


Safety Services Guidance



Driving at work: Driver competence

Key word(s) : Driving; Driver; Competence; Licence

Target audience : Staff who drive, managers of staff who drive at work

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Introduction

1. As part of the planning for any work-related driving activity, a risk assessment of the activity should be undertaken and drivers properly authorised. The process should consider the class(s) of licence held, and the competence and experience of the driver(s). Competence to drive one vehicle does not necessarily mean the driver is competent (or has a licence) to drive a different class of vehicle.
2. An individual's competence may change with time and should be reviewed on a regular basis, particularly in light of new information from accidents, incidents or near miss reports, or where different vehicles are to be used.

Licence types

3. As part of the authorisation process, managers must ensure that a person is permitted to drive the type of vehicle being provided by the University. For a definition of UK drivers licence codes and the applicability of international licences, see <https://www.gov.uk/browse/driving>.
4. When staff are undertaking low risk driving activities using their own vehicle, the self-declaration completed as part of the process to claim expenses includes confirmation that a valid driving licence is held.
5. Those driving on University business should not be permitted to do so if they only possess a provisional licence, they have been banned or where their licence does not clearly show they can drive the type of vehicle. Under certain conditions, people can drive a minibus without that being marked on their licence. Please see [Safety Services Driving at Work Toolkit](#) for related guidance.
6. Whilst historically people who passed their driving test before 1997 will have automatically obtained a category D1 licence, this may have been removed when their licence was renewed (e.g. change of address) and as such, managers should check each licence to ensure that it is valid for the vehicle type.
7. Where drivers have endorsements on their licence, this should be taken into account as part of the authorisation process. Considering the value and nature of the endorsements can assist in establishing whether the individual requires any additional training or experience but does not preclude someone from occupational driving.

Competence and Training

8. Having the appropriate licence is only the first stage in ensuring a person's competence to drive. Consideration should be given to what, if any, training might be appropriate for the activity being undertaken.
9. All University minibus drivers¹ should undertake and pass the training course provided by STDU. This course should be retaken every 4 years. Managers should retain copies of the certification on file and ensure refresher courses are undertaken, as appropriate.
10. Consideration should also be given to staff driving other vehicles in specific risk environments. For example, those driving in remote and off-road environments may require additional training.
11. When deciding on whether an individual needs additional training, consideration should be given to what indicative factors there are available at that time – nature of the activity, experience of the individual (including points and previous accidents), previous training, etc.

Experience

12. The individual's familiarity with the vehicle and experience of using it are relevant factors. A driver with the correct licence and up-to-date training is more likely to be at higher risk in an unfamiliar vehicle than more experienced drivers.
13. When vehicles are rented from a third party, the rental representative must provide a walk around of the vehicle and its controls, pointing out safety features.
14. Wherever possible, particularly when people intend to drive a minibus for the first time or after a significant break from driving one, consideration should be given to allowing time to practise driving and manoeuvring the vehicle on familiar roads, before loading up.
15. Consideration should also be given to the amount of driving experience the individual actually has. For example, people may have a driving licence, but may not drive on a regular basis.

¹ See Guidance on Carrying Passengers [in Safety Services Driving at Work toolkit](#)

Ergonomics

16. When considering the person's ability to drive the minibus safely, thought should be given to factors such as eye sight, mobility, ability to make adequate adjustments to seating to enable controls and pedals to be reached without difficulty.

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