



# Safe Transport

## Safe vehicles and drivers

This document is intended to give basic advice on how to make sure that your vehicle is safe and how to avoid issues in adverse weather conditions.

### **My vehicle has an MOT, isn't that enough?**

An MOT certificate only indicates that a vehicle was roadworthy at the time of the inspection.

So the next day your vehicle could be unroadworthy and potentially dangerous to you, the passengers that you carry and to other road users.

Our contract terms state that

*"All vehicles provided by the Contractor must comply in all respects with relevant legislation, and any regulations made there under so far as are relevant."*

and goes on to say

*"The Operator shall not use ..... any vehicle which is found to have a defect which could affect the safety or wellbeing of passengers"*

So it is important that every vehicle is roadworthy **at all times**.

### **The MOT gave an advisory, what should I do?**



This will very much depend on what the advisory notice was for but generally they are only issued where there is a likelihood that the problem could get worse.

Our advice would be to rectify the fault as soon as possible, particularly where the fault may potentially affect the safe operation of the vehicle e.g. steering, suspension, brakes, or vision.

When Suffolk County Council carries out checks of vehicles in conjunction with DVSA we may also look at the MOT record for the vehicle online. If a vehicle fails a check for a fault that was identified at an earlier MOT this will be viewed seriously.

In the case of taxis we may also refer the matter to the licensing authority.

### **What else can I do to make the vehicle safe?**



We suggest that a daily visual check is made of your vehicle, ideally you should make a record of the check. At the very least check the following-

- Tyre condition (check for full inflation and for damage, include spare if fitted).
- All lights working.
- Indicators (you can check by switching on the hazard warning lights).
- All glass clear and intact (incl. mirrors).
- Spare tyre / emergency kit
- Are all fluid levels ok (washer bottle and oil) – also check for obvious leaks.
- Wipers are clearing the windscreen.
- Sufficient fuel to complete the journey.
- Dashboard warning lights.

## Anything else I should do?

The other vital component that should be in good working order is the driver, if you are in doubt as to your fitness to drive then you should not drive.

Remember that medications (prescription or over the counter) can affect your ability and you should always read the leaflets included with them.

Clearly driving under the influence of any alcoholic drink or drugs is absolutely forbidden and if detected will lead to the immediate termination of contracts.

In summary when it comes to checks think of the following acronym –

### P.O.W.D.E.R.Y.

**P**etrol

**O**il

**W**ater

**D**amage

**E**lectrics

**R**ubber

**Y**ou

We have also included a sample checklist at the end of this guidance that you may wish to use.

## Why is this important?

The transport that you provide for Suffolk County Council carries vulnerable young people (or adults) and it is important that they are transported safely.

If basic safety precautions are not taken this could lead to a breakdown which delays the journey or even an accident where passengers could be injured.

The safety of passengers is absolutely the top priority and both the driver and their employer must play their part. The contract terms place an obligation on all parties to comply with all legislation and to address all Health & Safety issues. Failure to do so will be viewed seriously and may lead to the contract being terminated.

## The journey itself

Even with a well maintained vehicle there are other things to consider.



As you are driving, be aware of how the vehicle handles. For example, vague steering could indicate a problem with tyres or other mechanical components. Excessive travel on brake and clutch pedals will also indicate problems. Don't ignore these problems, get them checked before they become more serious, as well as being safer it may save you a bigger repair bill in the future.



There can be many distractions when driving. Using a mobile phone (making a call or reading/sending texts), adjusting a sat nav or changing the track on an ipod all take your concentration away from the road. Depending on the circumstances you may be committing an offence such as careless driving.

You may feel that you are in control but you cannot predict what other road users may do and you must be able to react to avoid an accident. If you are not concentrating on the road your reaction times will not be as quick.



Drive to the conditions. In fog or rain reduce your speed and increase your braking distances. Remember that it is not just you in the vehicle, you have been entrusted with the safety of others.

## Are you fit to drive?

The driver is a vital part of making sure that each and every journey is safe.

### **Fatigue**

Do not exceed any legislative limits on your driving hours and do not drive if you feel tired.

### **Illness**

If you are feeling ill be aware of the impact that medication can have on your ability to drive. Read the guidance provided with "over the counter" medicines for any warnings about drowsiness.

If you are on any form of prescription medicine and also need to purchase nonprescription drugs, check with your GP or pharmacist if they will cause any issues if taken together.

If you are diagnosed with a long term medical condition check that this does not need to be reported to DVSA or your licensing authority. Your GP can offer advice or you can check on the DVSA website.

### **Eyesight**

It is worth having regular checks on your eyesight to ensure that you can see well enough to react to any emergency in front of you.

### **Comfort**

If you are driving an unfamiliar vehicle, take time to set yourself up and make sure that you know where all the controls are. Poor seating position can affect your control of the vehicle and also contribute to fatigue.

### **Drugs and alcohol**

There is no safe limit for recreational drugs or alcohol, their impact on your ability to drive will depend on many factors.

Suffolk County Council has a zero tolerance policy regarding drugs and alcohol. Drivers should be aware that any incident will lead to the termination of the contract.

## How to deal with emergencies



In the event of a breakdown or if a passenger is taken ill, you must act to ensure the safety of all your passengers.

- Pull over to a safe spot on the road and switch on headlights and hazard warning lights.
- Call immediately for an ambulance if any of your passengers need medical help.
- Assess whether it is safe for passengers to stay on the vehicle until help arrives.
- In the event of a breakdown summon help from your company/breakdown organisation.

- If your vehicle is causing a serious obstruction, summon the police.
- Do not allow passengers off the vehicle unless there is a serious risk to them if they remained on board.
- If passengers must be taken off the vehicle they should (if possible) use the nearside door and move to the front of the vehicle or to a safe area.
- Enlist any nearby help or responsible passengers to ensure that everyone stays safe while you deal with the incident.
- Once you are satisfied that passengers are safe - Advise your employer and the school or day care centre so that parents and carers can be informed. Contact Suffolk Passenger Transport to advise them of the incident.
- Do NOT attempt even simple repairs, wait for help and ensure the safety of all passengers.

### **P.O.W.D.E.R.Y Checks: Petrol, Oil, Water, Damage, Electrics, Rubber, You?**

Date ..... Time ..... Vehicle Reg No: .....

#### **Under Bonnet**

OIL  COOLANT  BRAKE FLUID  SCREENWASH  LEAKS

#### **Outside vehicle**

TYRES  WIPERBLADES  LIGHTS  BRAKELIGHTS  FOGS

REVERSE  INDICATORS  PREVIOUSLY UNREPORTED DAMAGE (none)

(or list) .....

#### **Inside vehicle**

HORN  FUEL  HAND BRAKE  BRAKE TEST  SEAT BELTS

HEAD RESTRAINTS  LOAD SECURITY  FIT TO DRIVE  TAX