

Minibus safety

A Code of Practice

ROSPA
*The Royal Society for the
Prevention of Accidents*



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**Community
Transport
Association**

LOCAL AUTHORITY
LARSOA
ROAD SAFETY OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION



Working for Safety on the Road

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Risk assessment

A risk assessment should be conducted at regular intervals and detailed records should be kept.

Minibus permits

Operators should comply with all the requirements of permit schemes.

Insurance

Operators should obtain written confirmation that their insurance policy applies to all the people using the minibus and all the activities and journeys that are conducted.

Maintenance

All minibuses should be serviced and maintained in accordance with a set schedule. A pre-drive safety check should be conducted every day the vehicle is used and repeated whenever another driver takes over.

Records

Appropriate written records should be kept, regularly reviewed and updated. Recommendations from reviews should be implemented.

Minibus drivers

Operators should set minimum criteria for their minibus drivers and ensure all their drivers conform to it.

Driver licence requirements

Ensure that all drivers have taken appropriate training in a minibus and have the appropriate entitlement on their driving licence.

Driver assessment and training

Ensure that all drivers are regularly re-assessed to maintain their driving skills and standards.

Authorisation of 'approved' drivers

Organisations should nominate a suitably qualified person to decide who is authorised to drive the minibus. Only authorised drivers should drive the minibus.

Vetting drivers and passenger assistants

Operators should ensure that drivers and passenger assistants are subject to a CRB or Disclosure Scotland check before appointment and follow the policies of their parent organisation or insurers (if applicable).

The drivers' responsibilities

Drivers should ensure that they are fit to drive and that the minibus is in a safe condition before every journey.

Age limits

Operators should consider the need to set age limits for drivers.

Medical fitness to drive

Operators should establish a process to assess the medical fitness to drive of their drivers on a regular basis. A simple eyesight test for drivers on appointment and at re-assessment should be conducted.

Drivers should be required to report to the operator any change that affects their ability to drive.

Driver impairment

Drivers should never drink and drive and be aware that alcohol can remain in the body for up to 24 hours.

Medicines

Drivers must not drive if ill, or affected by medicines.

Summary of best practice



Illicit drugs

Drivers must not drive if under the influence of drugs.

Distractions

Drivers should never use a mobile phone while driving.
Operators should implement a clear policy on this issue.

Tiredness

Operators should ensure that drivers are not driving when too tired. Drivers should ensure they are well rested before driving.

Safe Drivers' Hours

Clear rules on drivers' hours should be set, made known to drivers and enforced.

Journey planning

All journeys should be properly planned.

Second driver

A second driver should be provided on appropriate journeys.

After the journey

Drivers and/or passenger assistants should ensure that all passengers have been safely met. A post-trip vehicle check should be conducted and recorded.

Passenger assistants/escorts

Passenger Assistants/escorts should be provided wherever possible, and be aware of their duties and responsibilities.

Breakdown procedures

Clear accident and emergency procedures should be in place and should be included in driver and passenger assistant training.

Passenger care

Passengers should only be carried in a minibus that is suitable for their needs.

Supervision

Passengers should be adequately supervised.

Pick-ups and drop-offs

Drivers should only use suitable, agreed pick-up and drop-off places.

Passenger briefing

Passengers should be aware of their expected behaviour.

Passenger illness

Procedures for passenger illness should be in place.

Seats and seat belts

Seat belts should be provided on all seats and all passengers should wear their seat belt.

Seat belts and their fitment must comply with legal standards.

Seat belts should only be retro-fitted to minibuses if they can be fitted to the same standard as vehicles that have seat belts fitted at the point of manufacture.

Tachographs

Minibuses must be fitted with tachographs as required by law.

Speed limiters

Minibuses must be fitted with speed limiters as required by law and drivers must understand how this affects the way the vehicle can be safely driven.



Wheelchairs

Passengers in wheelchairs should be afforded the same level of safety as all other passengers. Drivers and passenger assistants should be trained in the care of passengers in wheelchairs.

Passenger lifts and ramps

Persons operating lifts should be trained to use them and should be aware of, and follow, the latest guidance for lifts and ramps on minibuses.

Accessibility

All passengers have the right to be transported in a minibus suitable for their needs.

Emergency equipment

Appropriate emergency equipment should be provided in the minibus, and drivers and passenger assistants trained in its use.

Fire hazards

Appropriate fire hazard procedures should be in place.

Luggage

All luggage should be securely stowed, and drivers should be trained in the use of roof racks and trailers, if used.

Weight limits

The maximum weight limit of the minibus should never be exceeded.

Journeys abroad

Operators should ensure that they are aware of, and follow all necessary rules and regulations for international journeys and for all the countries that will be visited or driven through.

1 Introduction



1.1 Minibuses are motor vehicles that have been constructed or adapted to carry more than eight, but not more than 16, passengers in addition to the driver. They provide a vital mode of transport for a great number of people and organisations. Local authorities, schools, voluntary groups, clubs and societies and employers all make extensive use of the minibus to run an impressive range of social and educational activities.

For every mile travelled, people in minibuses are less likely to be involved in an accident than people in cars. Nevertheless, the risk of injury and death for minibus users can be reduced.

The aim of this Code of Practice is to help organisations that own, hire or lease minibuses, to provide a safe, effective and efficient service. It is written for the person who owns, manages, or has responsibility for the operation and management of the minibus. This may be the driver, centre manager, the school (a nominated individual, Headteacher or the Governing Body) or the group leader. It is not written for commercial operators who require a full Public Service Vehicle (PSV) operator licence.

In addition to this Code of Practice, Operators should consult, and comply with, any guidelines or procedures produced by their own organisation, Local Authority or Governing Body. Community groups should consult, and comply with, any guidelines or procedures produced by their parent organisation.

1.2 Regulations

The Code of Practice refers throughout to various statutory regulations and other documents. These are correct as of January 2008, but Operators should check whether they have been amended since the publication of this document.

1.3 Photocopying extracts

Extracts from this Code of Practice may be photocopied and provided to minibus drivers, passenger assistants, passengers and their parents, without prior written permission, provided the source is acknowledged.



2 The management system



2.1 Anyone who operates a minibus service to carry passengers has a duty to take all reasonable precautions to ensure that it is operated safely.

HSE Guidelines, '**Driving at Work**', state that:

"health and safety law applies to on-the-road work activities and the risks should be effectively managed within a health and safety system."

This also applies to voluntary organisations; the HSE Guide, **Charity and Voluntary Workers: a Guide to Health and Safety at Work**, states:

"In general the same health and safety standards should be applied to voluntary workers as they would to employees exposed to the same risks. However, if the risk assessment shows that the risks to voluntary workers are different, the preventive and protective measures taken should reflect the different risks."

"HSE considers it good practice for a volunteer user to provide the same level of health and safety protection as they would in an employer/employee relationship, irrespective of whether there are strict legal duties."

It is also an offence under road traffic law to cause, or permit, a minibus to be driven on the road when its condition, or the way in which it is used, could cause danger to anyone in the minibus or to other road users. Operators must comply with all relevant legal requirements, the advice in the Highway Code, and take all other reasonable measures to protect the driver, the passengers and other road users from collision and injury risks.

Essentially, this means that, within its normal framework for managing health and safety at work, the organisation should conduct suitable risk assessments and ensure that journeys are safe, drivers are fit and competent, and the minibus is fit-for-purpose and in a safe condition. The management system must be monitored to ensure that drivers are complying with all requirements, and adequate records must be kept.

2.2 Risk assessment

Operators must conduct a written risk assessment of the management of their minibus service. Risk Assessments must be conducted by 'competent persons'. They must be recorded, and regularly updated, to demonstrate that the operator has taken reasonable care, and to enable the service to be monitored to ensure that standards, once set, are maintained, reviewed and improved.

Large organisations such as Local Authorities will have risk assessment policies and procedures, and the person responsible for the minibus should consult the Health and Safety Officer of their parent organisation and comply with their policies and procedures. Smaller organisations that do not have a Health and Safety Officer can obtain advice from their local Health and Safety Executive (HSE) office. The HSE's **Five Steps to Risk Assessment** is available free from www.hse.gov.uk

There is no such thing as zero risk. Risk assessment should identify:

- Hazards
- The likelihood of a hazard occurring
- The likely severity of any injury or property damage resulting
- Who might be affected
- Existing safety measures
- New safety measures that might be needed
- How safety measures are implemented
- Emergency procedures

Decisions can then be made about whether particular risks are justified and if so, whether control measures keep those risks within tolerable bounds and strike an appropriate balance between risk and cost.

2 The management system



Generic risk assessment

A generic risk assessment for the minibus service should be conducted and recorded. This should address the process of recruiting, training and supervising drivers, issues relating to the age, needs and behaviour of passengers, accident/emergency management systems, parental consent and general administration matters. The risk assessment should be recorded and regularly updated.

Individual risk assessment

Specific journeys also need to be considered. For regular or frequent journeys, it may not be necessary to conduct a separate written risk assessment for each trip. However, the risk assessment for regular trips should be periodically reviewed to ensure it remains appropriate and that it is being followed properly.

An individual risk assessment should be conducted, in advance, for every unusual or non-routine journey, or when passengers have special needs. These risk assessments should be approved by the operator and the person who has overall responsibility for the passengers (e.g., a headteacher).

BEST PRACTICE

A risk assessment should be conducted at regular intervals and detailed records should be kept.

2.3 Legal requirements

Every minibus must:

- Be correctly licensed
- Display a valid tax disc
- Be adequately insured
- Be well maintained
- Have a valid MoT certificate (if more than one year old)

2.4 Minibus permits

A minibus that is used to carry passengers for 'hire or reward' is normally classed as a Public Service Vehicle (PSV). The Operator must comply with PSV Operator Licensing and Passenger Carrying Vehicle (PCV) driver licensing requirements.

Hire or reward is not just paying a direct fare. It is any sort of payment which gives a person a right to be carried on a vehicle regardless of whether or not a profit is made. The payment may be made by the person himself, or on his behalf and may be a direct payment (such as a fare or other payment made directly in respect of the journey) or an indirect payment (such as a membership subscription to a club, payment for a bed in a hotel, school fees or payment for concert tickets). Although such indirect payments are usually made in respect of other services (rather than for transport) they are nonetheless viewed by the courts as hire or reward because anyone who had not made the payment would have no right to be carried¹.

However, non-profit making organisations (including schools) concerned with education, religion, social welfare, recreation or other activities of benefit to the community may be exempted if they are eligible for a minibus permit, granted under Section 19 of the Transport Act 1985.

Minibus Permits allow certain non-profit-making organisations to make a charge without having to comply with the full PSV licensing requirements and without their drivers needing to have PCV (category D1 or D) licence.

¹Public Service vehicle Operator Licensing: Guide for Operators PSV 437, VOSA

2 The management system



The following conditions must be met whenever permit vehicles are used:

- a) the vehicle must only be used by the organisation to whom the permit has been granted, or by affiliated/associate members of that organisation; **and**
- b) the vehicle must not be used by members of the general public, except as 'a' above; **and**
- c) the vehicle must not be operated for profit, or for an activity which in itself is carried out for profit; **and**
- d) the vehicle must meet the requirements for initial fitness as defined by the Construction and Use Regulations; **and**
- e) the permit disc must be displayed on the nearside of the windscreen, visible from the outside of the vehicle.

Other conditions may be placed upon a permit with which an operator must also comply. Operators may hold more than one permit but may only use one minibus under each permit at any one time. Permit discs may be transferred from one vehicle to another.

Permits are granted by a Traffic Commissioner, a 'designated body' approved by the Department for Transport or a Local Authority. Designated bodies can only issue permits to their own members. Local Authorities can issue permits to their own Departments, to schools or other education bodies (if they fulfill the Authority's duties under the Education Act 1944) and to certain other bodies. Permits are only valid for journeys that are entirely within the UK.

The status of the school may affect whether or not it is entitled to a Section 19 permit. Many private schools have charitable status and so come under the scope of the Permit System, as do Local Authority schools because they are non-profit-making.

However, those schools that do not have charitable status must operate under a PSV Operator's Licence and meet the full PSV regulations for any minibus used or hired by the school.

Community Bus Permits

Community Bus Permits are issued under Section 22 of the Transport Act 1985 to bodies that run a local bus service on a voluntary non-profit basis, using unpaid volunteer drivers. The rules are similar to those for Section 19 Minibus permits. However, members of the general public can be carried in the minibus.

Further advice

Detailed advice about Operator Licensing and Permit schemes is available in 'Public Service Vehicle Operator Licensing Guide for Operators' (PSV 437) and 'Passenger Transport Provided by Voluntary Groups: Guide for Operators' (PSV 385), both of which are available free from VOSA at www.vosa.gov.uk

Further information is also available from the Community Transport Association (CTA) at www.ctauk.org

BEST PRACTICE

Operators should comply with all the requirements of permit schemes.

2.5 Vehicle Excise Duty (Road Tax)

The taxation class of a vehicle depends on whether it carries passengers or goods, its weight, its construction and the purpose for which it is used. Operators are advised to check with the DVLA whether their minibus should be registered and taxed as a private/light goods vehicle or as a bus.

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A valid tax disc must be displayed in the windscreen. Exemptions are available from local Vehicle Registration Offices for minibuses used solely to carry people with disabilities (with or without friends and escorts). To qualify, the minibus must be registered under the Disabled Passenger Vehicle (DPV) taxation class. An advice leaflet is available from the CTA at www.ctauk.org

BEST PRACTICE

Operators should ensure that the Minibus is correctly registered and taxed.

2.6 Insurance

Every motor vehicle using the public highway must be insured with at least third party cover. Some local authorities or community transport groups have access to a fleet insurance scheme, otherwise operators must arrange their own insurance.

The operator must ensure that the vehicle, and its driver(s), are insured for **all** of the purposes to which the vehicle will be put, including whether it is used for 'hire and reward' and/or under a Section 19 Permit and whether it is registered as a Passenger Carrying Vehicle or a Private/Light Goods Vehicle. Operators must comply with all the conditions in the insurance policy. Using the vehicle in a way that does not comply with the insurance policy, or failing to keep it properly maintained, may invalidate the cover.

Schools should check that they are complying with the insurance policy and requirements of their Local Authority or governing body as appropriate. Other groups should check they are complying with the insurance policy and requirements of their umbrella organisation. It is useful to keep a copy of the insurance certificate in the minibus.

Check that the insurance policy covers:

- All the uses to which the minibus is put
- The total number of passengers allowed and the total weight (including passengers and luggage)
- All the people authorised to drive the minibus
- Journeys for which passengers pay a contribution.

In particular, Operators should be aware of, and comply with, any restrictions on drivers (e.g., age, experience, medical checks, etc.) within the insurance policy.

Operators should consider whether to provide additional insurance cover (e.g. for personal injury or legal expenses) for their drivers, passenger assistants and passengers.

BEST PRACTICE

Operators should obtain written confirmation that their insurance policy applies to all the people using the minibus and all the activities and journeys that are conducted.

2.7 Maintenance

When purchasing a new or second hand vehicle, ensure that a qualified engineer confirms the vehicle is roadworthy, safe and fit for its purpose. It may be possible to arrange this through the local authority or parent organisation. Operators must also be sure that any minibus they hire or lease is roadworthy and safe.

A clear procedure must be put in place to ensure the minibus is regularly serviced and maintained in accordance with a set schedule. This is in addition to the driver's pre journey checks.

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The schedule must include annual MoT Tests and should not exceed the manufacturer's recommended service intervals. Regular 'safety inspections' should be conducted and recorded, as described in the DfT Guide, 'A Guide to Maintaining Roadworthiness – Commercial Goods and Passenger Carrying Vehicles' (available free from www.vosa.gov.uk). Records of service, MoT history and 'safety inspections' should be kept.

A clear procedure must be put in place for drivers to report any vehicle defects and for such defects to be rectified. Drivers need to be aware of the procedure and encouraged to follow it. A Pre-Drive Safety Checklist is provided in Appendix 1.

2.8 MoT tests

Every minibus requires an **annual** MoT test from the **first** anniversary of its registration date. A minibus with 13 or more passenger seats requires a Class V test, which can only be conducted at designated testing stations or LGV testing stations. A minibus with 12 or less passenger seats only requires a normal car (Class IV) MoT certificate and can be tested at any garage with MoT Test facilities.

BEST PRACTICE

All minibuses should be serviced and maintained in accordance with a set schedule. A pre-drive safety check should be conducted every day the vehicle is used and repeated whenever another driver takes over.

2.9 Records

The law requires Operators to keep records of how they ensure the service they provide is safe. RoSPA recommends that records are kept for at least 15 months, but preferably longer, particularly if there is a risk of litigation following an incident. This will enable them to show that the service is being managed and operated with all reasonable

care and efficiency, that drivers and passenger assistants are properly trained, adequately monitored and perform their duties effectively.

When a fault that affects the safe operation of the vehicle or the safety of the occupants, is recorded, the vehicle should not be used until the fault is rectified. A nil-reporting procedure, which requires the driver to record the results of the check even if there are no faults, is recommended.

It is recommended that the following records are kept:

- All documents relating to the vehicle
- Operating log, including booking the vehicle in and out
- Accident/Incident book, including faults reported and rectified
- List of authorised drivers
- Training and re-training forms
- Medical check details
- Emergency equipment form
- Details of any vetting conducted
- Contact names and details (including out-of-hours details)
- Maintenance/safety checks.

These records are an essential part of the safety management system. It is important that they are kept accurate and up-to-date and that any changes recommended following reviews are implemented.

BEST PRACTICE

Appropriate written records should be kept, regularly reviewed and updated, recommendations from reviews should be implemented.

3 The minibus driver



- 3.1** Almost all road crashes are caused by, or involve, human error. More and more are caused by drivers losing control of their vehicles and by careless, reckless or aggressive driving.

The most frequent causes are:

- Careless, thoughtless, reckless driving
- Loss of control of vehicle
- Failure to avoid vehicle or object in carriageway
- Failure to give way
- Inattention or distraction
- Inappropriate speed
- Looked, but did not see
- Lack of judgement of own path
- Poor turn or manoeuvre
- Failure to look

- 3.2** Operators should ensure that every minibus driver:

- Has the appropriate licence entitlement to drive the minibus.
- Undergoes initial and periodic re assessments of ability to drive a minibus.
- Receives practical driver training, as necessary, under the conditions in which they are likely to drive the minibus.
- Understands his or her responsibilities.
- Has a clean driving licence (at the discretion of the Operator).*
- Is medically fit to drive.
- Drives for limited periods to avoid fatigue.
- Is accompanied by a second driver, who is also fully qualified and meets the same conditions as the first driver, on appropriate journeys.
- Is accompanied by a passenger assistant where passengers needs require it.
- Always carries a suitable form of identification (e.g. driving licence).

The company insuring the minibus may insist on some of these conditions, or impose others, as a condition of insurance.

Operators and drivers must comply fully with all such requirements.

**Operators who use drivers with penalty points on their licence should set criteria (number of points and types of offence) for what is acceptable, and consult their Insurers. This should be included in Risk Assessment policies, and further driver assessment or training should be considered.*

BEST PRACTICE

Operators should set minimum criteria for their minibus drivers and ensure all their drivers conform to it.

3.3 Driver licence requirements

The Operator is responsible for ensuring that everyone who drives a minibus has a valid driving licence to do so. They should check the driving licence(s) of their driver(s) annually and keep a record of the check. Drivers should be required to report any changes to their licence to the Operator.

Driving Licence entitlements to drive a minibus changed on 1 January 1997.

3.4 Car driving licence obtained before 1 January 1997

Drivers who obtained their full car driving licence before the 1 January 1997 may drive a minibus in the UK (until their licence expires) if they:

- Hold a valid full driving licence for private cars (group A, or B for automatics on an old style green or pink licence, or category B and D1 (101)* on a pink and green or photocard licence)
- Are at least 21 years of age
- The vehicle is not being used for hire or reward.

* see glossary

3 The minibus driver



However, drivers whose licence expire, when they reach 70 years of age or because they develop certain medical conditions, or who apply for a new licence because (for example) they change address, will not automatically retain the D1 (101) entitlement on their licence. They must apply to retain this entitlement and also pass a medical to PCV standards.

3.5 Car driving licence obtained on or after 1 January 1997

Drivers who obtained their full car driving licence on or after the 1 January 1997 are only licensed to drive a vehicle with up to eight seats (in addition to the driver). To drive a minibus, such drivers need to gain category D1 PCV entitlement on their licence by meeting higher medical standards and passing an appropriate test.

Volunteer drivers

However, 'volunteer drivers' are exempt from this requirement and are allowed to drive a minibus with up to 16 passenger seats (in addition to the driver) for social purposes by a non-commercial body, provided:

- The driver has held a full B licence for at least two years
- The driver receives no payment or other consideration for driving the vehicle other than out-of-pocket expenses
- The vehicle has a gross weight of no more than 3500kg (4250kg including any specialised equipment for carriage of disabled passengers)
- There is no trailer of any weight attached
- The driver is aged 21 or over, but under 70 (unless driver has passed PCV Medical and gained restriction 120).

This exemption was designed to cater for charities who use minibuses but who would not have been able to provide training for all their volunteer drivers. Unfortunately, the term 'volunteer driver' was not defined and has not been tested in law. Therefore, there have been differing views and conflicting advice as to whether or not teachers

driving a school minibus are 'volunteer' drivers and so exempt from the need to have a D1 PCV driving licence.

It is the Operator's and individual driver's responsibility to ensure that the driver is appropriately licensed to drive the minibus. The DVLA does not rule on specific cases, as this is a matter for the Police and courts. If challenged, an individual driver and the Operator would have to show that they were complying with the Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) Regulations 1999 correctly.

In April 2006, the (then) Department for Education and Skills (DfES) published a policy statement entitled 'Licensing for Incidental Drivers of the School Minibus.' This states that teachers or other school staff are mostly exempt from having to hold a D1 PCV driving licence to drive the school minibus because they are not being paid specifically to drive, i.e. driving is not mentioned in their contract of employment.

For the exemption to apply, the following conditions from section 7(6) of the Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) Regulations 1999 must be met:

- Drivers are aged 21 years or over
- They have held their category B driving licence for at least two years
- The minibus is being used by a non-commercial body¹ for social purposes, but not for hire or reward²
- Drivers are not being paid to drive the minibus, other than out-of-pocket expenses
- The minibus does not exceed 3.5 tonnes (or 4.25 tonnes if specialised equipment for the carriage of disabled passengers is included) gross vehicle weight³
- no trailer is towed.

3 The minibus driver



¹ *Independent schools that do not have charitable status should seek legal advice to check if they would be viewed as a non-commercial body for these purposes.*

² *Unless the minibus is operated under a section 19 bus permit (see section 2.3).*

³ *Gross vehicle Weight (GVW) is a legal rating of the maximum permitted gross weight including passengers for that particular vehicle; it does not relate to the actual weight at the time a vehicle is being driven. Therefore even if empty, a minibus above 3.5 tonnes GVW cannot be driven on a car driving licence issued on or after 1 January 1997. Most school minibuses are over 3.5 tonnes Gross Vehicle Weight and therefore these vehicles cannot be legally driven on a car driving licence by anyone who passed their car test on or after 1 January 1997.*

However, the DfES Statement also states that it would be “bad practice for school staff to drive the minibus solely on the basis that they have held a class B licence for two years”. It sets out good practice options for exempted school staff and encourages schools to ensure that staff who drive the school minibus receive appropriate training. It also includes a paragraph on the Certificate of Professional Competence.

Therefore, it is government policy that if a teacher’s contract of employment states that driving a minibus is part of their job, the teacher must hold a D1 PCV licence to drive a school minibus. If they drive a minibus with a Maximum Authorised Mass greater than 3.5 tonnes, or 4.25 tonnes if specialised equipment for the carriage of disabled passengers is included, (and this includes most newer minibuses) they must hold a D1 PCV licence. If the contract of employment does not refer to driving, or the Maximum Authorised Mass of the minibus does not exceed 3.5 tonnes (or 4.25 tonnes) they do not need to hold a D1 PCV licence, but it would be good practice to do so.

The DfES statement sets out Government policy.

Only a court can issue a legal ruling.

RoSPA recommends, that irrespective of the legal requirements, teachers and other school staff who drive a school minibus should receive specific minibus driver training, and preferably hold a D1 PCV licence. Schools that wish to adopt the exemptions for teachers and other staff on the basis that their contract of employment does not refer to driving, should also check if driving is included in the job description. If so, the school should seek legal advice to check if the job description forms part of the contract of employment. The school may also wish to seek legal advice on whether a teacher who is subject to school rules and discipline when driving the school minibus out-of-hours can be regarded as a volunteer – even if their contract does not specify driving.

The DfES policy statement is available at www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/healthandsafety/visits/

Information is also available in ‘Driving a Minibus’ (INF28) from DVLA, www.direct.gov.uk/prod_consum_dg/idcplg?ldcService=GET_FILE&dID=32146&Rendition=Web or “Driver Licensing for Minibuses” guides from the CTA at www.ctauk.org

3.6 Non-UK driving licences

The regulations about which non-British licences are valid in Britain, for which vehicles and for how long, vary considerably depending on the country from which the licence was issued. Although a driver with a non-British licence may be legally entitled to drive a car in Britain, this does not necessarily mean they are legally entitled to drive a minibus.

Drivers who hold a driving licence from another European country are allowed to drive on their licence in the UK. If they become a resident (more than 185 days in one year) they should obtain a UK ‘counterpart’ section for recording penalty points. Holders of EU licences who have a ‘B’ entitlement are able to drive a minibus under the UK’s rules as long as they meet all the requirement in Paragraph 3.5 above.

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If operators have drivers or potential drivers who hold driving licences from a country outside the EU, they are strongly advised to check with the DVLA that the licences of such drivers are valid for driving a minibus.

Further advice is available from the DVLA or in 'Driving in GB on a foreign licence' at www.direct.gov.uk/en/Motoring/DriverLicensing/DrivingInGbOnAForeignLicence/index.htm or 'Driver Licensing for Minibuses' guide from the CTA at www.ctauk.org

BEST PRACTICE

Ensure that all drivers have taken appropriate training in a minibus and have the appropriate entitlement on their driving licence.

3.7 Driver assessment and training

Driver assessment and training is essential. Trained drivers are safer drivers. Training reduces the risk to drivers, passengers and other road users. It increases the comfort of passengers and reassures parents that their children are in safe hands. Training will also result in lower running and maintenance costs and possibly, reduced insurance premiums. It should also provide added confidence to drivers that they are not being asked to undertake tasks for which they feel poorly qualified.

Driving a minibus is significantly different from driving a car. A minibus is larger, longer, wider and heavier than a car, and its steering, cornering and braking characteristics are markedly different. Another important difference for many drivers is that they are transporting a number of passengers, some of whom may have special needs, may be taken ill on the journey, and who may need supervising.

Practical training and assessment is by far the best way of ensuring that anyone who drives a minibus has the necessary knowledge, understanding, capabilities and attitudes to do so safely.

Training need not be stressful for those taking part; its purpose is to help them become competent and safe drivers of minibuses, not to discourage them from volunteering their services.

Driver training will normally include:

- Familiarisation with the vehicle
- Vehicle checks that should be conducted before and after each journey
- Emergency procedures
- Passenger care, including disability awareness (if applicable)
- Using passenger lifts or ramps (if relevant)
- Loading, unloading and securing passengers travelling in wheelchairs and stowing wheelchairs not in use during the journey (if relevant)
- Proper use of seat belts, harnesses and other passenger safety equipment
- On road assessment on the types of road the driver is likely to use (e.g., motorways or dual carriageways, urban and/or rural roads)
- Journey planning
- Dealing with luggage and equipment

The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport provides qualifications, which may be useful for those involved in managing or operating a transport service.

3 The minibus driver



3.8 Driver re-assessment

Re-assessment of drivers should be a fundamental part of the management system. It should take place **at least** once every four years, and more often if an incident merits it; for example if an individual driver is convicted of a traffic offence, such as speeding, is involved in a blameworthy collision, or if complaints have been received. Those who drive infrequently are likely to need re assessments more often. Re training should be provided if the assessment indicates particular drivers require it.

Monitoring and re-assessment on a regular basis will ensure that driving and passenger care standards are maintained, and enable the Operator to identify any worrying trends in their minibus service. It will also demonstrate that the operator is taking due care in the running of the service

BEST PRACTICE

Ensure that all drivers are regularly re-assessed to maintain their driving skills and standards.

3.9 Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MiDAS)

The Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MiDAS) is a national assessment and training scheme for minibus drivers in the voluntary and not-for-profit sectors. Originally developed by Hampshire County Council, it is administered by CTAUK. It provides classroom-based theory training and on-road driving assessment for all minibus drivers and additional training on passenger assistance and the use of wheelchair accessible vehicles, for drivers who will be transporting passengers with disabilities. Regular refresher training is a significant part of MiDAS and in order to retain their MiDAS Certificate, drivers must attend refresher training every four years.

MiDAS uses a 'cascade' approach. The CTA's training agents provide training for minibus Driver Assessor/Trainers (DAT's) nominated by the organisation. A DAT can then assess the competence of minibus drivers in their own organisation, and provide them with training on how to safely use a minibus.

It is free to join MiDAS, by registering at www.ctauk.org

Organisations joining MiDAS are required to commit to training and assessing all their drivers.

RoSPA provides minibus driver training; details can be found at www.rospa.com/drivertraining/courses/driver_training/minibus_test.htm

Many Local Authorities also provide minibus training and assessment courses.

3.10 Authorisation of 'approved' drivers

The authorisation of approved drivers is the responsibility of the Operator, and should be considered as part of the risk assessment procedures.

It is good practice to designate a suitably qualified person (e.g. an Approved Driving Instructor with PCV entitlement and/or a MiDAS trained DAT) to decide who can or cannot drive the minibus, and for an independent and competent assessor to conduct assessments and make recommendations about the competence of drivers who are submitted for assessment.

The criteria by which potential drivers are assessed must include whether they are safe and competent to drive the minibus, and whether they have been trained. Any conditions imposed by the insurers must also be followed.

3 The minibus driver



A driver who feels it is unsafe to undertake a journey (the absence of a second driver or a defective vehicle, for example) must be able to refuse to drive the minibus unless his or her concern is rectified.

The operator should keep records of the persons who have been authorised to drive the minibus, the date they were authorised and when they will be due for re-assessment.

BEST PRACTICE

Organisations should nominate a suitably qualified person to decide who is authorised to drive the minibus. Only authorised drivers should drive the minibus.

3.11 Vetting drivers and passenger assistants

The laws and procedures for vetting people who work, or wish to work, with children or vulnerable adults are changing during 2008. In England and Wales, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (SVG Act) introduces a new vetting and barring scheme from Autumn 2008. This will cover those who work or volunteer, or seek to work or volunteer, with children or vulnerable adults.

In January 2008, the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) was established to bring together and oversee existing vetting systems. Essentially, those wishing to work in 'regulated activities' must apply to become a member of the Vetting and Barring System (VBS) which is due to go live in November 2008. It is an offence to carry on a regulated activity without doing so or after having being barred. Similarly those managing others who carry on regulated activities must apply to join the scheme. This applies equally to those in paid employment or those working as volunteers. The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) will administer the system, which will be based on the current process undertaken to receive an Enhanced Disclosure.

In Scotland, the Scottish Government is developing its own similar system, as provided for in the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007, which will be managed by Disclosure Scotland. In Northern Ireland, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007 (SVG (NI) Order) will also introduce similar arrangements.

Schools and other local authority bodies should follow their authorities' policies and procedures in regard to vetting. Operators who are not linked to a Local Authority should follow their parent organisation's policies and procedures, and check whether their insurers specify any requirements.

It should not be necessary for schools to vet teachers who drive or act as passenger assistants provided they have been checked when appointed as a teacher.

A disclosure should only be requested after a provisional offer of employment is made to a candidate. The person to whom the disclosure relates must always consent to the check being carried out.

Operators are urged to check the latest advice and requirements at: Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA): www.isa.gov.org/
Criminal Records Bureau (CRB): www.crb.gov.uk/
Disclosure Scotland: www.disclosurescotland.co.uk

Operators should ensure that adequate supervision is provided to all employees and volunteers to prevent inappropriate relationships developing.

BEST PRACTICE

Operators should ensure that they are aware of and comply with the latest vetting requirements and that drivers and passenger assistants are vetted as necessary before appointment. They should follow the policies of their parent organisation or insurers (if applicable).

3 The minibus driver



3.12 The driver's responsibilities

The Operator has overall responsibility for ensuring a safe service is provided. However, every driver is personally responsible for ensuring that their vehicle is roadworthy before they take it out onto the road. Indeed it is the driver's licence that will suffer if the vehicle is found to be defective. It is also the driver's responsibility to ensure the safety (including the use of seat belts) and welfare of all passengers.

Before any journey, and every time a minibus is used, the driver must:

- Plan the journey so that it can be completed safely and comfortably in accordance with the passengers' needs
- Ensure the minibus is suitable for the passengers being carried
- Conduct a pre drive vehicle safety check (see Appendix 1)
- Be fit and able to drive
- conduct a moving brake test (see Appendix 1).

The driver should complete a log book, provided by the operator, to show that they have conducted the necessary checks.

BEST PRACTICE

Drivers should ensure that they are fit to drive and that the minibus is in a safe condition before every journey.

3.13 Age limits

Under the European Employment Directive, it is unlawful to discriminate against someone due to their age.

Operators should consult their Local Authority (or parent organisation or Human Resources Department if they are not a local authority body) to ensure that they comply with the law. Managers should also check whether the insurance policy imposes any restrictions.

Although there is a default retirement age of 65 years, this is not a statutory compulsory retirement age. Employees have the right to request working beyond this age, and employers have a duty to consider such requests, and are free to continue to employ people for as long as they are competent and capable.

Drivers under 25 and over 70 years old have higher than average accident risks. Younger drivers may have excellent eyesight, hearing and reaction times, but are nevertheless inexperienced. With age, general fitness, eyesight, hearing and reaction times deteriorate (but not at a uniform or predictable rate). Operators must therefore give due consideration to the medical condition, including eyesight requirements, of its drivers, as well as the driver's suitability in other ways.

BEST PRACTICE

Operators should consider the need to set age limits for drivers.

3 The minibus driver



3.14 Medical fitness to drive

Drivers must be medically fit to drive.

The Driver Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) sets minimum medical standards and rules for all drivers, including conditions that must be reported to the DVLA. Extra rules apply to drivers of large vehicles over 3,500kgs, minibuses and buses and operators need to be aware of the need to comply with these additional requirements. Some, but by no means all, of the medical conditions mean that a driver must surrender their driving licence and not drive, until passed fit to drive again by the DVLA. The 'At a Glance Guide to the Current Medical Standards of Fitness to Drive', available free at www.dvla.gov.uk/media/pdf/medical/aagv1.pdf outlines the conditions that must be reported.

Operators should require their drivers to notify them of any declarations they have made to the DVLA.

A person's fitness to drive can be affected by a medical condition, by temporary health impairments (such as stress, sleep disturbance, migraine, flu, severe colds, hayfever etc), long term illness and by the environment in which they work, drive and live. Relevant health issues should always be considered in driving risk assessments. It is important to remember, however, that few people enjoy perfect health and a sense of proportion and a balance between health requirements for safe driving on one hand and avoiding unfair discrimination on the other, needs to be maintained.

Operators should consider requiring new drivers to undergo a medical check, prior to acceptance as a driver. At the very least, drivers should sign a declaration that they are medically fit to drive, and are not taking any medication, or undergoing any medical treatment, that may affect their ability to drive.

Eyesight

The minimum eyesight standard (Rule 81 of the Highway Code) is that drivers **must** be able to read:

- A vehicle number plate, with characters 79.4mm high and 57mm wide, from a distance of 20.5 metres (67 feet – about five car lengths), or
- A new style number plate, with characters 50mm wide, from a distance of 20 metres (66 feet).

Drivers who need glasses or contact lenses to drive must wear them at all times when driving.

Operators should conduct a simple eyesight test on appointment and when drivers are re-assessed. They should also ensure that staff are aware that it is advisable to have their eyes tested at least every two years, or more often if advised by an ophthalmologist.

Whether the check is a physical examination by a doctor or a self declaration form, it is sensible to conduct re-assessments at regular intervals and to keep a record of the process. Operators should obtain the services of an appropriate medical adviser for this purpose.

BEST PRACTICE

Operators should establish a process to assess the medical fitness to drive of their drivers on a regular basis. A simple eyesight test for drivers on appointment and at re-assessment should be conducted. Drivers should be required to report to the operator any change that affects their ability to drive.

3 The minibus driver



3.15 Driver impairment

Drivers can be impaired by a number of factors, each of which can reduce their ability to drive safely and increase the risk of crashing. The main forms of driver impairment are:

Alcohol

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

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

Alcohol is absorbed into the bloodstream very quickly, but it takes about an hour for 1 unit to be removed by a healthy liver. Drinkers cannot be sure how much alcohol they are consuming because the alcoholic strength of drinks varies enormously, as does the size of measures. For example, a 175ml glass of wine of 12%abv would be 2.1 units, and a 250ml glass of the same wine would be 3 units.

Drivers should refrain from drinking any alcohol before driving. Alcohol remains in the body for up to 24 hours after it has been consumed and may still affect a driver the morning afterwards.

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

BEST PRACTICE

Drivers should never drink and drive and be aware that alcohol can remain in the body for up to 24 hours.

Medicines

Drivers should never drive if they feel tired or unwell, or if they are taking prescription or over-the-counter medicine or undergoing any medical treatment which advises against driving. If it does, the driver could consult their doctor or pharmacist for an alternative that does not cause drowsiness.

For many medications it is difficult to predict whether, how, when and for how long they will affect a person's ability to drive safely. A driver may not even notice that they have been impaired until it is too late. The effects depend on how much, how often and how a medicine is used, plus the psychological and physical attributes of the person taking it.

BEST PRACTICE

Drivers must not drive if ill, or affected by medicines.

Illicit drugs

As well as being illegal, taking illicit drugs can seriously affect a driver's judgement and abilities. Many drugs remain in the body for much longer periods than alcohol. Drivers should never drive if under the influence of drugs.

BEST PRACTICE

Drivers must not drive if under the influence of drugs.

Further advice about alcohol, illegal drugs and medicines is available in RoSPA's Guide 'Driving for Work: Drink and Drugs' which can be downloaded free from www.rospa.com/roadsafety/employers

3 The minibus driver



Distractions

Anything which distracts a driver could easily cause a collision. There are a number of distractions that should be discouraged while driving: eating or drinking, tuning a radio or changing a cassette, reading a map, writing, smoking, using a mobile phone or other electronic equipment.

Mobile phones

It is very useful to have a mobile telephone in the minibus. However, it is essential that drivers do not make or receive calls while they are driving, as the distraction this causes (even if it is a hands-free phone) significantly increases the risk of a crash. The mobile phone should be kept by the passenger assistant, or the driver should only use it when stopped in a safe place. Operators or Managers should not expect to be able to contact a driver while she or he is driving.

BEST PRACTICE

Drivers should never use a mobile phone while driving. Operators should implement a clear policy on this issue.

Further advice about mobile phones and driving is available in RoSPA's Guide 'Driving for Work: Mobile Phones' which can be downloaded free from www.rospa.com/roadsafety/employers

Tiredness

Thousands of crashes are caused by tired drivers. They are most likely to happen:

- On long journeys on monotonous roads, such as motorways
- Between 2:00 am and 6:00 am

- between 2:00 pm and 4:00 pm (especially after eating, or drinking even one alcoholic drink)
- After having less sleep than normal
- After drinking alcohol
- If taking medicines that cause drowsiness
- On journeys home after night shifts.

Sleepiness reduces reaction time, alertness, concentration and decision making, all crucial driving skills. Tired drivers are much more likely to have an accident, and the crash is likely to be severe because a drowsy or sleeping driver does not usually brake or swerve before the impact.

The Highway Code recommends a minimum break of at least 15 minutes after every two hours of driving. **Drivers who drive for more than two hours after a day's work are significantly more likely to be involved in a crash.**

If a driver begins to feel tired during a journey, he or she should find somewhere safe to stop (not the hard shoulder), drink one or two cups of strong coffee or other high caffeine drinks and (if possible) take a nap of about 15 minutes. If there is a second driver, they should take over. Ultimately, sleep is the only cure for tiredness.

BEST PRACTICE

Operators should ensure drivers are not driving when too tired. Drivers should ensure they are well rested before driving.

3.16 Safe Drivers' Hours

It is essential to set clear rules about the number of hours drivers spend driving, the time spent working or engaged in other activities during the day (or preceding days) and the number of rest breaks.

3 The minibus driver



Operators should consult and follow ‘Drivers’ Hours and Tachograph Rules for Road Passenger Vehicles in the UK and Europe’ (PSV 375), which is available from www.vosa.gov.uk

New rules came into force on 11 April 2007.

If the minibus is being driven outside the UK, EC or AETR Driver’s Hours rules must be followed from the beginning of the journey in the UK (see Appendix 7). As laws about Drivers’ Hours differ between countries outside the EU, Operators should contact the Embassy or consulate of the country or countries concerned to ascertain their national rules.

If the minibus is being driven in the UK by a paid driver, whether under a permit or not, Domestic Drivers’ Hours rules must be obeyed (see Appendix 7).

For journeys that are not governed by Drivers’ Hours rules, it is **strongly recommended** that drivers do not exceed the following limits:

	Driving only	Driving + other work
Max. length of working day*	13 hours	10 hours
Of which, spent driving	9 hours	4 hours
Maximum time driving without a break from work	2 hours or sooner if tired	2 hours or sooner if tired
Minimum length of break	15 mins**	15 mins**
Daily rest period	11 hours	11 hours
Weekly rest period	45 hours	45 hours

+ Taking account of other work undertaken before starting a journey.

**After 4 1/2 hours of driving, the accumulated length of breaks from driving should be at least 45 minutes.

Drivers should not be required to supervise children during their break, as this would not be a rest for the driver. With each additional driving period, the break time should be extended. Second drivers should also have adequate rest breaks, without being required to supervise children.

Drivers should **never** be expected to do a day’s work (regardless of the type of work), or be awake for a day and then drive for several hours in the evening.

On journeys lasting several days fatigue caused by consecutive days on duty must also be taken into account. Drivers’ Hours rules specify weekly rest periods.

BEST PRACTICE
Clear rules on Drivers’ Hours should be set, made known to drivers and enforced.

3.17 Journey planning

A planned journey reduces the risk of drowsiness and falling asleep at the wheel, and is more efficient, saves time, stress and money. Operators should set out rules and procedures for journey planning, and ensure that their drivers are aware of, and adhere to, these rules.

3 The minibus driver



Operators, trip organisers and drivers should ensure that each journey is planned in advance in terms of its time and distance, and their own, and their passengers' comfort. A suitable route should include places for rest, refreshment, comfort breaks and re-fuelling if necessary. Drivers should check information on roadworks and weather conditions that may affect their route, before they set out.

Mode of travel

If possible, make long journeys by train or air, as these are safer (mile for mile) than road travel.

Time

Consider how long the journey will take, including time for rest breaks and unexpected delays. Avoid driving in the early hours of the morning, when drivers have had less sleep than normal, or in mid afternoon after eating a large meal - these are peak times for sleep related crashes. Avoid starting a long journey after a full day's (or shift's) work.

Plan the route

If using a SatNav, set the destination before starting the journey. Drivers should know not to automatically follow the SatNav directions as it may sometimes send them on an inappropriate route. Drivers must obey road signs, markings and signals, no matter what the SatNav says, and, of course, be aware of what's happening on the road around them.

If not using a SatNav, write out a route that is easy to read. But do not try to read directions while driving. If necessary, stop somewhere safe to check directions. Check for roadworks or likely traffic jams, and if possible, plan an alternative route to avoid any major delays. Plan where to stop for regular rest breaks (every two hours, or sooner if feeling tired, for at least 15 to 20 minutes).

Overnight stop

Consider breaking the journey with an overnight stop (make it part of the holiday) especially if catching an early flight or returning from abroad.

Normal sleep time

Drivers should avoid staying up late or reducing their normal sleep before a long journey.

Journeys should be planned so that, as far as possible, drivers are not driving when they would normally be sleeping; in the early hours of the morning, for example. Eating a full meal before driving may result in a lower ability to concentrate and/or sleepiness. Drivers should not eat or drink while driving.

Further advice about safer journey planning is available in RoSPA's Guide 'Driving for Work: Safer Journey Planner' which can be downloaded free from www.rospa.com/roadsafety/employers

BEST PRACTICE

All journeys should be properly planned.

Second driver

A second driver is essential on long journeys or for shorter journeys where traffic conditions might significantly lengthen the journey time or create more stressful driving conditions. Second drivers should comply with all the same requirements as the main driver, and ideally both should be trained as passenger assistants.

BEST PRACTICE

A second driver should be provided on appropriate journeys.

It is essential that a nominated person, not on the journey, knows the destination of the minibus, its route and its expected time of arrival and return, and that parents and relatives are aware of this person's role and telephone number and vice versa.

3.18 After the journey

Operators should introduce a clear procedure for drivers to follow if passengers are not met at the end of the journey, and ensure that the drivers are aware of the procedure. **Children and other vulnerable passengers should never be left to wait for their parents or carers, or to travel home alone.**

3 The minibus driver



The driver should conduct a post trip vehicle check, inside and outside the minibus and record any visible damage or faults, any emergency equipment that has been used and any incidents that have occurred during the journey. Any faults should be reported to the operator as soon as is practicable, and the minibus should not be used again until the fault is rectified.

The easiest way of accomplishing the above procedure is to keep a Defects Book or Form, and for the operator to set up a procedure to deal with any matters that are reported.

A nil-reporting procedure which requires the driver to record the results of the check, even if there are no faults, is recommended (see section 2.9)

BEST PRACTICE

Drivers and/or passenger assistants should ensure that all passengers have been safely met. A post-trip vehicle check should be conducted and recorded.

3.19 Passenger assistants

The role of a passenger assistant in a minibus includes:

- Preventing the driver being distracted by passengers, especially when children are being carried
- Supervising children and in particular preventing any behaviour that could create a hazard
- Helping passengers whom the driver may not be qualified to help
- Assisting in the event of a breakdown or other emergency.

Passenger assistants are recommended under the following conditions:

- Where passengers' needs require a passenger assistant to be present (based on a risk assessment)
- Where children are being carried
- When a passenger's behaviour may cause a distraction to the driver or be dangerous to other passengers.

It may not be necessary to require a passenger assistant for every journey where children are being carried. Short, local journeys to a neighbouring school, for example, may be undertaken satisfactorily without a passenger assistant. However, a risk assessment should be conducted to decide which journeys do not require a passenger assistant, and this should take account of local road circumstances and the age and needs of the passengers.

The organisation using the minibus has a duty to ensure that an adequate assessment is made of any potential risks arising from behaviour or of any nuisance/potentially disruptive' passengers, and to ensure that adequate safeguards are in place, including if necessary that an escort is carried.

Schools should check whether their Local Authority specify ratios for the number of adult supervisors for off-site trips. 'Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits: A Good Practice Guide', published by the (then) DFES, advises that there should be a minimum of one teacher in charge plus enough supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency. It provides a general guide for adult:pupil ratios on local trips (this is not specific to minibus journeys):

- One adult for every six pupils in school years one to three (under fives reception classes should have a higher ratio)

3 The minibus driver



- One adult for every 10-15 pupils in school years four to six
- One adult for every 15-20 pupils in school years seven onwards.

‘Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits: A Good Practice Guide’ can be downloaded free from www.teachernet.gov.uk

Operators should introduce clear guidelines for lone drivers in the event of an emergency and a mobile telephone should be provided (but must not be used while driving). The guidelines should state that any volunteer driver, including a teacher, who is not prepared to drive without a passenger assistant will not be required to do so.

Ideally, the passenger assistant should also be able to act as a second driver, in which case he or she should have received the same training and assessment as the main driver.

Passenger assistants have a wide range of duties. It is the operator’s responsibility to ensure that passenger assistants are provided when necessary and that they are suitable and capable of carrying out their duties. Operators should ensure that passenger assistants receive an introduction to their duties, and are familiar with the vehicle, especially the emergency exits, first aid kit, fire extinguisher, emergency/breakdown procedures and trip details. Operators must also ensure that passenger assistants are provided with all necessary equipment.

The Passenger Assistant Training Course (PATS) was developed by the Community Transport Association and Hampshire County Council, as part of the MiDAS Scheme. It is designed for anyone who has care or supervision of passengers traveling by road, whether they are volunteers or paid staff. Details of the Scheme are available from the CTA at www.ctauk.org

When recruiting or assessing potential passenger assistants, the operator may find the following skills and qualities desirable:

- Ability and willingness to act as a second driver
- Experience of working with children
- Experience of working with people with disabilities.

A major part of the passenger assistant’s job is to supervise child passengers and ensure they are cared for and behave appropriately. Passenger assistants must be capable of exercising control over children. This will be easier if they sit in the rear of the vehicle with the passengers, rather than at the front with the driver, where possible. Passenger assistants should be qualified to provide for the needs of all the passengers. In some circumstances, they may need to be able to speak languages other than English or have special skills, such as sign language.

The Operator should ensure that the duties of passenger assistants are clearly set out and that all passenger assistants are aware of, and adhere to them. (Appendix 3).

BEST PRACTICE

Passenger assistants should be provided wherever possible, and be aware of their duties and responsibilities.

3 The minibus driver



3.20 Breakdown procedures

Operators must ensure that there is a clearly defined written procedure which must be followed in the event of a collision or breakdown and that all drivers and escorts are aware of, and adhere to it.

Regular vehicle checks and maintenance will reduce the likelihood of the minibus breaking down during a journey. But even a well maintained minibus may break down, and operators may wish to arrange a service contract with a garage or rescue organisation.

In the event of a vehicle breakdown:

- The driver should move the vehicle off the carriageway (onto the hard shoulder on a motorway) and switch on the hazard warning lights. If this is not possible, it should be moved as far away from moving traffic as possible. If a warning triangle is used, it should be placed on the same side of the road, at least 45 metres from the minibus. Always take great care when placing and retrieving a warning triangle and never use them on the motorway.
- The passengers should be moved out of the nearside of the vehicle and as far away from it and other traffic as possible. No one should stand between the vehicle and oncoming traffic. On motorways or other busy roads passengers should be taken onto the embankment or grass margin and as far from the traffic as is practicable. The hard shoulder on a motorway is very dangerous.
- Passengers should be kept together in one group. Children should be kept calm and under constant supervision.
- In some circumstances, it is safer to leave the passengers in the vehicle. For example, if it seems too dangerous to unload passengers in wheelchairs or if there is not a safe waiting area. The driver (and passenger assistant if present) will need to assess the situation and decide whether or not to unload passengers.
- If necessary, the driver should go for help, leaving the passengers with the passenger assistant. If the driver is the only adult present, he or she should not leave the children alone. The driver will need to give the police, or breakdown service, accurate details of the vehicle's location, and inform them if children or passengers with mobility problems are being carried.
- The driver should also telephone the school or nominated contact person, preferably with a mobile telephone kept on board for this purpose, to tell them what has happened and ask them to relay messages to parents and others. They should have out-of-hours contact details for this purpose.
- If the breakdown occurs on a motorway, it is better to use the roadside emergency telephone as this will enable the Police to pinpoint the vehicle's location. The nearest emergency telephone is indicated by arrows and numbers on small marker posts at the edge of the hard shoulder.

3.21 Road traffic collisions

Operators must ensure that there is a clearly defined written procedure which must be followed in the event of a collision or other emergency incident (such as passenger illness) and that all drivers and passenger assistants are aware of, and adhere to it. A copy of the procedure should be kept inside the vehicle.

3 The minibus driver



In the event of a road traffic collision, the driver and/or the passenger assistant must make the collision scene as safe as possible :

- Use hazard warning lights and any other safety devices supplied
- Do not move injured passengers unless they are in immediate danger of further injury from other vehicles or from fire or explosion
- Call the emergency services immediately; provide them with information about the situation, any special circumstances (for example if carrying oxygen bottles) and if any passengers have special needs
- Ensure one person (driver or passenger assistant) remains with the children if child passengers are involved
- Do not allow child passengers to assist with repairing or re-starting the vehicle and never allow them to push the vehicle.

If the emergency services are called, the driver must stay at the scene of the collision until the emergency services (and any one else with reasonable cause) have taken all the details. If possible, the names and addresses of all independent witnesses should be obtained at the scene.

If the collision is 'damage only' and no one is injured, the driver should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy before continuing the journey. The incident must be reported to the operator on their return. A report book or form must be kept for this purpose. The operator should ensure that all repairs and insurance details are completed.

If there is any injury or the names of people involved are not exchanged or there is damage to property other than the driver's vehicle (including street furniture), the driver must report the collision to the Police as soon as possible or in any case within 24 hours.

Any other incident, including traffic offences, must also be reported to the operator.

3.22 Emergency evacuations

In the event of an incident such as a fire, an emergency evacuation should be conducted. The best way to evacuate the vehicle will depend upon the nature of the incident, the passenger group and the type of minibus. Therefore, the driver and passenger assistant(s) will need to exercise their judgment at the scene of the incident.

Drivers and passenger assistants who have been trained will be far better equipped to make appropriate decisions and cope with such difficult circumstances.

Passengers should exit the vehicle as they would normally, if possible, and move as far away as possible. If passengers need assistance to exit the vehicle, the passenger assistants should provide what help is necessary. If it is necessary to use the rear exit, care must be taken against approaching traffic.

It may not be possible to remove wheelchairs quickly from a minibus, unless the passenger assistants and carers are trained to do so. It may be necessary to lift a passenger from the vehicle, which is not easy to do in a confined space and often requires two people.

Drivers and passenger assistants should not attempt to tackle a vehicle fire, unless they have been trained to do so.

BEST PRACTICE

Clear accident and emergency procedures should be in place and should be included in driver and escort training.

4 Passenger care



4.1 The behaviour of passengers can also increase the likelihood of an accident occurring. Operators, drivers and passenger assistants have a duty of care to their passengers. Complying with the points outlined in the previous chapters will go a long way to fulfilling this duty. To summarise some of the main points, ensure:

- The minibus is suitable for the needs of the passengers, including any passengers with disabilities
- The minibus is roadworthy
- All drivers are properly trained and regularly re-assessed
- A second driver is provided when appropriate
- There is a properly trained passenger assistant when appropriate
- All passengers have a seat and a seat belt
- Journeys are properly planned with adequate rest stops
- Drivers and passenger assistants know the emergency procedures
- All luggage and equipment is safely stored.
- The doors are closed, but not locked, before moving off
- That journey details are left with a nominated person
- That aisles and exits are clear.

Passengers may have a wide range of needs, which could include physical, mental, emotional, medical, behavioural and learning difficulties. Drivers and passenger assistants need to be aware in advance of the needs of passengers who are to be carried. It is important that the driver and passenger assistant(s) understand the nature of the needs and are qualified to assist the passengers.

BEST PRACTICE

Passengers should only be carried in a minibus that is suitable for their needs.

4.2 Supervision

A driver cannot safely drive and supervise up to 16 children at the same time. Children are likely to distract a driver with questions, moving about and general noise. They may also distract drivers in other vehicles. A passenger assistant is recommended and should preferably be someone the children know, especially with younger children. The duties of an passenger assistant are outlined in Appendices 3 and 4.

BEST PRACTICE

Passengers should be adequately supervised.

4.3 Pick ups and drop offs

Places where passengers are picked up and dropped off should be pre-arranged. Consideration should be given to the safety of passengers waiting for the minibus to arrive and boarding and leaving the minibus at these places.

This is particularly important for children and other vulnerable passengers. They should not be left alone at a drop off point if their parents or carers have not arrived to collect them. Parents must, of course, know when and where they are expected to collect their children.

4 Passenger care



Drivers must make certain that all passengers have boarded, are safely seated and are wearing properly adjusted seat belts, if fitted, before moving off. The doors must be properly closed, but not locked, before the driver moves off. Equally, they must make sure that all passengers have left the minibus and are clear of the doors before moving off. They should be aware of the danger of passengers' clothes becoming trapped in a door.

Drivers should only use suitable, agreed, drop off points. They should ensure that passengers do not exit from doors opening into traffic. When collecting or dropping off passengers from/to premises on the offside of a one-way street, the vehicle should stop on the nearside and the passengers escorted across the road when it is safe to do so.

BEST PRACTICE

Drivers should only use suitable, agreed pick-up and drop-off places.

4.4 Comfort

Everybody will be happier and enjoy the trip more, if they are comfortable. The minibus should not be too hot, cold or stuffy, and appropriate rest stops should be planned into the journey.

4.5 Passenger briefing

Passengers should be aware of the behaviour expected of them. Children in particular should be briefed before the journey begins so that they understand why boisterous behaviour is inappropriate. Passengers should be aware of the time when they must return to the minibus after rest stops, or for the return journey.

BEST PRACTICE

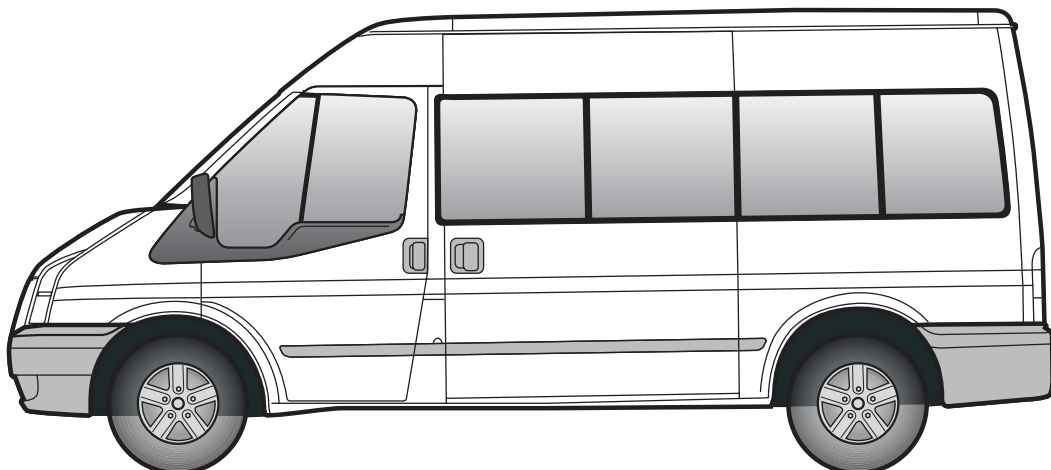
Passengers should be aware of their expected behaviour.

4.6 Passenger illness

Drivers should also know what to do in the event of passenger illness. This will require the driver to have details and a contact number for the relevant persons and understand how to deal with the safety of other passengers whilst dealing with the unwell passenger.

BEST PRACTICE

Procedures for passenger illness should be in place.



5 The minibus



- 5.1** The suitability and condition of the minibus itself can contribute to the likelihood of a collision occurring, and to the severity of injuries sustained in the event of a collision.

It is vital to ensure that all minibuses purchased, hired or leased are suitable for the organisation's transport requirements, and provide the maximum level of safety possible. The CTA publish 'Minibus Management – Buying a Vehicle', which can be downloaded from www.ctauk.org

5.2 Provision of seats and seat belts

Minibuses registered before 1 October 2001

When the main purpose of the trip is to transport three or more children, minibuses registered before 1 October 2001 must have a forward facing seat for each child, fitted with either a three-point seat belt or a lap belt. If there are also side or rear-facing seats in the minibus, the children must only use the forward-facing seats. If adult passengers are carried, they may sit in side or rear-facing seats, but it is much safer not to use side-facing seats. If seats are fitted with integral seat belts, the seats and their anchorages are considered as part of the seat belt anchorage system, and must meet the regulations outlined in 5.11 and 5.12.

Minibuses registered on or after 1 October 2001

All Minibuses registered on or after 1 October 2001 (whether they carry child or adult passengers) must have forward-facing or rearward-facing seats. Minibuses up to 3.5 tonnes gross vehicle weight (except those designed for urban use with standing passengers, or those manufactured six months before that date) must have inertia reel three-point seat belts in forward facing seats, and inertia reel three-point seat belts or retractable lap belts in rearward-facing seats (alternatively, disabled persons seat belts, or child restraints, may be fitted.) If seats are fitted with integral seat belts, the seats and their anchorages are considered as part of the seat belt anchorage system, and must meet the regulations outlined in 5.11 and 5.12.

Minibuses above 3.5 tonnes gross vehicle weight may have lap belts on forward-facing seats

provided that any surface in front of the seat is an energy-absorbing surface.

5.3 Use of seat belts and child restraints

Front seats

Drivers must wear a seat belt.

Passengers in the front seats, and any exposed seat, must use seat belts or an appropriate child car restraint. In these seats, the driver is responsible for ensuring that:

- Children under three years of age use an appropriate child restraint
- Children aged from three years up to their 12th birthday, and under 1.35 metres (approx 4'5") tall use an appropriate child restraint if available, or if not available, wear the seat belt
- Children aged 12 and 13 years (and younger children who are 1.35 metres or taller) use the seat belt.

Passengers aged 14 years or more travelling in the front seats, or any exposed seat, must wear a seat belt and are personally responsible for doing so.

Rear seats in small minibuses

Passengers sitting in the rear of minibuses that have an unladen weight of 2,540 kg or less must wear seat belts or use an appropriate child restraint. It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that:

- Children under three years of age use an appropriate child restraint
- Children aged from three years up to their 12th birthday, and under 1.35 metres (approx 4'5") tall, use an appropriate child restraint if available, or if not available, wear the seat belt
- Children aged 12 and 13 years (and younger children who are 1.35 metres or taller) use the seat belt.

Passengers 14 years or over must wear seat belts and are legally responsible for doing so.

5 The minibus



Rear seats in larger minibuses

In minibuses over 2,540 kg unladen weight (or in other buses and coaches that have seat belts fitted) passengers aged 14 years or over must wear seat belts and are legally responsible for doing so themselves.

At the time of writing, passengers aged three to 13 years are not required by law to wear seat belts. However, the Government has consulted on proposals to make it mandatory for passengers between these ages to use seat belts (or child restraints if available) and it is likely that the law will change. Operators are strongly recommended to ensure they check and comply with the latest legal requirements.

All passengers are strongly advised to wear seat belts, or to use child restraints if available, on all journeys

5.4 Duty to notify passengers

On buses and coaches (including minibuses) over 2,540 kg unladen weight, Operators must ensure that passengers are notified that they must wear seat belts by one or more of the following means:

- An announcement by the driver, conductor or courier or by a person such as a group leader, or an audio-visual presentation made when the passenger joins the bus or within a reasonable time of doing so;
- A sign prominently displayed at each passenger seat equipped with a seat belt.

Operators who fail to take all reasonable steps to ensure that every passenger is notified that s/he is required to wear a seat belt are guilty of an offence.

5.5 Appropriate child restraints

An appropriate child restraint is one that conforms to the United Nations standard, ECE Regulation 44-03 (or a subsequent version), is suitable for the child's weight and size and is correctly fitted according to the manufacturer's instructions. Child restraints are divided into categories, according to the weight of the children for whom they are suitable.

These correspond broadly to different age groups, but it is the weight of the child that is most important when deciding what type of child restraint to use.

Advice on child restraints is available at www.childcarseats.org.uk

The DfT publish a free advice leaflet, 'Seat belts and Child Restraints' which can be obtained by telephone, **0870 122 6236** or textphone, **0870 120 7405**, or emailing dft@twoten.press.net. It can be downloaded from www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk

When purchasing child restraints for use in a minibus, it is strongly recommended that the purchaser takes the minibus with them so they can make sure the restraints will fit properly in the minibus seats before they are purchased.

5.6 Failure to wear seat belts

Passengers who do not wear a seat belt put themselves and other occupants at risk because in an accident an unrestrained passenger would be thrown about inside the minibus with considerable force and could easily injure or kill another passenger or the driver. Therefore, Operators must establish a policy on what the driver should do if someone refuses to wear a seatbelt. In such cases, the risks should be explained and the passenger should be advised that the driver may refuse to transport them if they refuse to wear a seatbelt. However, the passenger should not be left behind if this would place them in danger.

5.7 All seat belts

It is important that seat belts and child restraints are correctly adjusted for the wearer to maximise their effectiveness. The basic points to note are:

- The belt should be worn as tight as possible
- The lap belt should go over the pelvic region, not the stomach
- Child restraints should be securely fitted according to the manufacturer's instructions and the child should be securely held in the restraint.

BEST PRACTICE

Seat belts should be provided on all seats and all passengers should wear their seat belt.

5 The minibus



5.8 Three for two rule

Since seat belts must be fitted to minibuses carrying children, the 'three-for-two' rule cannot be applied to children in minibuses. Where seat belts are fitted, only one passenger must use each seat belt. It is dangerous and illegal for a seat belt to be worn by more than one person at a time.

5.9 Types of seat belts

Three point seat belts (lap and diagonal) provide greater protection than lap belts. However, lap belts are far better than no belt at all. The lap belt should be placed over the pelvis (not the stomach) and worn as tight as possible.

5.10 Passenger restraints

Some disabled passengers may need postural support during the journey, and a variety of passenger restraints to assist people with disabilities to remain upright in their seat are available. Under no circumstances should they be used instead of a suitable seat belt as they do not conform to a recognised standard nor are they designed for this purpose.

5.11 Seat belt installation

Seat belts, including the seat belt assembly, the anchorage points and everything between that and the vehicle's main structure, must meet all the appropriate standards.

Seat belts are only effective if they are correctly anchored in the right position to the structure of the vehicle or to the seat if the seat has been designed and built to carry a belt. The seat itself also has to be securely anchored to the structure of the vehicle. This is particularly important if the seat belt is only fixed to the seat.

Seat belt anchorages must conform to the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 (as amended). In general, the Construction and Use Regulations require minibus seat belt anchorages to meet the requirements for 'M2 vehicles' contained in EC Regulation 76/115 (as amended). The seat belts themselves must comply with European Standards and have an 'E', 'e' or BS mark.

Initial installation check

Between 1998 and 2002, seats, seat belts and anchorage points in minibuses had to undergo a one-off installation check at Class V MOT testing stations, Vehicle Inspectorate (VI) test stations and VI designated PSV premises. This was not required if all the seatbelts in the minibus were fitted by the original manufacturer and were formally type approved or certified by the Vehicle Inspectorate when installed. However, the regulations were changed and from 1 October 2002, only minibuses that were in service before 1 October 2001, and have had extra seat belts fitted, require these tests.

BEST PRACTICE

Seat belts and their fitment must comply with legal standards.

5.12 Retro fitment of seat belts

It is possible to have seat belts retro fitted to existing vehicles, but it can be difficult and expensive. The main difficulties are:

- Engineering sufficiently strong anchorage points for the seat belts in the correct place to the vehicle's structure
- Engineering sufficiently strong seats that are securely anchored to the vehicle's structure (especially important if it is intended to attach seat belts to the seats).

Retro fitment should only be considered if the vehicle has been designed to take seat belts or can be modified to the equivalent standard. This will probably be technically or economically infeasible for minibuses manufactured before 1988.

Retro-fitment should only be accepted from a supplier, supported by a reputable insurance company, who offers product liability for the belts and their fitting, for the life of the product.

5 The minibus



Seat belts and anchorage points should conform to the relevant Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations and to British or European Standards. Further advice is available from the DfT in 'Advice on Retro-fitting Seat Belts to Minibuses and Coaches' (VSE 2/96).

If the retro-fitting of seat belts is necessary, independent expert advice must be obtained. Details of companies who offer such advice is available from the organisations listed in Useful Addresses.

BEST PRACTICE

Seat belts should only be retro-fitted to minibuses if they can be fitted to the same standard as vehicles that have seat belts fitted at the point of manufacture.

5.13 Special seats

Child seats and restraints are not suitable for all children. In some cases, a special seat which offers particular postural support may be necessary. Such seats do not conform to the standards required of child seats. If used, it is vital that they are properly secured at all times. Further guidance may be available from the Medical Devices Agency (see Useful Addresses).

5.14 Tachographs

The Regulations stipulating which vehicles must be fitted with a tachograph changed on 11 April 2007, with some types of vehicles that did not previously need a tachograph being required to have one fitted by 31 December 2007.

Except as detailed below, vehicles used for the carriage of passengers with more than nine seats, including the driver's seat must be fitted with a tachograph. A vehicle first registered before 1 May 2006 may be fitted with either an analogue or a digital tachograph. A vehicle first registered on or after 1 May 2006 must only be fitted with a digital tachograph.

There are some exemptions relevant to minibuses:

- Vehicles used for the carriage of passengers on regular services with a route that does not exceed 50 kms.
- Vehicles with between 10 and 17 seats used exclusively for the non-commercial carriage of passengers.

However, any minibus that is used abroad must be fitted with a tachograph (from the beginning of the journey in the UK).

BEST PRACTICE

Minibuses must be fitted with tachographs as required by law.

5.15 Speed limiters

New rules regarding the fitment of speed limiters on minibuses came into force on 1 January 2005.

Minibuses first used or registered on or after 1 October 2005 must have a limiter fitted by 1 January 2007, or if only used in Great Britain and weighing less than 5 tonnes, by 1 January 2008.

Minibuses that have a diesel-engine, more than eight passenger seats, weigh less than 10 tonnes and were first used or registered between 1 October 2001 – 31 December 2004 must have a limiter fitted by 1 January 2007.

Minibuses first used or registered before 1 October 2001 do not need to be fitted with a limiter.

Minibuses used abroad must be fitted with a limiter.

The limiter restricts the maximum powered speed of the minibus to 62 mph (100 kph). Minibuses fitted with a limiter cannot use the outside lane of a motorway that has three or more lanes.

5 The minibus



It is essential that drivers understand how to drive a speed-limited minibus and how the speed limiter affects their ability to overtake and accelerate.

BEST PRACTICE

Minibuses must be fitted with speed limiters as required by law and drivers must understand how this affects the way the vehicle can be safely driven.

5.16 Wheelchairs

Where possible, it is preferable for passengers who use wheelchairs to transfer to a fixed seat, and for the wheelchair to be securely stored during the journey.

However, this is not appropriate for all wheelchair users. Passengers may remain in their wheelchairs during the journey, provided that the wheelchair is secured in a forward-facing or a rearward-facing position (never sideways), and it is securely and symmetrically fixed to the vehicle with tie down webbing restraints.

Wheelchairs must not obstruct a door or gangway. Some wheelchairs, such as those designed for sports use, are unsuitable for traveling in.

In addition:

- The wheelchair user must be secured with seatbelts (three-point belts or harness) attached to the vehicle tracking
- The wheelchair handbrake must be applied
- The power on electric wheelchairs should be switched off and the batteries firmly attached to the wheelchair
- Tracking for the wheelchair and occupant restraint systems should be kept clean, and free from grit, etc, at all times.

Drivers and passenger assistants should be trained in the care (boarding and assistance) of passengers who travel in their wheelchairs. Training is available from the CTA and many local authorities.

The Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) provide more guidance in 'Accessibility Specification for Small Buses Designed to Carry nine to 22 Passengers (Inclusive)', which is available at www.dptac.gov.uk/pubs/smallbus2001/01.htm

Further guidance is also in 'Guidance Note MDA DB 2001 (03) – Guidance on the Safe Transportation of Wheelchairs' and 'DB 2003 (03) Guidance on the Safe Use of Wheelchairs and Vehicle-Mounted Passenger Lifts', both available from the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency at www.mhra.gov.uk

BEST PRACTICE

Passengers in wheelchairs should be afforded the same level of safety as all other passengers. Drivers and escorts should be trained in the care of passengers in wheelchairs.

5.17 Passenger lifts and ramps

Low floor minibuses are now available. These use ramps, which are safer, quicker and easier to use than lifts, especially when the side door is used.

Requirements for power operated lifts and for ramps are set out in DPTAC's 'Accessibility Specification for Small Buses Designed to Carry nine to 22 Passengers (inclusive)'. Lifts should comply with the British Standard BS 6109. The lift controls must be clearly marked and accessible from inside and outside the vehicle. Instructions for using the lift must be clearly displayed.

The lift must only be operated by staff who have received specific training. It must only be operated when the vehicle is stationary and the vehicle hand brake has been applied.

5 The minibus



It must be capable of carrying the heaviest wheelchair, the wheelchair user and a passenger assistant, wherever possible. Any wheelchair with brakes must have them applied while on the lift. Hydraulic wheelchair lifts should be tested every six months according to the requirements of the British Standard BS6109: Part 2: 1989.

The passenger should know what the lift operator is going to do. Electric wheelchairs should be in manual mode and full assistance given to the passenger, especially when the wheelchair has to be reversed off the vehicle. Passengers in wheelchairs should be facing the vehicle while the lift is in operation to reduce the feeling of insecurity.

Further guidance is available in DB 2003 (03) 'Guidance on the Safe Use of Wheelchairs and Vehicle-Mounted Passenger Lifts' from the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency at www.mhra.gov.uk

Ramps

Ramps should have non slip material and raised edges to prevent the loader slipping or falling, and to reduce the risk of wheelchairs slipping off the side. Gradients should not exceed 1:12 except where unavoidable. They must be securely stowed in the minibus when not in use, without obstructing the doors or gangways.

Training

Training for lift and ramp operations, including techniques to avoid manual handling problems for the passenger assistant or driver are provided by the Passenger Assistant Training Schemes (PATS) operated by the CTA (see www.ctauk.org)

BEST PRACTICE

Persons operating lifts should be trained to use them and should be aware of, and follow, the latest guidance for lifts and ramps on minibuses.

5.18 Accessibility

It is vital that passengers can easily board and leave the vehicle during normal use, and in an emergency. Every passenger must have easy access to the doors, which should be kept unlocked. Gangways must be kept clear of luggage at all times. Good accessibility also means that passengers should be able to enter and exit the vehicle comfortably.

Operators should consider the passengers who use the minibus and specify a vehicle design that is not awkward for them. Consider:

- seat widths
- the size of the steps
- the location and number of handrails
- the ease with which doors can be opened and closed
- adequate lighting
- the legibility of instructions and passenger notices
- wheelchair location
- roof height

BEST PRACTICE

All passengers have the right to be transported in a minibus suitable for their needs.

5.19 School bus signs

Under the Road Vehicles Lighting (Amendment) Regulations 1994, minibuses carrying children to or from school must display a prescribed 'school bus' sign to the front and rear of the vehicle. The driver may use hazard warning lights when the vehicle is stationary and children are entering or leaving the vehicle.

5 The minibus



5.20 Emergency equipment

Regulation 42 and Schedule 7 of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 specify that every minibus must carry a British Standard fire extinguisher of water or foam, (halon extinguishers are now illegal in vehicles) with a minimum test rating of 8A or 21B. If passengers in wheelchairs are being carried, the minibus should carry two fire extinguishers, one of which is kept in the passenger compartment. Drivers and passenger assistants should be trained in their use.

The regulations also specify that a suitable, clearly marked first aid box is kept readily available and in good condition. (Appendix 9 lists the minimum content of first aid kits).

The driver and passenger assistant(s) must know where the emergency equipment is kept in the vehicle and how to use it. The driver should check all the items are present before each trip. Every time an item is used the driver should inform the operator, who should ensure the item is replaced or re-filled.

BEST PRACTICE

Appropriate emergency equipment should be provided in the minibus, and drivers and passenger assistants trained in its use.

5.21 Fire hazards

Procedures for dealing with a vehicle fire are an important part of minibus driver training courses. The presence of a passenger assistant will reduce the risk to passengers if a fire breaks out.

In the event of a vehicle fire, the passengers should be evacuated first, and moved as far away from the vehicle as possible before any attempt is made to extinguish the fire. Under bonnet fires should **never** be tackled, but left for the Fire and Rescue Service.

Drivers can assist the Fire and Rescue Service by pulling the bonnet release (but **not** opening the bonnet any further) as they evacuate the vehicle. Fire extinguishers should be checked regularly. **Never** carry a fuel can, either empty or full, in the minibus.

The danger of fire should be considered when preparing the Technical Specification and choosing the minibus. For example, diesel is less flammable than petrol. It is recommended that the minibus be fitted with an automatic fuel cut off device which, in the event of an accident, will retain the fuel in the tank and prevent it being pumped to the engine.

An automatic cut off device is also recommended for the electrical system to reduce the possibility of sparks or overheated cables igniting loose fuel, fluids or gases. An automatic under bonnet fire extinguisher system is also recommended.

Training

Drivers and passenger assistants should undertake rehearsals of evacuation techniques including dealing with passengers who have been injured or have a disability. A training course is available from the CTA (see www.ctauk.org)

BEST PRACTICE

Appropriate fire hazard procedures should be in place.

5.22 Luggage

There are three ways of carrying luggage and equipment in a minibus: inside the vehicle, on the roof or in a trailer. However it is carried, all luggage and equipment must be securely stored. It should also be evenly distributed so one side of the vehicle is not weighed down. The Gross Vehicle Weight (specified in the vehicle handbook) must not be exceeded by the combined weight of the passengers, luggage and equipment.

5 The minibus



Inside the vehicle

In a crash, or emergency stop, unsecured luggage and equipment may be thrown around inside the vehicle, injuring passengers. It is vital that luggage and other equipment is stored safely and securely. It must not obstruct access to any of the doors, the aisles or any occupied seats.

Roof racks

Roof racks or roof boxes may be preferable if bulky equipment, or a large amount of luggage, is to be carried. If they are used, they must be loaded properly in accordance with the vehicle manufacturer's recommendations. If a tarpaulin cover is used it must be securely tied, and all items carried must be securely held so they cannot come loose and fall off the vehicle.

Drivers must be aware of the maximum weight capacity of a roof rack. This is commonly well below what it can be filled with, and if overloaded the stability and safety of the vehicle is adversely affected. The manufacturer's recommended maximum weight for a roof rack should never be exceeded.

The driver and passenger assistant should be trained in the use of roof racks. Drivers need to be aware of how a loaded roof rack affects the vehicle's handling. The use of a roof rack also presents some manual handling issues, for which drivers and passenger assistants must be trained.

Trailers

Alternatively, a trailer may be used to carry luggage or equipment. Lower speed limits apply to minibuses with trailers: 50 m.p.h. on single carriageway roads and 60 m.p.h. for dual carriageways and motorways. Minibuses with trailers are also prohibited from using the outside lane on motorways with three or more lanes.

Drivers who passed their driving test before 1 January 1997 may tow a trailer of any weight, up to the maximum train weight of the minibus. Drivers who passed their driving test on or after 1 January 1997 who have a D1 entitlement on their licence may tow a trailer up to 750kgs on a minibus. To tow a trailer above 750kgs, the driver must have D1 + E entitlements on their licence. Without these entitlements, drivers who obtained their car driving licence on or after 1 January 1997 are not permitted to tow a trailer on a minibus.

In addition to complying with the appropriate licence requirements, all drivers **must** be trained or already experienced in towing before being permitted to drive a minibus with a trailer.

A trailer must not be used on any minibus with rear facing doors which is carrying passengers, unless there is an emergency door on the nearside of the vehicle. In the event of a collision, it is likely that the trailer will obstruct the rear doors. It is the Operator's responsibility to ensure that when passengers are carried, access through the emergency rear exit is not restricted in any way by the trailer.

BEST PRACTICE

All luggage should be securely stowed, and drivers should be trained in the use of roof racks and trailers, if used.

5 The minibus



5.23 Weight limits

It is vital that minibuses are not overloaded. Operators should consult the manufacturer's recommendations for the Maximum Authorised Mass (Gross Vehicle Weight), in the vehicle handbook, which must never be exceeded.

Over-loading is illegal and unsafe. It may make the vehicle more difficult to control and it will increase its braking distances, which could lead to an accident.

A minibus may inadvertently be overloaded, for example, if carrying a full complement of heavier passengers and equipment. Operators should provide clear guidance to drivers, and keep a copy in the vehicle, explaining the need to check the gross vehicle weight before every journey. Drivers should also be aware that driving a minibus which is close to its maximum weight limit, may increase its braking distances.

BEST PRACTICE

The maximum weight limit of the minibus should never be exceeded.

6 Journeys abroad



6.1 The Regulations that govern journeys outside the UK depend upon the country or countries being visited (including those which are simply passed through) and the type of trip being undertaken. There are two relevant types of service:

Regular services

A journey along a specified route with passengers being picked up and set down at pre-determined places. Special regular services cater for specialised clientele such as students, workers or military staff.

Occasional services

Excursions, tours and private hire trips, which will cover most minibus journeys abroad.

6.2 All international journeys

A tachograph must be fitted and used for international journeys (except in Eire). Drivers must be trained in the use of the tachograph as misuse may lead to prosecution or spot fines. Drivers Hours Regulations must be followed from the start of the journey in the UK.

Driving licence requirements and laws about drivers' hours vary in countries outside the EU. Regulations about what emergency equipment must be carried on the minibus also vary; for instance, a warning triangle must be carried in some countries. The Operator should consult one of the main motoring UK organisations or the country's Embassy or consulate in London for further advice.

The Operator should also consult the vehicle's insurers regarding insurance cover for the journey and for the countries to be visited.

Section 19 Small Bus Permits are not valid abroad. Therefore, the driver must hold a PCV licence if any payment is made by passengers for the trip i.e. where it constitutes 'Hire and Reward'. This means that a PCV licence is required for any foreign journey where, had the journey been made in the UK alone, a Section 19 Small Bus Permit would be required.

6.3 Documentation for international journeys

Operators must ensure that all the necessary documentation for journeys abroad is carried. The requirements may vary according to the country or countries being visited and further advice should be obtained. Some or all of the documents below will be required:

- i Full driving licence with appropriate entitlement (see section 3.5)
- ii International Driving Permit or translation of licence (for some countries)
- iii Full passport (for everyone in the vehicle)
- iv European Health Insurance card (for everyone in the vehicle)
- v Letter of authority to drive the minibus
- vi Tachograph charts
- vii Waybill and/or Own Account Certificate
- viii Model Control Document
- ix Vehicle Registration Document
- x Green card (international motor insurance certificate)
- xi If any payment is made by or on behalf of passengers – a full PCV driving licence (see the definition for 'Hire and Reward' in the Glossary)

Advice on taking a minibus abroad is available from the CTA, in the Factsheet 'Taking A Minibus To Europe', which is available from www.ctauk.org

BEST PRACTICE

Operators should ensure that they are aware of, and follow all necessary rules and regulations for international journeys and for all the countries that will be visited or driven through.

7 Glossary



Minibus

A motor vehicle which is constructed or adapted to carry more than eight but not more than 16 passengers in addition to the driver.

A minibus first used on or after 1 April 1988 must comply with regulations 41 to 44, and Schedule 6, of the Road Vehicles Construction and Use Regulations 1986 (SI 1986 No. 1078).

A minibus first used before 1 April 1988 can comply with the 1986 Regulations, or alternatively with the Minibus (Conditions of Fitness, Equipment and Use) Regulations 1977 (as amended).

These regulations set out the minimum construction standards for minibuses with which all manufacturers and converters must comply.

Owner

The registered owner of the minibus.

Operator

The group or individual responsible for organising the carriage of passengers. This may be the driver, if he or she owns the vehicle, or the person, school, organisation, etc. for whom the driver works (whether under a contract of employment or any other description of contract personally to do work, including someone working in a voluntary capacity).

Manager

The person responsible for managing the minibus service, within the school or organisation.

Driver licence entitlements

D1

Vehicles with between nine and 16 passenger seats with a trailer up to 750kg.

D1 + E

Combinations of vehicles where the towing vehicle is in subcategory D1 and its trailer has a MAM of over 750kg, provided that the MAM of the combination thus formed does not exceed 12000kg, and the MAM of the trailer does not exceed the unladen mass of the towing vehicle.

D

Any bus with more than eight passenger seats with a trailer up to 750kg.

D + E

Any bus with more than eight passenger seats with a trailer over 750kg.

Category restrictions

On any category the DVLA may place one or more category restriction on the column next to the category on the Licence document.

Restriction 120 = Complies with health standards for Category D1

Restriction 101 (1) = Not for hire and reward

'Hire or Reward'

'Hire or Reward' embraces any payment (in money or kind), which gives a person a right or expectation, to be carried regardless of whether a profit is made or not. This payment may be a direct payment made by the person themselves, or on their behalf – such as a fare, a grant or even a donation to the operator. It may include other things in addition to the cost of travel – e.g. membership fees, grants, payments for access to specific events etc.

Seat restraint system

A seat belt intended to be worn by a person in a vehicle and designed to prevent or lessen injury to its wearer in the event of a collision to the vehicle and includes, in the case of a child restraint, any special chair to which the belt is attached.

Three point belt

A seat belt which restrains the upper and lower parts of the torso, includes a lap belt, is anchored at not less than three points and is designed for use by an adult.*

Lap belt

A seat belt which passes across the front of the wearer's pelvic region and which is designed for use by an adult.*

*Although they are designed for an adult, so that they are capable of withstanding maximum stress and strain, seat belts are nevertheless suitable for use by children.

7 Glossary



Approved seat belt

An approved seat belt is one which meets either British or European Standards, or equivalents, set out in Construction and Use Regulation 47, is correctly installed, in good working order and displays 'e' or 'E' mark followed by a number or a BS 'kitemark'.

Disabled person's belt

A seat belt which has been specially designed or adapted for use by an adult or young person suffering from some physical disability and which is intended for use solely by such a person.

Child restraint

A seat belt or other device for the use of a child which is designed either to be fitted directly to a suitable anchorage or to be used in conjunction with a seat belt for an adult and held in place by the restraining action of that belt.

An appropriate child restraint is a rearward-facing baby seat, forward-facing child seat, booster seat or booster cushion suitable for the child's weight.

All child restraints must conform to ECE R44.03 or a later version (e.g., R44.04 or R44.05).

M2 vehicles

One of the vehicle categories for type approval purposes laid down in EC Directive 70/156/EEC. M2 vehicles are used for the carriage of more than eight passengers in addition to the driver, but have a maximum weight not exceeding 5 metric tonnes.

Types and standards of appropriate child restraints

Child restraints are designed for specific weight ranges of children. These broadly match different age groups, but it is the weight that is most important. Many can be converted as the child grows and so fit into more than one group.

Note that manufacturers may use names different to those mentioned below.

Types and standards of appropriate child restraints

Type	Weight	Approx age
Rearward-facing baby seats	Group 0 up to 10kgs (22 lbs) ¹ Group 0+ up to 13kgs (29lbs)	Birth to 6-9 months Birth to 12-15 months
Combination seat	Group 0+ to 1 0-18kgs (20-40lbs)	Birth – 4 years
Forward-facing child seat	Group 1 9-18kgs (20-40lbs)	9 months – 4 years
Booster seat ²	Group 2 15-25kgs (33-55lbs)	4-6 years
Booster seat	Group 2 and 3 15-36kgs (33-79lbs)	4-11 years
Booster seat	Group 1, 2 and 3 9-36kgs (20-79lbs)	9 months – 11 years
Booster cushion ²	Group 3 22-36kgs (48-79lbs)	6-11 years

¹Group 0 (0-10kg) baby seats are no longer produced.

²Booster seats that only fit into Group 2 or only into Group 3 are no longer produced. All now fit into either Group 2 and 3 (15-36kg) or Groups 1 to 3 (9-36 kg).



- 1 Pre-drive safety check
- 2 Advice for minibus drivers
- 3 The duties of a passenger assistant – advice for operators
- 4 Advice to passenger assistants
- 5 Advice to parents and guardians
- 6 Advice for children
- 7 Drivers' Hours
- 8 First aid kit and other equipment for minibuses
- 9 Useful addresses
- 10 Suggested further reading



Pre-drive safety check

Every day the minibus is used, the driver 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 3.0mm across centre 3/4 is recommended	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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) fits and 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 telephone (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"/>
Damage or sharp edges	<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 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.



Advice for minibus drivers

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

Before setting off

- Allow sufficient time for the journey. If using a SatNav, set it before you start.
- Avoid long spells of driving, and plan breaks to ensure you are fresh to continue and that children do not get restless.
- Conduct a pre drive safety check before every drive.
- 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.
- 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.
- Ensure that children 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.
- 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.
- Always ensure that ambulant disabled passengers are seated safely and comfortably and that passengers travelling in their wheelchairs are safely restrained. Wheelchairs not in use must also be securely stored.
- 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. Check that children have any necessary medication with them.
- Take care when using passenger lifts and other specialist equipment. Always comply with the manufacturer's instructions.
- 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.
- Know the height, width length and weight of the vehicle, and the position of the exterior fuel cap.

During the journey

- Do not allow noisy or boisterous behaviour, or passengers to trail flags or any other article from the vehicle.
- Enforce a 'No Smoking' rule. It is now a legal requirement that minibuses are 'No Smoking'
- Enforce a 'No Alcohol' rule.
- Do not allow child passengers to operate the doors, and supervise any operation of the doors by responsible persons.



- Approach each stop slowly and with care.
- Use hazard Warning Lights on school trips when children are boarding or leaving the vehicle.
- 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 while driving.
- Children must not be left unaccompanied in the minibus (this is another reason for having a passenger assistant).
- If the vehicle breaks down, or if there is a collision, give clear instructions to the passengers and see that children remain together and supervised: their safety is paramount.
- 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, and as far away from the carriageway and passing traffic as possible. Again ensure that passengers, especially children, remain together and are supervised.
- If requested by the police, or any other person having reasonable cause, give particulars of the driver's name and driving licence, and the name and address of the minibus operator or owner.

At the end of the journey

- Ensure that children 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.
- Take particular care when reversing the vehicle if children are nearby. Avoid unnecessary reversing, but if it is unavoidable, seek adult assistance for direction, and but ensure the assistant does not stand directly behind the vehicle.
- Children alighting from the vehicle should be closely supervised
- 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 the operator.



The duties of a passenger assistant – advice for operators

- 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.
- Check that no passenger boards or leaves the vehicle until it is at a complete standstill, and safely parked by a pavement or other traffic free area.
- Ensure the driver does not move off until everyone is safely seated, facing the front and wearing a properly positioned and adjusted seat belt (if fitted), or using a securely fixed and properly adjusted special harness, seat or child restraint if appropriate.
- Check that ambulant disabled passengers are seated safely, passengers travelling in wheelchairs are safely secured and wheelchairs not in use are securely stored.
- 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 wearing their seat belts (if fitted) throughout the journey.
- Ensure that all luggage is securely stored and that all gangways and exits are kept clear.
- 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).
- Ensure that children are never left unsupervised in the minibus, or if the vehicle breaks down.
- Only operate the passenger lift and other specialist equipment if trained and qualified to do so.
- Keep a complete list of the passengers, including details of any special needs, and ensuring that all passengers have returned to the vehicle after any rest stops.
- In the event of a breakdown or accident, ensure that children remain supervised, are given clear and firm instructions and if necessary, help in evacuating the minibus.
- Help to direct the vehicle if the driver needs to reverse, but do not stand directly behind the vehicle out of the driver's sight. Children must **never** direct a reversing vehicle.



Advice for passenger assistants on minibuses

Before setting off

- Reserve the most appropriate seat for yourself to allow you to supervise the passengers.
- See that children are supervised when boarding the vehicle, especially if they are using a rear door.
- 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.
- Always ensure that ambulant disabled passengers are seated safely and comfortably and that passengers travelling in their wheelchairs are safely restrained.
- Ensure that any wheelchairs, and other equipment, not in use are securely stored.
- 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.
- 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.
- Enforce a 'No Smoking' rule.
- Enforce a 'No Alcohol' rule.
- Do not allow passengers to operate the doors, unless supervised.
- If there is any 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.
- Children must not be left unaccompanied in the minibus.
- If the vehicle breaks down, or if there is a collision, give clear instructions to the passengers and see that children remain supervised: their safety is paramount.
- If there is a risk of fire, however small, evacuate the vehicle and move the occupants to a safe place.
- Ensure that litter is disposed of carefully (in a litter bag or bin) as cans rolling around the floor can be distracting.

During the journey

- Do not allow noisy or boisterous behaviour.
- Try to keep the children occupied the journey will seem much quicker.
- At the end of the journey
 - Ensure that children 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.
 - Do not leave children alone if no one has arrived to collect them.
 - If necessary, assist the driver to reverse the vehicle. Never allow a child to do this. Do not stand directly behind the vehicle while it is reversing.
 - Ensure that passengers take all their personal belongings with them



Advice to parents and guardians

Teaching road safety is one of the most important duties of a parent. It must include teaching children to behave properly when they use public transport. Minibuses are not places for play.

Please read and make sure you understand and agree to these guidelines before allowing your child to make a minibus journey.

Pick-up and drop-off points

Be punctual

Make sure your child is ready for collection at the proper time. Remember, it is your responsibility to ensure your child gets to and from the minibus safely. Make sure your child knows what to do if the minibus is late or does not arrive..

Wait with your child

Wait with your child on the side of the road where the bus stops. Make sure you stand on the side of the road where the bus sets them down on the return journey. Always avoid calling your child across the road to you. Children are excited when they have just come back and traffic will be the last thing on their mind.

Safe walking and crossing

Make sure your child knows and understands the Green Cross Code. Young children cannot judge speed or distance of traffic very well and must not be allowed to cross the road unaccompanied. Advice on safe crossing is available from your local Road Safety Officer located within the County Council, Metropolitan District, London Borough or Unitary Authority.

Meet your child

Make sure that you, or another carer, are at the pre arranged meeting point when your child returns home, and have the telephone number of other parents, the school or other relevant contact person to pass on messages if required.

Safe Route

Make sure that both you and your child know the safest route home after leaving the minibus, and always use it.

On the minibus

Behaviour

Teach your child to act sensibly on or around minibuses. Make sure your child knows that bad behaviour on the minibus is dangerous and to listen to the driver's and passenger assistant's instructions. Children should understand that misbehaviour may result in the minibus returning to its base, the child being taken to a place of safety and/or the minibus remaining stationary until the parents have collected the child.

Contact details

Make sure that the person responsible for the minibus has up to date information about the child making the journey, including contact details for emergencies.

Medical details

Make sure that the person responsible for the minibus has up to date information about any special requirements the child may have and relevant medical information in writing.

Medication

If your child may need to take medication during the trip, discuss this in advance with the trip organisers. Remember neither the driver or teachers can give medication. Teachers and drivers do not have a legal duty to administer medication, but they can volunteer to support a child. If they do this, they must have appropriate training. If a child is going out on a school trip, provision must be made to ensure the child's health and safety.



Other details

Advise the driver and passenger assistant if there is a particular difficulty with your child on a particular day. But it is your duty to decide whether your child should go on the journey in such circumstances. It is the parent's responsibility for assessing whether a child is fit to undertake the journey.

Damage

Any vandalism caused by your child whilst on a journey, is your responsibility. Persistent offenders may not be accepted on future journeys. Unreasonable behaviour may endanger your own, or someone else's, child. Parents will be expected to reimburse the operator for any damage caused by their child.

Concerns

Discuss and resolve any concerns you may have with the responsible person, eg: the headteacher or group leader.



Advice for children on minibuses

- Go to the toilet before you get on the minibus. Arrive on time, and wait for the minibus away from the road.
- Don't push or rush towards the minibus when it arrives.
- Find a seat quickly and quietly without pushing and put on your seatbelt.
- Make sure your bags are correctly stored so they do not block the gangways or take up seats.
- Stay seated when the minibus is moving and keep your seat belt on at all times.
- It's dangerous to kneel on your seat.
- Only speak to the driver when he or she is not driving, or in an emergency. Speak to the passenger assistant (if there is one) rather than the driver.
- If you need to use the toilet or you feel unwell during the journey, tell the passenger assistant, or the driver if the passenger assistant is not present.
- Don't throw things or play about in the minibus
- Wait until the minibus has stopped and the driver has told you to undo your seatbelt before getting up to leave.
- Take your belongings with you when you leave the minibus, except in an emergency when you should leave them behind.
- Be careful, if you have forgotten something and you return to the minibus the driver may be pulling away. Tell the passenger assistant.
- If you have to cross the road after getting off the minibus, wait for it to move away first. Use the Green Cross Code.



Drivers' Hours

The table below summarises the main rules concerning Drivers' Hours. A comprehensive explanation of the rules is contained in 'Drivers' Hours and Tachograph Rules for Road Passenger Vehicles in the UK and Europe' (PSV375). Available from the www.vosa.gov.uk

	Domestic rules	EC rules
Maximum length of working day	16 hours	13 hours
Daily driving period	10 hours	9 hours
Time driving without a break*	5 1/2 hours	4 1/2 hours
Minimum length of break	30 minutes	45 minutes
Daily rest period	10 hours	11 hours
Weekly driving limit		56 hours

*The break is a period during which the driver may not perform other work and is exclusively used for recuperation. This break may be split into smaller periods and distributed throughout the 4 1/2 hour. In this case, the first period must be at least 15 minutes, and the second period must be at least 30 minutes.



First aid kit and other equipment for minibuses

First aid kit

- 10 antiseptic wipes, foil packed
- 1 conforming disposable bandage (not less than 7.5 cm wide)
- 2 triangular bandages
- 1 packet of 24 assorted adhesive dressings
- 3 large sterile unmedicated ambulance dressings (not less than 15 x 20 cm)
- 2 sterile eye pads with attachments
- 12 assorted safety pins
- 1 pair of rustproof blunt-ended scissors
- Disposable gloves
- Mouth mask for resuscitation.

Fire extinguisher

At least one fire extinguisher (two are recommended for accessible minibuses) which:

- complies with BS 5432 (or an equivalent, e.g. BSEN 3), and
- has a minimum test rating of 8A or 21B, and
- contains water or foam (please note Halon extinguishers are no longer permitted in vehicles)

Other equipment

It is recommended that the following should also be carried:

- Pen and paper
- The organisation's internal instructions and contact details
- Insurance details
- Motoring breakdown policy details
- Mobile phone, phonecard or change for the phone
- Webbing cutter
- A high-visibility coat complying with BS EN 471
- An emergency warning triangle or a flashing beacon (not fitted to the vehicle)
- A working torch
- Sterile gloves and mouth masks.





Useful addresses

Arthritis Care

18 Stephenson Way
London NW1 2HD
0207 380 6500
Email: Info@arthritiscare.org.uk
www.arthritiscare.org.uk

Association of Industrial Road Safety Officers (AIRSO)

68 The Boulevard
Worthing
West Sussex BN13 1LA
01903 506095
Email: airso@talk21.com
www.airso.org.uk

Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers (ATCO)

Ian White
ATCO Liaison Officer
Email: ianwhite@wiltshire.gov.uk

Barnardos

Tanners lane
Barkingside
Ilford
Essex IG6 1QG
020 8550 8822
Email: dorothy.howes@barnardos.org.uk
www.barnardos.org.uk

British Standards Institution (BSI)

389 Chiswick High Road
London W4 4AL
0208 996 9000
www.bsi-global.com

Child Accident Prevention Trust (CAPT)

4th Floor, Cloister Court
22-26 Farringdon Lane
London EC1R 3AJ
020 7608 3828
Email: safe@capt.org.uk
www.capt.org.uk

Community Transport Association (CTA)

Highbank
Halton Street
Hyde
Stockport SK14 2NY
08707 743586
Email: advice@ctauk.org
www.ctauk.org

Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT)

Drury House
34-43 Russell Street
London WC2B 5HA
020 7240 3131
Email: admin@cpt-uk.org
www.cpt-uk.org

Department for Children, Schools and Families

Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT
0870 000 2288
Email: info@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk
www.dfes.gov.uk

Department of Environment (Northern Ireland)

Transport Division Headquarters
Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street
Belfast BT2 8GB
Email: doe.internetteam@doeni.gov.uk
www.doeni.gov.uk

Department for Transport (DfT)

Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
London SW1P 3DR
0207 944 4716
Email: road.safety@dft.gsi.gov.uk
www.dft.gov.uk
www.transportoffice.gov.uk
www.direct.gov.uk/en/motoring



Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC)

Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
London SW1P 3DR
020 7944 8011
Email: dptac@dft.gsi.gov.uk
www.dptac.gov.uk

Driving Standards Agency

Stanley House
Talbot Street
Nottingham NG1 5GU
0115 901 2500 (Tel)
0115 901 2510 (Fax)
www.dsa.gov.uk

DVLA

Driver enquiries

Drivers Customer Services (DCS)
Correspondence Team
Swansea SA6 7JL
0870 240 0009
drivers.dvla@gtnet.gov.uk

Vehicle enquiries

Vehicle Customer Services (VCS)
Swansea SA99 1AR
0870 240 0010
Email: vehicles.dvla@gtnet.gov.uk

www.dvla.gov.uk

Local Authority Road Safety Officers' Association (LARSOA)

Brian Hogarth
Secretary
5 Farriers Court
Scopwick
Lincoln LN4 3PL
Email: brian.hogarth@btinternet.com
www.larsoa.org

Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)

10-2 Market Towers
1 Nine Elms Lane
London SW8 5NQ
0207 084 2000
email: info@mhra.gsi.gov.uk
www.mhra.gov.uk

Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS)

3rd Floor Clutha House
10 Storey's Gate
London SW1P 3AY
0207 222 7732
Email: mail@pacts.org.uk
www.pacts.org.uk

PHAB

Summit House
Wandle Road
Croydon
Surrey CR0 1DF
020 8667 9443
Email: info@phabengland.org.uk
www.phabengland.org.uk

Road Safety Council of Northern Ireland

Barry Griffin
Unit 1A
Boucher Business Park
Belfast BT9 6FY
028 90 665757
Email: admin@roadsafetycouncil.com
www.roadsafetycouncil.com

Road Safety Wales

Steve Baker
2nd Floor, 2 Cwrt-y-Parc
Parc Ty Glas
Cardiff Business Park
Llanishen
Cardiff CF14 5GH
Email: sbaker@rospa.com
www.roadsafetywales.co.uk



Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)

Kevin Clinton
Edgbaston Park
353 Bristol Road
Birmingham B5 7ST
0121 248 2000
Email: kclinton@rospa.com

Willie Wills
Livingstone House
43 Discovery Terrace
Heriot-Watt University Research Park
Edinburgh EH4 4AP
0131 449 9379
Email: wwills@rospa.com

Steve Baker
2nd Floor, 2 Cwrt-y-Parc
Parc Ty Glas
Cardiff Business Park
Llanishen
Cardiff CF14 5GH
029 20 761306
Email: sbaker@rospa.com

Nella House
Dargan Crescent
Belfast BT3 9JP
02890 501160

www.rospa.com

Scottish Accident Prevention Council (SAPC)

Livingstone House
43 Discovery Terrace
Heriot-Watt University Research Park
Edinburgh EH4 4AP
0131 449 9379
Email: wwills@rospa.com
www.sapc.org.uk

Scottish Government

Transport Department
Area 3-H
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ
0131 244 0763 (Tel)
0131 244 0785 (Fax)
www.scotland.gov.uk

Road Safety Scotland

Michael McDonnell
Director
Heriot-Watt Research Park
Riccarton
Currie
Edinburgh EH14 4AP
0131 472 9200
Email: enquiries@roadsafetyscotland.org.uk
www.roadsafetyscotland.org.uk

Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT)

Forbes House
Halkin Street
London SW1X 7DS
0207 235 7000
www.smmt.co.uk

National Assembly for Wales

Cardiff Bay
Cardiff CF99 1NA
029 20 825111
www.wales.gov.uk

Vehicle and Operators Service Agency (VOSA)

Berkeley House
Croydon Street
Bristol BS5 0DA
0870 6060440
Enquiries@vosa.gov.uk
www.vosa.gov.uk

Advice is also available from the Road Safety Department of your local authority.



Key documents

The HSE

www.hse.gov.uk

- Driving at Work
- A Guide to Risk Assessment Requirements
- Five Steps to Risk Assessment
- Managing Vehicle Safety at the Workplace
- Workplace Transport Safety

RoSPA

www.rospa.com

- Driving for Work: Safer Journey Planner
- Driving for Work: Safer Speeds
- Driving for Work: Drink and Drugs
- Driving for Work: Mobile Phones
- Driving for Work: Driver Assessment & Training
- Driving for Work: Vehicle Technology
- Driving for Work: Own Vehicles
- Driving for Work: Fitness To Drive
- Managing Risk on the Road: A Guide for Voluntary Organisations
- Volunteer Driver's Handbook
- Essential Minibus Driving
- The RoSPA National Minibus Test

Vehicle and Operators Services Agency

www.vosa.org.uk

- Drivers' Hours Rules for Road Passenger Vehicles PSV 375
- Passenger Transport Provided by Voluntary Groups, Guide for Operators PSV 385
- Public Service Vehicle Operator Licensing Guide to Operators PSV 437"
- Local Bus Service Registration Guide to Operators PSV 353A
- Minibus & Coach Seatbelts – Advice to Uses & Operators of Minibuses and Coaches Carrying Children VSE 1/ 96
- Minibus & Coach Seatbelts – Advice on Retro-fitting Seatbelts to minibuses & Coaches VSE 2/ 96"
- Guide to Maintaining Roadworthiness - Commercial Goods and Passenger Carrying Vehicles
- Recommended Specification for Buses used to Operate Local Bus Services
- Recommended Specification for Low Floor Buses



Department for Children, Schools and Families

www.teachernet.gov.uk

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- Licensing for Incidental Drivers of the School Minibus
 - Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits: A Good Practice Guide
-

DVLA

www.dvla.gov.uk

-
- At a Glance Guide to the Current Medical Standards of Fitness to Drive
-

Community Transport Association

www.ctauk.org

-
- Driver licensing – minibuses
 - Minibus management – buying a new vehicle
 - Minibus management – hire charges
 - Minibus management – maintenance schedules
 - Minibus management – Taking a minibus to Europe
 - Minibus management – MOT testing
 - Minibus management – registration and excise duty
 - Minibus Management – Road Speed Limiters
 - Minibus Management – Tachographs
 - Seatbelts and Child Restraints – Minibuses
 - The Safety of Passengers in Wheelchairs on Buses
 - Bus Service Operator’s Grant for Section 22 Community Buses
 - Concessionary Fares and Community Transport
 - Minibus Brokerage
-

DfT

www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk

-
- Seatbelts and Child Restraints
-

Department for Transport

www.dft.gov.uk

-
- Increasing Bus Use for Journeys to School: A Guide to Best Practice within Existing Legislation
 - The School Run – Training Programme for Bus Drivers
-

Available in most good bookshops

-
- The Highway Code
 - Roadcraft
 - The Bus and Coach Driver’s Manual
-



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Edgbaston Park,
353 Bristol Road,
Birmingham B5 7ST

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VAT Registration No. 655 1316 49

www.rospace.com

