

Driving for Work – Guidance for Employees

These guidance notes are for all employees who are out all day delivering parcels or driving between clients, or a secretarial role in the office kitchen.

Both you and your employers should treat the car as a piece of work equipment. So the car in the office/workshop/factory etc. is simply a tool. Most accidents involve someone who is not used to driving a lot simply get into bad habits.

The purpose of these guidance notes is to ensure that you should do every time you use the car.

1. Maintenance

You are responsible for the car you drive. So, if the lights don't work or the car is not on your licence.

Before you take any vehicle out on the road you should always check:

- 1.1 The lights, front and rear.
- 1.2 The indicators.
- 1.3 The tyres, checking the pressure. Often you will be asked to check the pressure. If you are unsure either ask your employer or go to a tester on a garage forecourt. Having the correct pressure for the vehicle as well as the weather.
- 1.4 Windscreen wipers.

2. Planning for your Journey

- 2.1 You should always plan your journey. Known or expected delays, such as rush hours or road works. Our weather is becoming more unpredictable, depending on the time of year. In the summer, water in the summer months. If possible, carry a hot drink.
- 2.2 Most cars nowadays have a fire extinguisher. Make sure you know where it is.
- 2.3 Most people have a mobile phone in their car, so you can call for help if you are stranded.

3. Driving in Adverse Weather

- 3.1 In an ideal world, driving in adverse conditions would be avoided where possible. However, if you must drive, consider the following:

company business, whether they are a sales director or service engineer. If you are driving to the shops to get some tea for the office, you are not on company business.

etc. you drive at work as another employee. Ensure your wellbeing in the car. It is estimated that up to a third of road traffic accidents involve people – especially those who are not used to driving a lot.

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Before you take any vehicle out on the road you should always check:

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3.1.1 Slow down. It will take longer to see and react to hazards.

3.1.2 Keep a safe distance from the vehicle in front. The Highways Agency recommends a minimum of two seconds from the vehicle in front. Stopping distances are doubled in wet conditions and tripled in icy conditions.

3.1.3 Drive as though you will be hit from behind. Do not pull out or swerve in front of you at any time.

3.1.4 Use your dipped headlights if visibility is poor, use your dipped headlights.

3.1.5 Only if visibility is very poor should you use your fog lights. Remember fog lights are not to act as running lights, and are not to be used in normal conditions.

3.1.6 Avoid sharp turns.

3.1.7 Watch out for signs of poor driving conditions.

4. Heavy Rain and Flooding

4.1 Allow a larger gap between vehicles. Give the vehicle in front to allow for the increased stopping distance and surface spray especially in heavy rain.

4.2 Do not attempt to cross a flooded area if you are unsure of the depth. Many vehicles will float (even small cars) but damage can be caused by much shallower water.

4.3 If you have to drive through a flooded area, drive on the highest part of the road and keep your speed low.

4.4 Keep in first gear when driving through water, having due regard for the depth of the water.

4.5 Always test your brakes after driving through water, having due regard for the depth of the water.

5. Snow and Ice

5.1 Make sure you have cleared your car of snow and ice before you move off. Clear your windscreen properly before you move off. Clearing your windscreen to peer through is not enough, and you may be stopped by the police. In such weather you should clear your vehicle thoroughly and well in advance of your journey. And be aware that if you leave your vehicle running unattended outdoors, your insurance may be invalidated if it is stolen.

5.2 Once on the move, drive slowly. You should normally, but not so slowly as to cause your vehicle to stall.

5.3 Keep a ten second gap between vehicles and the vehicle in front of you, remembering that stopping distances may be considerably greater than in normal conditions.

5.4 Use the highest gear possible (without increasing your speed).

5.5 Brake gently to avoid skidding. Allow the vehicle to slow down naturally wherever possible.

5.6 If the vehicle does skid, do not use the brakes. Instead ease off the accelerator and gently steer in the direction you want to regain control.

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6. Driving in Fog

- 6.1 Many accidents happen in fog simply because people are going too fast and cannot see the car in front until it is too late.
- 6.2 As with other adverse weather conditions, the key is to slow down and make sure you have plenty of room in front of the car in front.
- 6.3 In foggy conditions, your headlights will not be powerful enough. So now is the time when you should use your fog lights, especially the rear ones, so that drivers behind you can see you.

7. Tailgating

- 7.1 If you find you are being tailgated, have another driver closer to you than you think is safe, then you should you do not do anything that could cause an accident.
- 7.2 Do not slam on your brakes. This will make them back off.
- 7.3 Do not speed up; adjust to an appropriate speed for the road and conditions, you will reduce your chances of having an accident. The best thing to do is to move to the left when it is safe to do so and allow the other driver to pass.
- 7.4 Ignore the follower and drive off.
- 7.5 Do not make eye contact or aggressive gestures.

8. Security

- 8.1 Do not leave valuables such as mobile phones, Sat Navs, laptops and tablets in the car.
- 8.2 Place any bags and boxes in the vehicle regardless of whether they contain anything of value. In the car, use the vehicle's load cover.
- 8.3 Do not leave documents such as your insurance certificate, insurance certificate or registration documents in the car.
- 8.4 Always lock the car when you go to the garage kiosk.
- 8.5 Never leave the keys in the car when you go to the garage kiosk.
- 8.6 Never leave the vehicle unattended.
- 8.7 A woman should never leave her handbag on the display, put a coat/jumper over it or slide it under the seat. A handbag quite often contains your house keys and details of your home. If a thief gets your bag...

9. Personal Safety

- 9.1 It is always good practice to let people know your destination and estimated time of arrival.
- 9.2 Try to avoid leaving the car on the passenger seat when you are in slow moving traffic. When waiting at traffic lights or roundabouts. Opportunist thieves will often get in the car and grab as they pass. For the same reason it is unwise to leave the car with the windows open wide in traffic.
- 9.3 Park in well-lit and busy areas. If you are parking in daylight and will be returning to your car, consider what the area will be like upon your return.
- 9.4 Many modern vehicles have a remote unlock facility. Unless you have permission, do not use this facility.
- 9.5 Never pick up hitchhikers. This could prevent a breach of Company policy.

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- 11.3 If you don't have a mobile phone, use an emergency telephone on your side of the carriageway.
- 11.4 Follow the arrows of the hard shoulder – the phone is free and connects to the Police or the Roadways Agency.
- 11.5 Give full details to the police, including if you are a vulnerable motorist, such as a woman travelling alone.
- 11.6 If you feel at risk from other traffic, return to your vehicle by a left-hand door and lock all doors. Do not get out again as soon as you feel this danger has passed.
- 11.7 If you are on an order to stop, follow the following guidelines:
 - 11.7.1 Get your vehicle into a safe position. Use your hazard lights to make it clear to other road users that your vehicle is causing an obstruction.
 - 11.7.2 If you have a mobile phone, use it to call the police.
 - 11.7.3 If you have a mobile phone, you may be struck by other traffic, so make all of your movements carefully. Get out of the car and get well away from the traffic. Consider whether it is safe for you to fix the car or whether you need professional assistance.
 - 11.7.4 If it is safe and you have a warning triangle or other permitted device, place it at least 45 metres (50 yards) behind your vehicle on the same side of the road. Always take great care when doing this.
 - 11.7.5 Keep your seat belt fastened, even if visibility is poor.
 - 11.7.6 Do not start your engine (if you have a stand), between your vehicle and the traffic.
 - 11.7.7 At night or in poor visibility, stand where you will prevent other road users seeing you.
 - 11.7.8 Use your mobile phone if you have one. If you have a breakdown service, use their available phone to contact a breakdown service.
 - 11.7.9 If you have a mobile phone, remember to retrieve it, with care, when the breakdown service arrives.

12. Third Party Breakdown

If someone attempts to flag you down for help, think before stopping. You should consider whether you can actually help. You should not jeopardise your own safety. If you continue and report the incident to the police, you must be able to do so.

13. Stress and Discomfort

Despite the fact that we are used to driving, stress and physical discomfort can build up over time. The potential effect that stress and discomfort can have on your driving and on general well-being should not be underestimated. Constantly, driving can cause mental fatigue and stress. You should be aware of the potential effect that stress and discomfort can have on your standard of driving.

14. Posture

- 14.1 Adjust the seat so that you are comfortable. The seat should support the small of your back.
- 14.2 When driving you should be able to reach both the pedals and steering wheel without stretching. Your arms should be bent at the elbow when the wheel and your feet on the pedals are bent.

- 14.3 Check and adjust the seat and mirrors before you enter a vehicle.
- 15. Tension**
- 15.1 It is advisable when you are driving to do the following exercises to help alleviate muscle tension and discomfort. The Ergonomics Society of the United States and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration suggests the following exercises:
- 15.1.1 Buttock clenches
 - 15.1.2 Side bends;
 - 15.1.3 Shoulder shrugs
- 16. Tiredness and Rest Breaks**
- Driving when you are tired is a major risk of collision. To minimise this risk:
- 16.1 Make sure you are well rested before starting a journey if you are tired. Get a good night's sleep before starting a long journey.
 - 16.2 Avoid undertaking long journeys between midnight and 6 am, when natural alertness is at a minimum.
 - 16.3 Plan your journey to include a break of at least 15 minutes after every 2 hours of driving. A minimum break of at least 15 minutes is recommended.
 - 16.4 If you feel at all sleepy, do not drive on a motorway. Do not stop on the hard shoulder.
 - 16.5 The most effective breaks are to drink, for example, two cups of caffeinated coffee, or to take a short nap (at least 15 minutes).
- 17. Severe Weather**
- 17.1 Winter can bring snow and ice which may extend your journey time considerably. It is important for motorists to be stranded in their vehicles for several hours due to snow blocking the roads.
- 17.1.1 You need to be prepared for bad weather, you need to be prepared for driving to or from work.
 - 17.1.2 Make sure you have a winter kit for everyone in the vehicle. You need warm hats, coats boots and gloves.
 - 17.1.3 Think about what you can keep in the boot. You may not be able to handle it all. You will need to drink so take something to keep you hydrated.
 - 17.1.4 If you take a long journey, make sure you have enough to last an extra few hours. You may not be able to handle it all.
 - 17.1.5 Take a torch with you. Your phone battery won't last long if you keep it on. You should also carry phone chargers/batteries.
 - 17.1.6 You should have a shovel. If you have a shovel handy, it may be prudent to add a shovel to your kit.
- 17.2 If you do find yourself stuck in your vehicle. It may get very cold, so stay in your vehicle. It may get very cold, so stay in your vehicle. It may get very cold, so stay in your vehicle. It may get very cold, so stay in your vehicle.

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