



Briefing 20-30

April 2020

Drivers' Handbooks

To: All Chief Executives, Main Contacts and APSE Contacts in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Key Points

A recent network query from an APSE member local authority has shown that many local authorities are producing their own drivers' handbooks, and those that were shared have many commonalities and many differences. Several respondents said that while they did not have one currently, they would like to consider issuing one to all of their drivers.

This briefing provides a starting point for those local authorities who have not yet issued their drivers with handbooks and will be useful for those authorities who are considering updating their handbooks in the near future.

Please note that this briefing does not constitute legal advice, it simply provides a general list of things to consider including in the production of a driver handbook.

1.0 Why should you have a handbook?

Many local authorities responded to the original network query on this issue to say that while they did not currently have a driver handbook, that they would be interested in producing one. Some of the reasons for issuing your drivers with a handbook include:

- To reduce injuries resulting from vehicle use
- To reduce preventable damage to its' vehicles and third parties and/or their property
- It can be used as part of the risk management process/strategy
- It ensures that policies are communicated to drivers

A well written and comprehensive handbook is another potential tool in safeguarding your local authority's reputation and instructing drivers on best practice. Handbooks

shared as part of this exercise varied in size from as few as 10 pages up to 90 pages. Some are comprehensive and others split each section into several separate corporate documents/policies. You should use your best judgement on what is right for your authority.

2.0 Sections to include

Most handbooks had the following sections:

- **Useful phone numbers**
in the event of a breakdown, accident and other useful contacts (e.g. fleet manager, road safety manager, insurance manager)
- **The law**
(e.g. Highway Code, Driver hours, tachograph guidance)
- **Vehicles**
(e.g. driver's daily checks, defect rectification, MOTs and service schedules, vehicle security, breakdown and puncture procedures, overnight parking)
- **Authorised drivers**
(e.g. licence checks and endorsements, accessible minibuses, carrying passengers, tracking systems)
- **Health and safety**
(e.g. seatbelts, loading the vehicle, towing trailers, use of mobile communications, prescribed medication, notification of illness/condition/disability, eyesight checks, clothing and footwear, smoking)
- **Accidents and damage**
(e.g. accidents involving a third party, providing details to a third party, notifying the police, accident reports, damage not resulting from an accident)
- **Minibus driver information**
(e.g. child seats, booster cushions, seat belts)

Other potentially useful sections include:

- one local authority had a series of safety tips for driving in fog, windy weather, floods and snow/ice

3.0 Useful phone numbers

Many of the drivers handbooks viewed in the preparation of this briefing contained useful phone numbers for drivers such as:

- Phone numbers in the event of a breakdown, accident, theft or loss
- Fleet manager
- Road safety manager
- Insurance manager
- Fleet reception
- Fleet technical and compliance officer
- Council fuelling sites (and their addresses/opening hours)

3.0 The law and code of practice

All of the handbooks viewed as part of the research for this briefing has a section stating that their handbooks are for guidance only, and that they are not designed to teach readers how to drive.

Many also stated that drivers should treat the vehicle as if it were their own, and that it was their responsibility to protect the substantial capital investment of the local authority in their fleet.

Code of practice

Some of the handbooks have a code of practice outlining the general requirements that drivers are required to comply with as part of their job. This might include:

- Only driving vehicles you are licensed, authorised and where necessary trained to drive
- Carry out daily checks and complete paperwork as prescribed
- Promptly report any defects relating to authority owned, hired and leased vehicles
- Being aware of the operating limits of your vehicle (e.g. loading, height, weight)
- Reporting any traffic offences to your line manager/supervisor
- Always driving in accordance with the requirements of the Highway Code

Legislation

It is important that drivers are familiar with the vast amount of legislation that they are subject to. Drivers are governed by multiple laws enforced by agencies such as the police, Customs and Excise, VOSA, the Health and Safety Executive, Trading Standards, etc.

The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations and the Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations state that the driver is responsible for “ensuring that the vehicle is in a roadworthy condition at all times”.

O Licence (Operator's Licence)

An Operator's Licence aka O Licence is granted to the council and requires that all of its vehicles are in fit/serviceable condition. The licence also has many other rules regarding driving hours, tachographs, speed limits, vehicle loading, vehicle checks, defects and keeping records on all of the above. In order for the council to maintain its O Licence, strict processes and procedures need to be followed and drivers need to be made aware of their responsibilities regarding this.

Drivers' hours

- Complying with Driver's Hours Regulations - both British Domestic Rules and European Rules
- Information on weekly driving, fortnightly driving, breaks from driving, daily rest, split daily rest, weekly rest
- Rules for passenger carrying vehicles - if applicable

Tachograph guidance

- Information on the regulations surrounding analogue and digital Tachographs
- Information on how to complete analogue Tachograph charts (e.g. start/end locations and odometer readings)
- Information on how digital Tachographs record information, visual warnings and DVLA Digital Driver Cards

Traffic violations and parking fines

- Contact details for reporting incidents

Driver CPC

- Information on the need to carry a Driver Certificate of Professional Competence card (DCPC) card for drivers of vehicles over 3500kg at all times

Other information you may want to include:

- Information on the operation of your authority's Fleet Management System

4.0 Vehicles

Driver's daily checks

- Paperwork required to be completed every day
- Checking and reporting any vehicle defects at the start of the day/shift
- Information on what is required as part of the authority's daily check (e.g. clean windows and lights, tyre pressure, checking bodywork and lights, checking wheel nuts)
- Information on the standards to check against (e.g. the correct tread depth for different vehicles)

Defect rectification

- Information on who/where to report defects to and what forms to complete

MOTs and service schedules

- Staying aware of dates for servicing and MOTs of vehicles in your care
- Removing all materials from vehicle and ensuring the vehicle is clean prior to any servicing/maintenance

Fuel

- Ensuring you use the correct fuel
- Use of council fuel key fobs and fuel cards where appropriate

Vehicle security

- Not leaving vehicles unattended
- Ensuring windows are closed, handbrake is on doors locked and vehicle is alarmed
- Not leaving valuables in vehicles (e.g. tools, equipment)
- Procedures for reporting vehicle thefts and break-ins

Breakdown and puncture procedures

- Phone number/s to call in the event of a breakdown

Parking and overnight parking

- General information on parking in restricted parking areas to carry out essential work - e.g. using flashing beacon lights, using warning signs, locking moveable attachments on specialist vehicles
- Information on where vehicles should be parked overnight

Speed limits

- You may wish to include a breakdown of the speed limits for different vehicle types in built-up areas, single carriageways, dual carriageways and motorways

5.0 Authorised drivers

General information

- Authorisation to drive process
- Health and operational declaration
- Ensuring you only drive vehicles you are licensed and authorised to drive
- Not allowing any other person to drive the vehicle in your charge or operate ancillaries unless they are expressly authorised to do so

Licence checks and endorsements

- Licence inspection

Statement on how often you are required to present your driving licence to your Line Manager (e.g. 0-3 Fixed Penalty Points = Annually, 4-8 Fixed Penalty Points = Every 3 Months).

Accessible minibuses

- Speed limits for minibuses on different types of roads
- Details on requirements to drive accessible minibuses (e.g. D1 entitlement, MiDAS Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme)

Carrying passengers

- Information on who is permitted to travel in local authority vehicles

Tracking systems

- Information on the council's tracking systems used in vehicles
- Warning that tracking systems must not be interfered with and the consequences of this

6.0 Health & Safety

Seatbelts

- Reiterating that seatbelts must be worn where fitted

Loading the vehicle

- Details on penalties for overloading vehicles
- Information on how to ensure vehicles are not overloaded and loads are secure
- Reiterating the responsibility of the driver for the vehicle load

Towing trailers

- Checking the trailer and vehicle are suitable and legal for the job
- How to calculate the towed weight of the vehicle
- Information on the speed restrictions for vehicles towing trailers
- Licence requirements for towing trailers
- Carrying out checks of trailer couplings, breakaway cable and trailers during daily vehicle checks (if appropriate)
- Advice on the security of loads

Use of mobile communications

- Advice against using handheld mobile phones or radio microphones while driving
- Instructions on how to use any radio systems in place in the authority

Prescribed medication

- How to notify the appropriate supervisor/managers of a change in prescribed medication

Notification of illness/condition/disability

- How to notify the appropriate supervisor/managers of a change in physical and/or mental health

Eyesight checks

- As part of pre-employment medical checks
- How often eyesight checks are required or whether this is included in periodic medical check questionnaires
- Need to wear glasses/contact lenses at all times if necessary

Clothing and footwear

- Advice on uniform standards and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) if required

Smoking

- Information on any no smoking policy in place in authority owned, hired and leased vehicles

Drug and alcohol misuse

- Information on the authority's drug, alcohol and/or substance misuse policy (if appropriate)

7.0 Accidents and damage

Accidents involving a third party

- Legal responsibility of drivers to stop and exchange details (you could include a checklist of information needed)
- Phone numbers for the appropriate line managers and departments for reporting accidents
- Procedures at the scene of road traffic incidents

Providing details to a third party

- Details required by a third party (e.g. Registration, Policy Number)

Notifying the police

- Information on what cases the police should be informed

Accident reports

- Completion of appropriate paperwork (e.g. RIDDOR for the Health and Safety Executive)
- Road Traffic Incident card (RTI) usage

Damage not resulting from an accident

- Employees need to report any damage immediately to their line manager

8.0 Minibus driver information

Carrying passengers

- Legal responsibility to ensure passengers are carried safely

- List of the permitted passengers in the council's vehicles (e.g. council employees, people transported as part of a council service, those authorised by a line manager)

Child seats / booster cushions

- Information on children under 12 years of age / 4'5" using booster cushions, or if not available children aged 3 or over using adult seat belts

Seat belts

- Ensuring passengers know they are legally required to wear seat belts
- Information on how to report passengers for not complying or if there are issues with belts in vehicles

9.0 APSE Comment

APSE welcomes the use of drivers' handbooks as a way of encouraging best practice, and reinforcing the seriousness of safety in the operation of local authority fleets. The information contained within the briefing should serve as a useful starting point for those developing a driver handbook or updating their council's existing handbook.

APSE encourages our local authority transport members to continue to share best practice with each other and to utilise our Network Query service as a means of finding answers to your service needs and questions.

APSE has several Transport and Mechanical advisory groups (both National and Area) which are free to attend for APSE local authority members. Please visit the [APSE website](#) for more details on future meetings.

The APSE Fleet, Waste and Grounds event in May 2020 has been postponed. Further information on a rescheduled date will be made available [here](#) shortly.

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