up to two occasions. The total period of interruption must be no more than 1 hour. During that regular daily rest period the driver shall have access to a bunk or couchette.

Emergencies

Emergency rules can only be invoked in absolutely genuine emergencies.

A driver may in emergency disregard driving time and daily rest so long as all the following points are observed.

- Road safety is not put at risk.
- The extension of hours is limited to the extent that it is necessary to ensure the safety of passengers or the vehicle.
- The first stopping place suitable for ensuring the safety of passengers must be observed.
- Continuation to the end of the journey is permitted only if there are no suitable stopping places available before the end of the journey and then only if road safety is not put at risk.
- The occurrence and reasons are noted by the driver on the back of the tachograph chart.

This provision is not an open cheque for drivers to break the rules. There must be a genuine emergency and road safety must never be jeopardised by the driver.

Tachographs

Employers must:

- Ensure that drives are supplied with sufficient analogue charts or paper for digital tachographs.
- Collect completed charts not later than 30 days after use and then keep for 12 months.
- Download digital tachograph cards.

Drivers must:

- Write on the disc:
 - Surname followed by first name (no initials)
 - Date and place chart begins with odometer reading
 - Date and place chart ends with odometer reading
 - Registration number of vehicle(s) used, with odometer readings
- Keep completed charts for at least 28 days plus the current week day then return them to their employer as soon as possible and certainly within 42 days after use.
- If inspection of your tachograph takes place by a Police Officer or Vehicle Inspector, make sure that the tachograph analogue disc or digital print-out is signed by the officer.
- See that the instrument is kept reading and running.
- Ensure that correct mode position is selected – “other work” (crossed hammers), “available” (periods of availability), rest. “Drive” is selected automatically.
- Ensure that an analogue tachograph is set to official UK time at all times, including throughout an international journey. A digital tachograph will show UTC time at all times on print-outs, although local time can be also be shown on the screen for reference purposes only.
- Be able to produce tachograph charts and relevant digital print-outs for the previous 28 days.
- If the analogue tachograph becomes defective, complete the current chart by hand or fill in a temporary chart and attach to the original. With a digital tachograph, if it becomes defective, take a print-out if possible and complete the back as with an analogue chart.
- Keep print-outs of digital tachographs where the card has been lost, stolen or become defective, where it has been produced to correct a driver error, used to record any notes against ‘activities’, or used to explain the reason for departure from the rules in an emergency.
- Arrange for a defective tachograph to be repaired “en route” if the vehicle does not return to base within 7 days.

UK Domestic rules

If you are operating in the UK, either on a Regular Service that is below 50km, or you are driving a vehicle with 15 or fewer passenger seats on any type of operation, you will be subject to UK domestic rules on drivers' hours. They differ from the EU rules:

Daily driving

The maximum aggregate driving time is 10 hours per working day.

Breaks

A driver must take a break of at least 30 minutes after driving continuously for 5½ hours.

A driver may work a through duty of 8½ hours driving provided that accumulated layover time is at least 45 minutes. This must be followed by either a daily rest period or a break of at least 30 minutes.

Maximum spreadover

The maximum length of a driver's working day (from signing on to signing off) is 16 hours.

Daily rest

A driver must have a period of at least 10 hours between each working day which can be reduced to 8½ on no more than 3 occasions per week.

Weekly rest

A driver must have a period of at least 24 hours off duty every 2 weeks, i.e. each fortnight. The rest period does not have to be a calendar day. It can be taken at the beginning or end of a working fortnight and can fall partly in one fortnight and partly in the next, provided it is started in the fortnight to which it applies.

Mixed EC and UK work

Drivers working partly under EC rules and partly under the UK domestic rules must observe 3 basic principles:

- Time spent driving or on duty under one set of rules may not count as a break period or rest period under the other set.
- Driving and other duties under the EC rules count towards the limits on driving and other duties under UK rules.
- Driving and other duties under UK rules count as attendance at work under the EC rules.

Further information is contained in PSV375 which is downloadable free of charge from VOSA's website

www.vosa.gov.uk/vosacorp/publications/manualsandguides/drivershoursandtachographguides.htm

8. School bus signs

The Road Vehicles Lighting (Amendment) Regulations 1994 define the dimensions and colours of the signs, how they should be used and the use of hazard warning lights when school children are boarding or alighting. The section of the regulations that refer specifically to the use of school bus signs is summarised below.

With the exception of those covered under the section “What is excluded?”, no person shall use, cause or permit a bus to be used when it is carrying a child to or from school unless –

- (a) a prescribed sign (minimum 250 x 250 mm) is fitted to the front of the bus and is plainly visible to road users ahead of the bus, and
- (b) a prescribed sign (minimum 400 x 400 mm) is fitted to the rear of the bus and is plainly visible to road users behind the bus.

For the purposes of this regulation – a bus carrying a child to or from his school is a reference to a bus carrying a child, (defined as being under the age of 16 years old):-

- (i) to, or to a place within the vicinity of, his school on a day during term time before he has attended the school on that day: or
- (ii) from, or from a place within the vicinity of, his school on a day during term time after he has finished attending the school on that day.

Legal requirements

It is clear from the regulations that the legal requirement for school bus signs to be displayed applies only to journeys between home and school and vice versa. There is, therefore, no legal requirement for the signs to be displayed on journeys involving school children being carried on educational visits, sporting activities, etc.

Exclusions

The regulations state that if fuel duty rebate is being claimed, the only services on which the display of the signs is mandatory are those which have been provided or secured either by a local education authority in England or Wales under section 55 of the Education Act 1944 or by an education authority in Scotland under section 51 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980.

Hazard warning lights

The regulations also state that it is permissible to use hazard warning lights in conjunction with school bus signs: “when the vehicle is stationary and children under the age of 16 years are entering or leaving, or are about to enter or leave, or have just left the vehicle”.

Conclusion

There is a legal requirement to display school signs on services carrying school children under the age of 16 between home and school and vice versa where (a) no fuel duty rebate is being claimed in respect of those services and (b) where fuel duty rebate is being claimed on services provided or secured by a local education authority under the Acts listed above for the purposes of carrying school children between home and school and vice versa.

Operators claiming fuel duty rebate on services not provided or secured by a local education authority are advised to check the fuel duty rebate regulations and conditions* very carefully before deciding to display school bus signs on such services, as the display of certain types of sign on these services is forbidden and their display may jeopardise fuel duty rebate entitlement.

*e.g. at least half of the accommodation on the vehicles by means of which the service is provided is normally available to members of the general public and the service is regularly used by such members.

No offence is being committed by either driver or operator if a school bus sign is displayed on a bus not being used for the carriage of school children. The integrity of the sign is reduced if it is left on display when not legally required.

9. Minibus pre-use safety checklist

The driver is responsible for the minibus and should conduct a pre-drive safety check. This should be repeated whenever another driver takes over the vehicle. He or she should walk around the vehicle, including the trailer if applicable, to check for visible defects, and check the items listed below.

Exterior check

	OK	Not OK
Oil level (once only at start of day)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coolant level (once only at start of day)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Windscreen washer fluid level (once only at start of day)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brake fluid level (once only at start of day)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Windscreen and windows are clean and undamaged	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wiper blades are clean and undamaged	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lights, including brake lights and indicators, are clean and working	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tyre pressures, including the spare (and inner tyres and tyres on a trailer, if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tyre tread, including the spare and inner tyres and tyres on the trailer, if applicable. At least 2.0mm across centre ¾ is recommended	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tyres – Any cuts and bulges?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Doors open and close properly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trailer brake lights and indicators work, if applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lift (if fitted) works safely	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ramp (if fitted) works safely	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Roof rack or trailer is properly fitted, and all luggage is securely held	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damage or sharp edges	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Interior check

	OK	Not OK
Mirrors are correctly adjusted, clean and unobstructed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Position and function/purpose of all the dashboard controls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Position of driving seat so that all controls can be operated comfortably	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check for pressure on brake pedal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wipers and washers are working properly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fuel level (and type of fuel: diesel or petrol)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seat belts, where fitted, are undamaged and working properly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Location of wheel brace and jack	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Location and contents of first aid kit and fire extinguisher(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Location of relevant paperwork (permit disc, insurance, Road tax disc, MOT), emergency numbers and driving licence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change for parking or the telephobe (or mobile phone or phonecard)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Luggage is securely stowed and aisles and exits are clear	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Ensure that emergency equipment is available in the event of breakdown or accident. For example, a high visibility jacket, mobile phone, first aid kit and torch. Other equipment such as a warning triangle, webbing cutter could also be included.

Brake checks

Before the passengers are loaded the brakes should be checked. With the engine running, check the handbrake is working properly, and that the brake pedal is firm when pressed. A moving brake test should then be conducted, off-road if possible. Warn the passengers first, reach a speed of not more than 15 mph, check the mirrors and if it is safe, apply the brakes fairly firmly. The brakes should work effectively, the vehicle should not pull to one side, luggage should be stored securely.

If faults that might affect the vehicle's or passengers' safety are found, the vehicle must not be used until they are all remedied.

10. Speed limiters

In November 2002 the European Parliament and Council issued Directive 2002/85/EC which amended the original Directive 92/6/EEC to extend the range of vehicles to which the Directive applies. The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 have now been amended (SI 2102/2004) to incorporate these new requirements which came into effect as of the 1 January 2005.

New requirements

Passenger vehicles (irrespective of weight) with more than 8 passenger seats, first registered after 1 January 2005 are now required to be fitted with speed limiters.

However, for passenger vehicles (with over 8 passenger seats and a design weight not exceeding 5.0 tonnes) used solely within the UK this requirement was deferred to 1 January 2008.

Retro-fit to existing vehicles

There are retro-fit requirements that will apply to Passenger vehicles (over 8 passenger seats - irrespective of weight) that were first registered between 1 October 2001 and 31 December 2004 (inclusive).

Vehicles caught by these requirements needed to be fitted with speed limiters with effect for 1 January 2006, unless the vehicle is being used solely within the UK, in which case the requirement will come into effect on 1 January 2007.

Changes to vehicles already fitted with speed limiters.

Vehicles that are currently required to have speed limiters fitted by UK domestic regulations will need to have the set speed of the systems changed. These vehicles are passenger vehicles (with more than 8 passenger seats and a design weight over 7.5 tonnes and not exceeding 10.0 tonnes) which will need to have the speed limiters reset so the current set speed of 100kph will need to be reduced to a setting that will ensure that the maximum stabilised speed will not exceed 100kph.

There are also separate provisions that apply to Passenger vehicles with over 8 passenger seats and a design weight over 10.0 tonnes gross that are already fitted with a speed limiter set at 100kph. These vehicles will not be required to have the speed limiters reset and will be able to continue with systems set at 100kph.

11. Safe operating procedure

Minibus drivers

On journeys where an escort is present, the items below should be divided between the driver and escort, with the driver concentrating on those tasks which directly relate to driving the vehicle.

Before setting off

- Allow sufficient time for the journey.
- Conduct a pre-drive safety check before every journey.
- Make sure you are familiar with the height, width, length and weight of the vehicle, and the position of the exterior fuel cap.
- Avoid long spells of driving, and plan breaks to ensure you are fresh to continue and that passengers do not get restless.
- Never allow passengers to board until the vehicle is at a complete standstill, and safely parked by an adjacent pavement or other traffic-free area. If you need to leave the vehicle, switch off the engine and remove the ignition keys.
- Passengers should enter the minibus from the pavement adjacent to the bus, not from the road itself (unless using a ramp or lift at the rear). If driving abroad, the nearside door may open onto the road, and therefore, extra care will be needed.
- Where relevant ensure that passengers are supervised when boarding the vehicle, especially if they are using a rear door. Plan which passengers will sit in the front seats and by the doors.
- Do not exceed the carrying capacity of the minibus.
- Make sure everyone is sitting, one to a seat, and that passengers are using seat belts.
- Always ensure that child passengers under the age of 11yrs or less than 150cm (5 feet) tall are safely belted in using an appropriate child seat or booster cushion.
- Always ensure that passengers travelling in their wheelchairs are safely secured. Wheelchairs not in use must be securely stored.

- When school bus signs are used, make sure they are in position only while children are being transported, and that they do not obstruct your vision.
- Make sure there is a complete list of the passengers being carried with a note of any special medical or other needs. Keep the list with other relevant documents in a place where it can be readily found in the event of an accident.
- Take care when using passenger lifts and other specialist equipment. Always comply with the manufacturer's instructions and only operate if competent to do so.
- Check that no bags or clothing are caught in the doors, and check all mirrors every time before moving away in case latecomers are approaching the vehicle.
- Check that all luggage is secured, and that gangways and exits are clear.

During the journey

Ensure that passengers behave in an acceptable manner during the journey and do not distract the driver in any way. Boisterous play must not be allowed, neither must smoking nor drinking alcohol.

Passengers must remain seated and wear their seat belts throughout the journey.

Ensure that when passengers are dropped off, they leave the vehicle safely; that no parts of their clothing are caught in the vehicle's doors; that there is someone to meet them (a parent, guardian or carer in the cases of children and/or persons with disabilities).

Approach any stop slowly and with care and only responsible persons to operate doors.

Use hazard warning lights on school trips when children are boarding or leaving the vehicle if parked on the public highway.

If there is a serious delay during the journey inform the school or organisation so that information may be passed to parents. A mobile telephone is very useful for this purpose, but must not be used by the driver whilst driving.

Children or other vulnerable people must not be left unaccompanied in the minibus.

If the vehicle breaks down, or if there is an accident, give clear instructions to the passengers and see that they remain together and supervised.

If there is a risk of fire, however small, evacuate the vehicle and move the occupants to a safe place.

If you have to stop for an emergency or breakdown whilst on a motorway, only stop on the hard shoulder as far away from the carriageway and passing traffic as possible. Switch on the hazard warning lights and make sure the side lights are on. Vacate the vehicle and again ensure that passengers, especially children, remain together and are supervised, move them to a safe position behind the barrier and up the bank if possible.

At the end of the journey

Ensure that children and other vulnerable people are supervised when leaving the vehicle, especially if they are using a rear exit.

Never allow passengers to leave until the vehicle is at a complete standstill, and safely parked by an adjacent pavement or other traffic-free area, and the hand brake is engaged.

Always park so that passengers step onto the footway and not onto the road.

Do not leave children alone if no one has arrived to collect them. Ensure you know what to do if a child is not collected.

Report any problems or incidents that occurred during the trip to your line manager.

Supervise the passengers when boarding or leaving the vehicle, taking particular care if they are leaving by the rear exit. If driving abroad in a country that drives on the right, be aware that some doors may open onto the roadside.

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