



Driver Safety Handbook

Guidelines for ALL drivers

INTRODUCTION

This booklet provides useful information to help keep you safe on the road when driving an Aberystwyth University (AU) vehicle or a personal vehicle for business use on behalf of the university.

This handbook must also be read and considered best practice for any non-university staff and students who are permitted to drive an AU vehicle or use their own vehicle for university business.

The advice in this handbook is relevant to all drivers, however, there are some additional considerations to apply when driving vans, minibuses and specialist vehicles. These will be highlighted in their own section of this handbook.

BEFORE YOU GET IN THE VEHICLE

What is a university business trip?

The university has a legal responsibility for managing the risk of all work-related journeys. A work-related journey is described as:

Any trip in a vehicle regardless of who owns that vehicle that is not your normal commute to and from your normal place of work.

Note: If you interrupt your commute to or from your normal place of work by attending to an errand on behalf of the university, the whole trip would be considered work-related. Essentially, once you commence a work-related journey you are no longer commuting. Drivers need to be mindful that the use of AU vehicles and/or hire vehicles is strictly for work-related journeys and personal use is not permitted.

RISK ASSESSMENTS

All work-related journeys should normally have a risk assessment.

The risk assessment will not cover any work associated activities and any ancillary equipment. A risk assessment should be reviewed and amended for local use.

Further information on risk assessment along with training opportunities can be found on the HS&E webpages.

Any work-related journeys whose risk assessment gives reasonable cause for concern should be discussed with the HS&E team before undertaking the journey and associated activities.

Common sense should prevail when driving to remote rural locations, involving unpredictable road conditions and/or lone driving and unnecessary risks should not be taken.

Expected driving standards

You must remember that whilst driving on university business you are ambassadors for the university and therefore there is an expectation that:

You will always drive in accordance with the road traffic law and the [Highway Code](#).

Be patient and display courteous to all road users.

Do not engage in any behaviour, be it verbal or physical by gesture and the way you drive your vehicle that would be considered by most people to be inappropriate and unacceptable.

Authorisation to Drive

Before you can drive a university vehicle you must ensure that you are an authorised driver, this applies to all staff and non-university staff.

This process requires you to complete a university authorised driver application form and return it to the Travel & Fleet section.

IMPORTANT – You must not engage in any work-related journeys (on or off road) which involve driving, no matter how short or infrequent, until you have become an Authorised and/or Combined Authorised Driver.

You should always consider the Hierarchy in the Travel Policy before travelling.

***Business use cover for combined drivers** – by default most insurance policies will cover you for social & domestic pleasure purposes and for commuting to and from your normal place of work. It will NOT cover you automatically for any business trips. You will need to ask for this cover specifically. In most cases Business use cover will not increase your insurance premium, it might however attract an admin charge if you add this cover after commencement of your policy.

Important – you **WILL NOT** be insured unless you have Business use cover included in your policy to drive your own vehicle.

Journey Planning

All journeys should be planned, this does not mean that you must route plan every single journey in detail, particularly if you are making multiple local trips that are familiar to you. It does however mean that you should consider the following:

- Ensure you are fit and well to drive.
- Have you had enough sleep the previous night, are you unwell, are you on any medication that might make you drowsy or affect your ability to drive?
- Try to avoid congested areas at peak times, especially around schools.
- Where possible, avoid driving in adverse weather.

Extra considerations for long journeys:

- Plan your route in detail, allow enough time for breaks and stops.
- Check to see if there is major event being held or road works to avoid potential traffic.
- Use Sat Nav or Maps where possible. Preset destinations and only adjust when parked and safe to do so.
- Ensure you have enough fuel, at least to get you to a suitable refuelling point.
- If using an EV ensure you are aware of the location of charging stations.
- Plan to take regular breaks, at least 15 minutes in every two-hour stretch of driving.
- Be aware of road and bridge tolls, CAZ (Clean Air Zones), ULEZ (Ultra Low Emission Zone) and congestion charge as these may need paying prior to a journey to avoid a hefty penalty charge notice.

Fitness to drive

It is your responsibility to ensure you are fit enough to drive, this will require you to take several things into consideration:

Eyesight

You must be able to read (with glasses or contact lenses, if necessary) a number plate made after 1 September 2001 from 20 metres.

If you need glasses or contact lenses to drive, you must wear them at all times when driving.

Have your eyesight checked regularly (at least every two years, or more often if your optician recommends it).

Alcohol, drugs and medication

You must not under any circumstance drive under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or so called 'legal highs'.

For more information, please see university's alcohol and drugs policy.

Drugs and medicines can affect decision-making and driving skills, as well as your physical and mental condition and behaviour, and significantly increase your risk of crashing. The penalties are the same as for drink driving.

Check with your GP or pharmacist whether any over the counter or prescribed medicines you are taking are likely to affect your driving (for example, by causing drowsiness). Always check the label of medicines and the Patient Information leaflet for any warnings, and if it says that certain side-effects may occur, assume that they will do so.

DVLA notifiable medical conditions

You are bound by legislation to notify the DVLA if you suffer with any medical conditions that might affect your driving. It is your responsibility to check with your GP whether any of your medical conditions are considered 'notifiable.'

You can obtain detailed information by visiting the Governments official website: <https://www.gov.uk/driving-medical-conditions>

The university respects your privacy; however, we have a duty of care towards your safety whilst at work. For this reason, you must notify your Line Manager if you suffer any medical conditions that may affect your ability to drive a vehicle safely or operate any other specialist vehicle/plant.

YOUR VEHICLE

As the driver of a vehicle or specialist vehicle/plant YOU are legally responsible for ensuring that the vehicle is safe and roadworthy at all times, regardless of whether the vehicle is owned, leased or hired.

Your vehicle may be subject to a prohibition order and/or you may be charged with an offence if the vehicle is deemed un-roadworthy or

safe by the DVSA (Drivers Vehicle Standards Agency) or Police. YOU as the driver will be accountable and must pay any fine and may have endorsements placed onto your driving licence. This includes your own vehicle when driving your Personal Vehicle for work purposes.

To ensure your vehicle is safe and legally compliant the university have made available daily vehicle defect checklists forms for vehicle, trailers, specialist vehicles and plant that must be completed prior to first use by the driver each day. The university mandates this practice.

Please refer to the Travel and Fleet website for the approved daily vehicle checklists.

Line managers should also be aware of their responsibilities and ensure that they have adequate knowledge and training for their role.

WHILE DRIVING

Drivers Hours

	LIMIT	NOTES
<i>Daily driving limit</i>	<u>Maximum</u> of 10 hours	This relates to any 24 hour period from midnight to midnight
<i>Daily duty limit</i>	<u>Maximum</u> of 11 hours	Daily duty is the total sum of all time spent working. A teacher, for example, needs to include the teaching time, plus the marking, preparation, driving the minibus, etc. These 11 hours can be spread out over a 15-hour period. At least 4 hours must be off duty, i.e. 'a period where one is free to dispose of one's own time'.
Continuous driving	<u>Maximum</u> of 2 hours	If it is not possible to stop immediately, open a

<i>Break period</i>	Minimum of 15 minutes	window for fresh air and stop as soon as it is safe and legal. Your concentration will be much improved if you plan your journey with regular breaks for rest and refreshments.
Daily rest period	Minimum of 11 hours	You must take a rest of at least 10 hours between 2 working days. This can be reduced to 8.5 hours up to 3 times week.

Please note the hours displayed above are restricted to the activity of driving only, however due consideration should be given to any additional activities that the driver may be engaged in as part of their duties during the period in question.

Seatbelts

Seatbelts must be worn in all vehicles in which they are present, any animals being transported in a vehicle must be suitably secured in accordance with rule 57 of the Highway Code.

Tyres

If tyres appear low as part of the daily check, put the required air pressure stated in the vehicle handbook. The tyres pressures can also be found on the manufacturer sticker inside the vehicle.

Towing Trailers

Only use a trailer if you have the correct licence entitlement and are authorised by the university to do so, and, you have been appropriately trained.

Make sure you know how to connect the trailer, including the electrical connections. Ensure that it is not overloaded and that the weight of any load is evenly distributed and secured with correct restraints, lashings or netting.

For detailed information on towing trailers and the law, please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/towing-rules>

Roof racks

Roof racks should only be used where there are no other forms of transport available and no other suitable alternatives for carrying the load. A risk assessment must be undertaken in all cases.

When driving, remember to account for the extra height and be aware of low bridges, barriers with height restrictions and overhanging buildings/ branches which affects the vehicle's handling and stopping characteristics.

Remove roof racks when not being used as fuel consumption will be greater if left fastened to the roof.

DRIVING

You should be able to see and reach all the controls comfortably. Good all-round, unobstructed, visibility is vital.

Lanyards

Drivers and/or passengers are warned not to wear lanyards when driving or travelling in vehicles because of the risk of injury if an airbag goes off. Always remove your lanyard when driving.

Mobile phones & other communication devices

You are advised to ensure you have a means of summoning assistance while engaged on work-related journeys. The following must always be observed.

- You must only make or receive calls as permitted by law – this means that while on the public highway, unless you need to report an emergency and stopping is not possible, you must not make or receive a call via a hand-held device.
- You are advised not to engage in any hands-free mobile conversation while driving unless necessary and must remain in control of your vehicle at all times. The police have the power to stop you if they believe you have been distracted by using a mobile phone while driving, even if it's fully hands-free.
- You are reminded that the penalty for using a phone/or any other electronic communication device while driving is a £200 fine and possible points added to your licence, you will be responsible for paying this fine, in addition to any additional remedial action available to the university under its disciplinary procedures.

Smoking, eating & drinking while driving

Smoking and the use of electronic smoking devices is prohibited in all vehicles. All university owned and leased vehicles will display a no smoking sign.

See the university's smoking policy for full details.

You must always maintain proper control of your vehicle, therefore eating or drinking while driving is prohibited. Plan food stops into your journey and refer to rule 148 of the Highway Code.

Speed limits

Always stay within speed limits (including variable limits and temporary limits at roadworks). Speed limits are set as the maximum speed limit for that road. There are many circumstances when it is not safe to drive at that speed (for example, around schools at opening and closing times, on busy, narrow roads, on rural roads or where visibility is restricted). Be aware of your surroundings and the road conditions.

Certain vehicles may be required to travel at a different speed limit. The maximum speed for a panel van on a single carriageway is 50mph, whereas a car can travel at maximum speed limit of 60mph on a single carriageway. Ensure that you know the maximum speed limits for the type of vehicle you are driving.

Here is a link to UK speed limit table: <https://www.gov.uk/speed-limits>

Driving on-campus

Driving safely on-campus and built-up areas always calls for extra awareness, especially where there are large groups of pedestrians. Stay alert of pedestrians walking out, cyclists and other vulnerable road users.

Manoeuvring

Minor knocks and scrapes may appear insignificant. However, place a financial burden on the university.

Reversing is one of the most common situations where vehicle damage is sustained, often because the driver acted a little hastily or failed to have a good look around before getting into the vehicle.

Personal Safety and Violence

All drivers should remain vigilant to personal attack and theft. Ensure that tools, valuable equipment and items are stored out of sight in the vehicle. Always lock the vehicle when unattended.

Parking

When parking, you must ensure that the vehicle is parked in a safe and legal place.

When parking on the left and facing uphill, turn your wheels to the right, when parking downhill turn your wheels to the left.

Vehicles must always be locked when unattended, even for short periods, for example, when making deliveries or at filling stations.

When parking the vehicle for any length of time, especially during darkness, try to use a well-lit area with passing traffic and pedestrians, rather than a secluded location.

Parking Charges and Tolls (inc CAZ- Clean Air zones, ULEZ- Ultra Low Emissions Zones and Congestion Charge for London)

Reimbursement for any parking charges and tolls can be made in line with the university expenses policy. This does NOT include any fines for parking illegally.

Dangerous Goods

The carriage of dangerous goods as classified by the UNECE Transport of Dangerous Goods Regulations within university vehicles is ONLY allowed with prior agreement from the university Health and Safety team.

Adverse weather

The weather can cause driving hazards, reduced visibility and slippery road surfaces which leads to longer stopping distances. We need to adjust our driving accordingly. Drivers should check with their line manager whether any work-related trip is required where adverse weather is forecast. If in doubt or if conditions are poor, avoid making any journey.

Before Setting Off in Adverse Weather

Listen to local/national weather broadcasts and travel bulletins.
Check travel alerts online.

Plan and think about taking warm clothes, suitable footwear and a torch – it could be a long walk to a phone, if you are not able to get phone reception.

Always keep the windscreen, mirrors and windows clean and check that the washer bottle is full of screen wash. Ensure the correct concentration is used to prevent the solution freezing.

Rain

Rain reduces your ability to see and greatly increases the distance required to slow down and stop. You will need about TWICE your normal braking distance.

Aquaplaning

Aquaplaning is caused by driving too fast into surface water.
Aquaplaning can be avoided by reducing speed in wet conditions.

Flooded roads

Don't attempt to cross if the water seems too deep. If you are not sure of the water's depth, look for an alternative route.

REMEMBER to test your brakes when you are through the flood.

Snow and Ice

If snow or ice has formed on your vehicle. Clear any snow and/or ice from the roof, windows and mirrors completely before you set off.

Hail, heavy snow and rain all reduce visibility – use dipped headlights. Only travel at a speed at which you can stop within the distance you can see to be clear. Always reduce your speed smoothly and in plenty of time on slippery surfaces. Avoid harsh braking and acceleration, or sharp steering.

In snow, stop frequently to clean the windows, wheel arches, lights and number plates.

Hot Weather

Wear cool, loose, comfortable clothing and keep your vehicle well ventilated. Take regular breaks to stretch your legs, take refreshment and get some fresh air.

REFUELLING AND FUEL CARDS

Most university provided vehicles will have a fuel card designated for the vehicle. Make sure the card is in your possession before commencing a journey and return the vehicle with a full tank of fuel (Pool cars/hire cars).

Fuel cards are to be used only for university vehicles or authorised university tasks.

Pay special attention to the type of fuel required for the vehicle you are driving. Putting the wrong fuel in is not only costly and inconvenient, but serious damage can also be caused to the engine.

If you realise you have put the wrong fuel in:

- **DO NOT** start the engine.
- Call for breakdown assistance immediately, details of breakdown assistance can be found inside the vehicle.
- Speak to a member of the garage forecourt for advice, as they may need to cordon off the area Vehicle Breakdown

BREAKDOWN

Always check that the vehicle contains details of the university breakdown cover prior to travelling. If not present, please contact your line manager or the Travel and Fleet section during working hours.

In the event of a vehicle breakdown on the road, appropriate hazard warning lights should be illuminated.

Whenever possible drivers and all passengers should leave the vehicle and wait in a safe location away from moving traffic.

- Special consideration should be given in the event of breakdown on a motorway or high-speed dual carriageway

Should your vehicle break down:

- Think of your and other road user's safety
- Call 999 if you are in danger or feel your vehicle is a danger to others

ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORTING PROCEDURE

All drivers need to familiarise themselves with the university's [Health and Safety webpages](#) as an incident form will need to be completed. A motor accident form will also need completing for our motor insurance provider, regardless of the amount of damage.

Accidents

- Stop. It is an offence not to stop, if your vehicle is involved and damage is caused to another vehicle or property, or someone is injured.
- Use hazard warning lights and switch off your engine.
- Call the emergency services immediately if required; provide them with information about the situation, any special circumstances (for

example, if carrying oxygen bottles) and if any passengers have special needs.

- Give first aid if required and if you are competent to do so.
- Ensure the vehicle is roadworthy before continuing the journey and where any doubt exists, do not continue your onward journey without seeking the advice of the relevant breakdown service first.
- Provide your name, address and vehicle registration. You will also need to give the owner's name and address if the vehicle is not yours. You must report the accident to the police within 24 hours if you do not give your details at the time of the accident. You must also report the accident to your insurance company, even if you're not planning to make a claim.

Never admit fault. This could be construed as an admission of liability in the event of a subsequent insurance claim.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Travel and Fleet – [Travel & Fleet : Estates, Facilities & Residences, Aberystwyth University](#)

Health, Safety and Environment - [Health, Safety & Environment : Aberystwyth University](#)

APPENDIX 1

Extra considerations for drivers of vans

Drivers of vans need to be aware of whether their vehicle is classified as a van or a car-derived van. Check with the Travel & Fleet section if you are not sure on the classification of your vehicle.

When driving a van, particular attention should be paid to the following as they differ from cars:

Visibility can be restricted or limited due to a fitted bulkhead or there being less windows. If there is poor visibility and you are unsure before reversing or manoeuvring get out of the vehicle and check before moving. If possible, use a banks person.

Blind spots - all vehicles have blind spots, but vans have more than cars. Because of this you need to make more frequent use of your side mirrors and always be prepared to do a shoulder check/s prior to making any manoeuvre

Height and width – Know the height and width of your vehicle, arrange for a sticker to be placed in the vehicle if needs be, both in metric and imperial measurements. Watch out for height restriction bars, in car parks and the like and be careful when looking to go through narrow gaps

Loading/Overloading - Understanding these can be complicated so you must seek advice from the Travel and Fleet department. Follow this link for detailed information: <https://www.gov.uk/vehicle-weights-explained>

You should know where on your vehicle to find the plate containing weight and load carrying information and know approximately the weight of your intended loads and where the location of your nearest

weigh bridge is. Remember, if you get caught driving an overloaded van, you could be personally fined.

Make sure any loads carried are distributed evenly across the compartment and secure. Be especially mindful of loads that might shift in transit which could adversely affect the handling characteristics of the vehicle, particularly when braking or negotiating bends.

Driving a Minibus

Are you qualified to drive a minibus? You could answer this in a variety of ways, e.g. do you have the necessary skills to drive a minibus safely? Do you have enough driving experience to take charge of such a large vehicle, especially with passengers?

If you past your driving test before 1 Jan 1997 you would be subject to having the D1 entitlement on your driving licence and would be eligible to drive a 16-passenger minibus (17 including the driver) with a 101 restriction (no for hire or reward).

If you passed your driving test after 1 Jan 1997 you would be subject to passing a test to obtain the D1 entitlement to drive a 16-passenger minibus (17 including the driver).

However, those drivers with a B licence entitlement are eligible to drive an 8-seat minibus (9 including the driver) not for hire or reward.

If you are unsure about the legal driving licence requirements for driving a minibus, contact the Travel and Fleet section.

Driving a minibus is a demanding and responsible task, especially if the driver does not drive a minibus on a regular basis. The driver is legally responsible for the safety and welfare of their passengers. Drivers must be confident and competent to drive a minibus and must request familiarisation from the line manager if they have not

driven a particular make and model of minibus before and /or if they have not driven a minibus in a long time.

Loading and Parking

Ensure that all loads are secured and stowed correctly, do not overload a minibus. Be mindful when parking to access loads and allow sufficient room for wheelchair users to access and egress the vehicle if the minibus is fitted with a manual or electronic chairlift. Drivers must liaise with their line manager to gain access to any appropriate training. No passengers should be standing on a minibus, all should be in allocated seats.

Taking a vehicle abroad

Please contact the Travel and Fleet section as there may be different driving laws, customs and conditions for certain countries.

Driving specialist vehicles

Due to the wide variety of activities involving transport, special consideration and extra care **MUST** always be exercised when driving on or for these work areas, The following must be adhered to at all times; vehicle operators must follow 'Safe Stop' procedure:

- Engage handbrake
- Controls in Neutral
- Switch off engine (or turn off power)
- Remove key (or lock-off the power supply)

This above procedure should be followed;

- Before leaving the driver seat/operating position.
- When anyone else approaches.
- Before anyone carries out maintenance; adjustments or deals with a blockage.

Whilst driving and operating a vehicle, ensure the below is adhered to;

- Safe vehicle- vehicles, machines and handling equipment is suitable for the task at hand, capable of carrying out the task safely.
- Faults reported and rectified promptly, no temporary or modified repairs.
- Safe driver- medically fit, competent, confident and trained. No unauthorised or untrained persons are allowed to drive.
- Safe site- vehicles and pedestrians are segregated where possible, site rules are clearly displayed and given to those coming onto site. Traffic routes defined, speed limits and warnings and are adhered too. Aware of deliveries and where deliveries take place.
- Never approach, walk behind or beside a reversing vehicle.
- Never attempt to squeeze between vehicles or fixed objects.
- Where possible have separate doorways in buildings for vehicles and pedestrians and wear high visibility clothing to help others.

Extra consideration

Your vehicle or equipment may have some specific operational requirements, you must therefore familiarize yourself with any operator's manual that comes with the vehicle and/or equipment. Additional consideration should be made when driving through rough terrain, deep water, hill climbing & descending, long grass, mud crawling, snow and ice. Additional training and guidance should be undertaken and followed when driving in these conditions.

Specialist vehicles- best practice guidance

Risk assessment- Before undertaking any driving/task involving a specialist vehicle. You must refer to the relevant risk assessment and/or SSOW (Safe System of Work)

Training- You must attend a university approved training course before being permitted to drive/operate any specialist vehicle. Read and understand the manufacturers user manual thoroughly.

Familiarise yourself with all the safety symbols and cut-off switches.

The following are useful reminders, in addition to daily vehicle defect checks and maintenance.

- Pay attention when driving and using the loading equipment, such as Telehandlers, tractors with buckets and forklifts. Remember the overhang. Be aware of blind spots.
- Always drive forward when going uphill and plan your route. Avoid severe slopes, ditches and tight obstacles. Avoid wet and boggy areas where possible. Take your time and always be aware. Never rush a task,
- When carry loads, loads must be secure and avoid loading. Refer to the capabilities of the vehicle. Loads must be distributed evenly.
- Only road registered vehicles can be driven on the road.
- Use the correct hitch system and always ensure that the connecting trailer/item and ancillary items are connected properly.
- Beware of dangers from overhead power lines, branches, and low bridges etc

Vulnerable road users

They are everywhere!

Many of them do not realise how vulnerable they are. They may be young or inexperienced. Or they may be much older and suffering a deterioration in the key senses of sight or hearing. Who knows ... they may be just like us but for some reason inattentive or distracted for the moment.

They may not be looking around, and they usually don't have rear mirrors! In fact, this is usually the first problem – they may not be aware of your approach.

They may be in a busy town area where there is a lot of traffic movement and obstructions to vision. They may be in rural areas, on the road, around the next bend or over the next hill.

Often, they have little or no protection against a motor vehicle. And in the case of a horse rider, or a farm worker with cattle, they have limited control.

All drivers have an obligation towards slower and more vulnerable road users. You must do more than see them – you must anticipate where they might be and what they might do.

Use of the horn can be appropriate on some occasions, but it can also startle and cause a further problem, so it needs to be used with care.

The only safe action when vulnerable road users are ahead is to slow down & be patient wait until you have their attention pass with extra space, low speed, and minimum noise.

In conclusion

This handbook has been compiled to provide a reference point for safe driving requirements.

If you have any specific questions or need advice that is not covered in this handbook, you should consult your Line Manager or the Travel & Fleet section.