

Taxi Driver Theory Test Revision

Key Learning points



Note: This document is a revision aid only and should be used in conjunction with the following publications:

- All you need to know to be a Taxi Driver;
- DVSA Guide to Driving the Essential Skills;
- Highway Code for Northern Ireland; and
- Know your Traffic Signs.

Also, you should revise using the Taxi Theory test practice papers which are available on the NIDirect website:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/taxi-theory-test-practice-papers>

Taxi driver theory test

Anyone applying to become a taxi driver must pass a two-part theory test before they can apply for the practical driving test.

There are two parts to the taxi driver theory test:

- multiple choice questions; and
- hazard perception video clips.

Multiple choice questions

The multiple choice questions will test your knowledge of road safety and how to operate as a taxi driver. The questions are based on the following 4 broad topic areas set out in bands numbered 1 - 4:

1. road procedure and responsibilities, eco-safe driving and the environment;
2. traffic signs and signals, vulnerable road users, mechanical knowledge;
3. health and safety, legal responsibilities, safe loading of the vehicle; and
4. customer care, carriage of vulnerable passengers, passenger comfort and safety.

The pass mark for the multiple choice questions part is 80 out of 100. However, you must also show that you have a broad knowledge in all topic areas by achieving a score of at least 18 in each of the four topic areas listed above.

The hazard perception test

This will test your ability to:

- scan the road;
- recognise from the clues that a potentially dangerous situation might arise; and
- adopt a driving plan to reduce the risk.

During the test you will be shown 14 video clips which feature every day road scenes. In each clip there will be at least one developing hazard, but one of the clips will feature two developing hazards.

To achieve a high score you will need to respond to the developing hazard during the early stages. The maximum you can score on each hazard is five.

Drivers need to recognise available clues and perceive danger no matter what vehicle they use. For this reason, the same version of the hazard perception test is used for all categories of test.

The pass mark for the hazard perception test is 50 or more out of a possible 75.

Band 1 - Road Procedure and Responsibilities, Ecosafe Driving & the Environment

Stopping distances

Drive at a speed that will allow you to stop well within the distance you can see to be clear.

You should:

- leave enough space between you and the vehicle in front so that you can pull up safely if it suddenly slows down or stops - the safe rule is never to get closer than the overall stopping distance (see Typical Stopping Distances below);
- allow at least a two-second gap between you and the vehicle in front on roads carrying faster-moving traffic and in tunnels where visibility is reduced, doubling the gap on wet roads and increasing it still further on icy roads;
- always remember, large vehicles and motorcycles need a greater distance to stop; and
- if you are driving a large vehicle in a tunnel, you should allow a four-second gap between you and the vehicle in front.

If you have to stop in a tunnel, leave at least a 5-metre gap between you and the vehicle in front.

Typical Stopping Distances



Carrying a heavy load

Carrying a heavy load may have an effect on the handling of your car, so:

- you need to allow a greater stopping distance when carrying a heavy load; and
- you may need to adjust your headlights and inflate your tyres more to take account of the load.

You also need to consider the effect a full complement of passengers will have on your braking distances, handling characteristics and stability. When loaded you need to increase your separation distance to allow for an increase in your stopping distances.

The two-second rule

In good, dry conditions, an alert driver, who's driving a vehicle with good tyres and brakes, needs to be at least two seconds behind the vehicle in front.

In bad conditions, double the safety gap to four seconds or even more.

How to measure the safety gap:

Choose an obvious stationary point ahead, such as a bridge, a tree or a road sign. When the vehicle ahead passes the object, say to yourself, 'Only a fool breaks the two-second rule.' If you reach the object before you finish saying it, you're too close to the vehicle in front and need to drop back.

Driving too close to the vehicle in front is a major factor in crashes. You can avoid such incidents by looking well ahead, keeping your distance and giving yourself time to react.

In good, dry conditions, leave a two-second gap.

In wet weather, leave a four-second gap.

In icy weather, leave a 20-second gap.

When a vehicle behind is driving too close to you, ease off the accelerator very gradually and increase the gap between you and the vehicle in front. This will give you more time to react if the driver ahead should slow down or stop suddenly.

Roundabout Hazards

Roundabouts can be particularly hazardous areas. While negotiating the roundabout, you should be especially aware of:

Pedestrians

In many areas, zebra crossings are located near the entrances to and exits from roundabouts. Even if there are no formal crossings, pedestrians may attempt to cross the road at these junctions. Always be aware of pedestrians who may be trying to cross the road.

Cyclists and horse riders

They often keep to the outside of the roundabout even when intending to turn right. Take extra care and allow them plenty of room.

Motorcyclists and cyclists

It's often difficult to see them on a roundabout.

Long vehicles

Because of their length, they might take a different course or straddle lanes as they approach the roundabout and as they go round it. Watch out for their signals and allow for the path the rear of their vehicle follows.

All vehicles

Be prepared for vehicles to cross your path to leave at the next exit. Always be on the lookout for their signals.

The road surface

This can become polished and slippery, especially when wet. Avoid harsh braking and acceleration when on the roundabout.

Overtaking large vehicles

If you're considering overtaking a large vehicle, you need to keep well back to ensure that you:

- get the best view of the road ahead; and
- allow the driver to see you in their mirrors.

Remember, if you can't see their mirrors, they can't see you. Be especially aware that left-hand-drive lorries have different blind spots from right-hand-drive vehicles.

Leave a good space while waiting to overtake. If another car fills the gap, drop back again.

If possible, you should also note whether the vehicle you intend to overtake is loaded or unloaded.

The speed of large vehicles varies greatly when they're going up and down hills. A loaded vehicle might crawl slowly uphill and then pick up speed surprisingly quickly on the downhill run.

Always remember these possible changes in speed when you're thinking of overtaking.

Avoid driving alongside a large vehicle; you may be in its blind spot and the driver may not be able to see you.

Overtaking at night

You'll need to take extra care before attempting to overtake at night. It's more difficult because you can see less. Only overtake if you can see that the road ahead will remain clear until after you've finished the manoeuvre. Don't overtake if there's a chance you're approaching:

- a road junction;
- a bend or hidden dip in the road;
- the brow of a bridge or hill, except on a dual carriageway;
- a pedestrian crossing;
- road markings indicating double white lines ahead.

or if there's likely to be:

- a vehicle overtaking or turning right; or
- any other potential hazard.

If you're being overtaken, dip your lights as soon as the vehicle starts to pass you, to avoid causing glare in the mirrors of the overtaking vehicle.

Junctions at night

Brake lights can dazzle. Unless it's foggy, don't keep your foot on the brake pedal while you're waiting at a junction or queuing in traffic. Use your parking brake instead.

Driving in adverse weather conditions

When driving in fog you should:

- use your lights as required;
- keep a safe distance behind the vehicle in front - rear lights can give a false sense of security;
- be able to pull up well within the distance you can see clearly (this is particularly important on motorways and dual carriageways, as vehicles are travelling faster);
- use your windscreen wipers and demisters;
- beware of other drivers not using headlights;
- not accelerate to get away from a vehicle which is too close behind you;
- check your mirrors before you slow down, then use your brakes so that your brake lights warn drivers behind you that you are slowing down;
- stop in the correct position at a junction with limited visibility and listen for traffic; and
- when you are sure it is safe to emerge do so positively - and do not hesitate in a position that puts you directly in the path of approaching vehicles.

Lights

Use dipped headlights whenever you find it difficult to see. You need to see clearly and be seen at all times.

Use high-intensity rear fog lights and front fog lights (if fitted) when visibility is 100 metres (328 feet) or less.

Rear fog lights must only be capable of operating with dipped headlights or front fog lights.

Switch off front and rear fog lights when you can see further than 100 metres (328 feet), but beware of patchy fog.

Keep all lights and reflectors clean and make sure that they are working correctly at all times, particularly in bad weather.

Dealing with floods

When you have to pass through a flood, take your time. Stop and assess how deep the water is. Don't just drive into it. Some roads that are likely to flood have depth gauges. Check the depth on these.

Deep water

If the water seems too deep for your vehicle, turn back and go around the flood by another road. It might take a little longer, but that's better than finding yourself stranded.

If the water is too deep it could:

- flood the exhaust, causing the engine to stop; or
- find its way into the air intake on some vehicles, causing serious engine damage.

Shallow water

If the water isn't too deep, drive on slowly but be sure to keep to the shallowest part. Remember, because of the camber of the road, the water is probably deepest near the kerb and shallowest at the crown. By keeping to the shallowest part of the road, you'll be more likely to see lifted manhole covers or other debris.

Driving through floodwater

Drive in first gear as slowly as possible but keep the engine speed high and steady by slipping the clutch.

- If the engine speed is too low, you might stall;
- If you go too fast, you could create a bow wave. Water will flood the engine and it could cut out. Try to strike a balance.

Engines and water

Some types of diesel engine will tolerate a certain amount of water, but many modern fuel systems are electronically controlled and are, therefore, affected by water.

All petrol engines can be seriously affected by even small amounts of water being splashed onto the electrical components; these can include engine management systems, ignition systems and so on.

Aquaplaning

A great danger when driving at speed in very wet weather is the build-up of water between the tyre and the road surface. As a result, your vehicle actually slides forwards on a thin film of water as your tyres lose contact with the road surface. This is called aquaplaning. Even good tyres can't grip in this situation. A clear indication that you're aquaplaning can be that

the steering suddenly feels very light. When this happens, slow down by easing off the accelerator.

Never brake or try to change direction, because when you're aquaplaning, you've no control at all over steering or braking. The higher your speed on a wet road, the more likely you are to aquaplane. You must keep your speed down and watch for water pooling on the road surface.

Even at lower speeds, if the front and rear tyres on one side of the vehicle hit a patch of deeper water, the vehicle may swerve because of the additional resistance on that side.

Icy Roads

Drive extremely carefully when the roads are icy. Avoid sudden distractions as these could cause loss of control.

You should:

- drive at a slow speed in as high a gear as possible;
- accelerate and brake very gently;
- drive particularly slowly on bends where loss of control is more likely;
- brake progressively on the straight before you reach a bend - having slowed down, steer smoothly round the bend, avoiding sudden actions; and
- check your grip on the road surface when there is snow or ice by choosing a safe place to brake gently - if the steering feels unresponsive this may indicate ice and your vehicle losing its grip on the road (when travelling on ice, tyres make virtually no noise).

Turning right

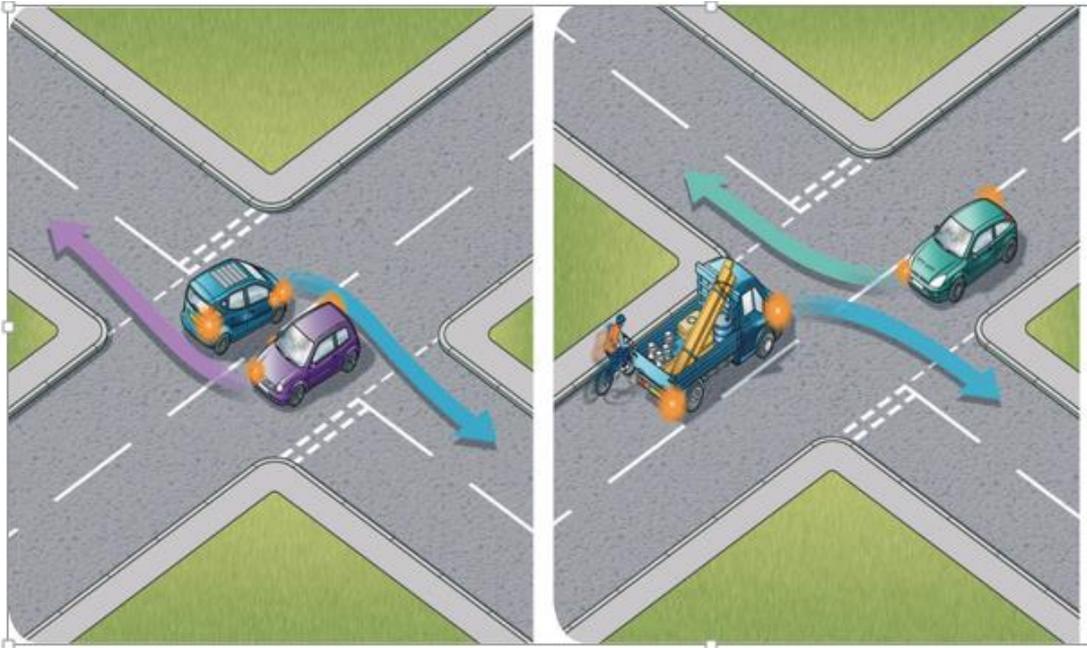
Well before you turn right you should:

- use your mirrors to make sure you know the position and movement of traffic behind you;
- give a right-turn signal;
- take up a position just left of the middle of the road or in the space for traffic turning right; and
- leave room for other vehicles to pass on the left, if possible.

When turning right at a cross roads where an oncoming vehicle is also turning right, there is a choice of two methods (see diagram below):

- turn right side to right side - keep the other vehicle on your right and turn behind it - this is generally the safer method as you have a clear view of any approaching traffic when completing your turn; or

- left side to left side, turning in front of each other - this can block your view of oncoming vehicles, so take extra care (cyclists and motorcyclists in particular may be hidden from your view).



Right side to right side turn

Left side to left side turn

Parking

You **MUST NOT** stop or park on a road marked with double white lines, even if one of the lines is broken, except to pick up or drop off passengers or to load or unload goods.

Yellow zigzags are often marked on the road outside schools, along with the words 'School – keep clear'. Don't stop (even to set down or pick up children) or park there.



Parking at night

You **MUST NOT** park on a road at night facing against the direction of the traffic flow unless in a recognised parking space.

The Horn

Use the horn only while your vehicle is moving and you need to warn other road users of your presence.

Never sound your horn aggressively. You **MUST NOT** use your horn:

- while stationary on the road; and
- when driving in a built-up area between the hours of 11.30 pm and 7.00 am, except when another road user poses a danger.

Lights

You **MUST NOT**:

- use any lights in a way that would dazzle or cause discomfort to other road users, including pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders; or
- use front or rear fog lights unless visibility is seriously reduced. You **MUST** switch them off when visibility improves to avoid dazzling other road users.

In stationary queues of traffic, drivers should apply the parking brake and, once the following traffic has stopped, take their foot off the footbrake to deactivate the vehicle brake lights. This will minimise glare to road users behind until the traffic moves again.

Hazard warning lights

These may be used when your vehicle is stationary, to warn that it is temporarily obstructing traffic. Never use them as an excuse for dangerous or illegal parking.

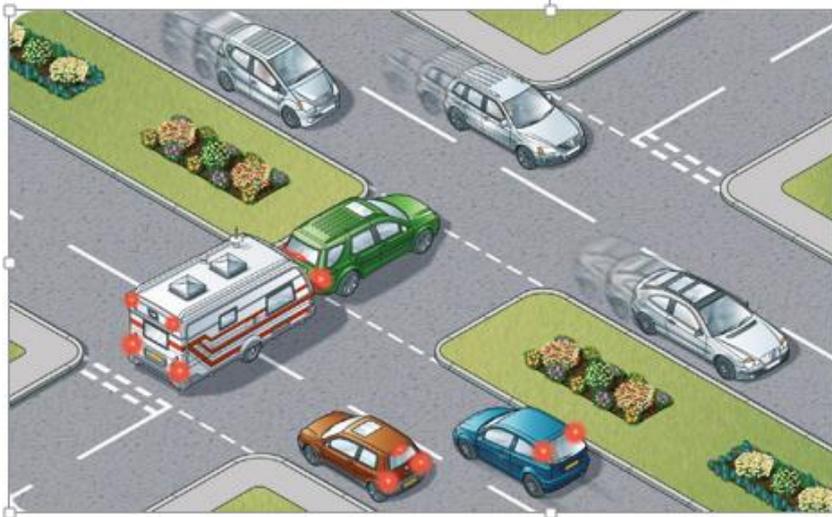
You must not use hazard warning lights while driving or being towed unless you are on a motorway or unrestricted dual carriageway and you need to warn drivers behind you of a hazard or obstruction ahead.

Only use them for long enough to ensure that your warning has been observed.

Dual carriageways

When crossing, or turning right, first assess whether the central reservation is deep enough to protect the full length of your vehicle (see diagram below):

- if it is, then you should treat each half of the carriageway as a separate road and wait in the central reservation until there is a safe gap in the traffic on the second half of the road;
- if the central reservation is too shallow for the length of your vehicle, wait until you can cross both carriageways in one go.



Crossing a dual carriageway

Additional rules for the motorway

If your vehicle develops a problem, leave the motorway at the next exit or pull into a service area.

If you cannot do so, you should:

- pull onto the hard shoulder and stop as far to the left as possible, with your wheels turned to the left;
- try to stop near an emergency telephone (situated at approximately one mile intervals along the hard shoulder);
- leave the vehicle by the left-hand door and ensure your passengers do the same (you must leave any animals in the vehicle or, in an emergency, keep them under proper control on the verge) and never attempt to place a warning triangle on a motorway;
- not put yourself in danger by attempting even simple repairs;
- ensure that passengers keep away from the carriageway and hard shoulder, and that children are kept under control;
- walk to an emergency telephone on your side of the carriageway (follow the arrows on the posts at the back of the hard shoulder) – the telephone is free of charge and connects directly to the police, use these in preference to a mobile phone and always face the traffic when you speak on the phone;
- give full details to the police - also inform them if you are a vulnerable motorist such as disabled, older or travelling alone;

- return and wait near your vehicle (well away from the carriageway and hard shoulder); and
- if you feel at risk from another person, return to your vehicle by a left-hand door and lock all doors - leave your vehicle again as soon as you feel this danger has passed.

Emergency telephones

Motorway emergency telephones are free of charge to use and easily located. You will be connected to the Police. The operator will then get in touch with a recovery company for you.

In most cases the emergency telephones are 1.6 km (about 1 mile) apart. The direction of the nearest phone will be shown by the arrow on the marker posts along the edge of the hard shoulder.

Do not cross the carriageway or any slip road to get to a telephone. Face the oncoming traffic while using the telephone.

If your vehicle has its own telephone, make sure that whoever you contact also informs the police or telephone them yourself.

If you use a mobile phone, identify your location from the marker posts on the hard shoulder before you phone.

If anything falls from either your vehicle or another vehicle:

- use the nearest emergency telephone;
- do not attempt to recover it yourself; and
- do not stand on the carriageway to warn oncoming traffic.

Passing the scene of an incident

If you're not one of the first to arrive at the scene of an incident and enough people have already stopped to give assistance, you should drive past carefully and not be distracted by the incident.

If the incident is on the other side of a dual carriageway or motorway, don't slow down to look. You may cause another collision on your side of the road or, at the very least, additional and unnecessary traffic congestion.

Always give way to emergency and incident support vehicles. Watch out for their flashing lights and listen for their warning sirens. Depending on the type of vehicle, the flashing lights used could be red, blue, amber or green

Ecosafe driving

Transport is an essential part of modern life, but we can't ignore its environmental consequences – local, regional and global. There's increasing public concern for the protection of our environment, with the result that many motor manufacturers are devoting more time, effort and resources to the development of environmentally friendly vehicles.

Ecosafe driving is a recognised and proven style of driving that contributes to road safety while also reducing fuel consumption and emissions. One of the main factors in increasing road safety is the emphasis on planning ahead so that you're prepared for potential hazards.

By increasing your hazard perception and planning skills you can make maximum use of your vehicle's momentum and engine braking. By doing this, you can reduce damage to the environment.

In addition, it will help reduce running costs by reducing wear and tear on your vehicle. Plus as a professional driver, you can set an example to other road users in helping to keep the environment green.

Fossil fuels are a finite resource which must be used wisely.

But you, as a driver, can also help. If you follow the principles of ecosafe driving you'll become a more environmentally friendly driver:

- your journeys will be more comfortable;
- you could considerably reduce your fuel bills; and
- you could reduce those emissions that cause damage to the atmosphere.

In addition, you'll become a safer driver as you develop your planning, perception and anticipation skills to a high level.

Try to drive in an ecosafe manner at all times, whether you're driving for business or for pleasure. Fuel, like all forms of power, costs money as well as having an impact on the environment. Minimising the fuel or power you use is always important, both for the planet and for your pocket.

However, although it's good to save fuel, you mustn't compromise your own safety or that of other road users when attempting to do so. Road safety is more important than saving

fuel. At all times you should be prepared to adapt to changing conditions and it may be that you have to sacrifice fuel-saving for safety.

Always drive with fuel economy in mind. Operators keep careful checks on vehicle running costs, and fuel economy is a key factor for profitability as well as reducing waste.

You should:

- plan routes to avoid congestion;
- anticipate well ahead;
- avoid the need to make up time;
- avoid over-revving;
- drive smoothly. This can reduce fuel consumption by up to 15%;
- avoid rapid acceleration as this leads to greater fuel consumption, and increased wear and tear;
- avoid using the air-conditioning continuously as this increases fuel consumption by about 15%;
- consider the use of cruise control where fitted, as this will help reduce fuel costs;
- brake in good time (all braking wastes energy in the form of heat);
- make good use of any regenerative retarders fitted. This is a braking system which allows the use of the vehicle's drive motor, or motors, to convert the vehicle's kinetic energy into electrical energy during deceleration; and
- switch off your engine when stationary for some time, especially where noise and exhaust fumes cause annoyance.

The effects of pollution

Air pollution contributes to health problems for many people. In densely populated areas, traffic is the biggest source of air pollution. Road transport accounts for a significant proportion of all emissions and how we drive can make a surprising difference to local air quality. The particular problem with emissions from vehicles is that they're at ground level. People with conditions such as respiratory problems, heart disease or vascular disease are particularly exposed.

In addition, pollution from motor vehicles causes changes to communities and the landscape, including:

- damage to vegetation;
- deterioration and weakening of buildings and bridges;
- the depletion of natural resources; and
- disruption of wildlife.

Fuel combustion produces:

- carbon dioxide, a major greenhouse gas - transport accounts for about one-fifth of the carbon dioxide we produce in this country; and
- nitric oxides - these add nitrogen to the atmosphere, causing damage and disturbance to the ecosystem.

Catalytic converters in good working order reduce these emissions.

The accelerator

Try to use the accelerator smoothly and progressively. When appropriate, take your foot off the pedal and allow the momentum of the vehicle to take you forward. Taking your foot off the accelerator when going downhill can save a considerable amount of fuel without any loss of vehicle control.

Whenever possible, avoid rapid acceleration or heavy braking as this leads to greater fuel consumption and more pollution. Driving smoothly can reduce fuel consumption by about 15% as well as reducing wear and tear on your vehicle.

Petrol engines

All modern petrol-engined vehicles are fitted with a catalytic converter to help reduce exhaust emissions. These vehicles must use unleaded fuel for the system to operate correctly.

Air conditioning and climate control

If air conditioning is fitted, use it only when you really need to – running air conditioning continuously may increase fuel consumption by about 15%.

Climate control is now an option on many cars. This monitors humidity, temperature (external and internal) and the quality of the air entering the vehicle. It adjusts the use of the air conditioning as required and reduces fuel waste. In hot, humid conditions, it can also help to reduce the driver stress that can contribute to 'road rage' situations.

Cruise control

Use cruise control, when appropriate, if it is fitted. Using cruise control keeps a steady setting on the accelerator so not varying the intake of fuel. Use of constant speeds on motorways and dual carriageways enables full use of cruise control, which helps to optimise the engine management system's ability to precisely measure and deliver the appropriate amount of fuel for any given situation. This not only gives more economic fuel use but also reduces engine wear.

Use of cruise control, combined with effective route planning and keeping unnecessary revs to a minimum, can help to minimise the amount of fuel used. If your vehicle has a fuel consumption readout display on the instrument panel, use it to monitor the fuel used

during the journey. Cruise control can also help to maintain your speed within the speed limit. But remember, it should not be used as a substitute for concentration – you must exercise proper control of your vehicle at all times. Also, you should not use cruise control when driving in wet or slippery conditions or in heavy traffic as your feet in relation to the foot controls may not be in their usual position which may increase your reaction time.

Minimise weight and drag

Save fuel by not carrying unnecessary weight in your car. Remove items from your boot if they're not required and avoid topping up your tank with fuel if it's not needed. Remove cycle carriers and roof racks when they're not in use to reduce wind resistance.

FACTS:

- the drag on a roof box can increase a vehicle's fuel consumption by more than 15%;
- opening windows or a sun roof will increase drag and, consequently, fuel consumption when you're driving at higher speeds.

Catalytic converters

These are exhaust-treatment systems that remove up to 75% of carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide and hydrocarbons.

The converter is a honeycomb-shaped filter with a total surface area about equal to a football pitch. This surface is coated with precious metals such as platinum, palladium and rhodium. These speed up a chemical reaction in the exhaust gases as the engine heats up. The oxygen content of the exhaust is monitored and a sensor triggers controls to adjust the air-fuel mixture.

The converter only deals with toxic and polluting gases. Carbon dioxide is still produced.

Leaded petrol can't be used in vehicles fitted with a catalytic converter. Even one tankful can permanently damage the system.

If you over-accelerate or exceed 3000 rpm, the catalytic converter can't clean up emissions completely and will release some that are contaminated. Make sure, therefore, that you don't drive in such a way that this will occur.

Environment / Recycling

If you do your own maintenance, make sure you take your old oil which should be in a suitable container, batteries and used tyres to a garage or local authority site for recycling or safe disposal. It is illegal and harmful to pour oil down a drain and if you get it on your skin it can cause major skin problems.

Petrol stations/fuel tank/fuel leaks

Ensure that, when filling up your vehicle's tank or any fuel cans you are carrying, you do not spill fuel on the forecourt. Any spilled fuel should be immediately reported to the petrol station attendant.

Diesel spillage is dangerous to other road users, particularly motorcyclists, as it will significantly reduce the level of grip between the tyres and the road surface.

Double-check for fuel leaks and make sure that:

- you do not overfill your fuel tank;
- the fuel cap is fastened securely;
- the seal in the cap is not torn, perished or missing; and
- there is no visual damage to the cap or the fuel tank

Emergency fuel caps, if fitted, should form a good seal.

Never smoke, or use a mobile phone, on the forecourt of petrol stations as these are major fire risks and could cause an explosion.

When refuelling your vehicle, ensure that you switch the engine off first and you should aim to only fill it up to the bottom of the filler neck and no further. Make sure you replace the filler cap correctly and make sure it is secured to prevent any spillage.

If you fill the tank to the brim, when the fuel becomes hot and expands, its only way of escape is via the breather vent. If, at any time, you notice that your fuel filler cap is missing you **MUST** get it replaced before continuing.

Do not forget to pay for your fuel before leaving the forecourt, this could be very embarrassing especially if you are stopped by the police and you are carrying passengers.

Band 2 - Traffic Signs & Signals, Vulnerable Road Users & Mechanical Knowledge

Signals by authorised persons

Police officers

Stop



Traffic approaching from the front



Traffic approaching from both front and behind



Traffic approaching from behind

To beckon traffic on



From the side



From the front



From behind

Arm signals to persons controlling traffic



I want to go straight on



I want to turn left;
use either hand



I want to turn right

Signals to other road users

Arm signals

For use when direction indicator signals are not used, or when necessary to reinforce direction indicator signals and stop lights. **Also for use by pedal cyclists and those in charge of horses.**



I intend to move in to the left or turn left



I intend to move out to the right or turn right



I intend to slow down or stop



School crossing patrols



Not ready to cross children



Barrier to stop children crossing



Ready to cross children, vehicles must be prepared to stop



All vehicles must stop

Bus lanes

Only vehicles shown on the sign (see below) may use the lane during the hours of operation, which are also shown on the sign. Outside those periods all vehicles can use the bus lane.

Where there are no times shown, the bus lane is in operation for 24 hours a day. Don't park or drive in bus lanes under any circumstances when they're in operation.



With-flow bus lane ahead that can also be used by pedal cycles and taxis. Hours of operation may be shown



With-flow bus and pedal cycle lane sign showing hours of operation

Signs giving orders

Signs with red circles are mostly prohibitive. Plates below signs qualify their message.



Entry to 20 mph zone



End of 20 mph zone



Maximum speed



National speed limit applies



School crossing patrol



Stop and give way



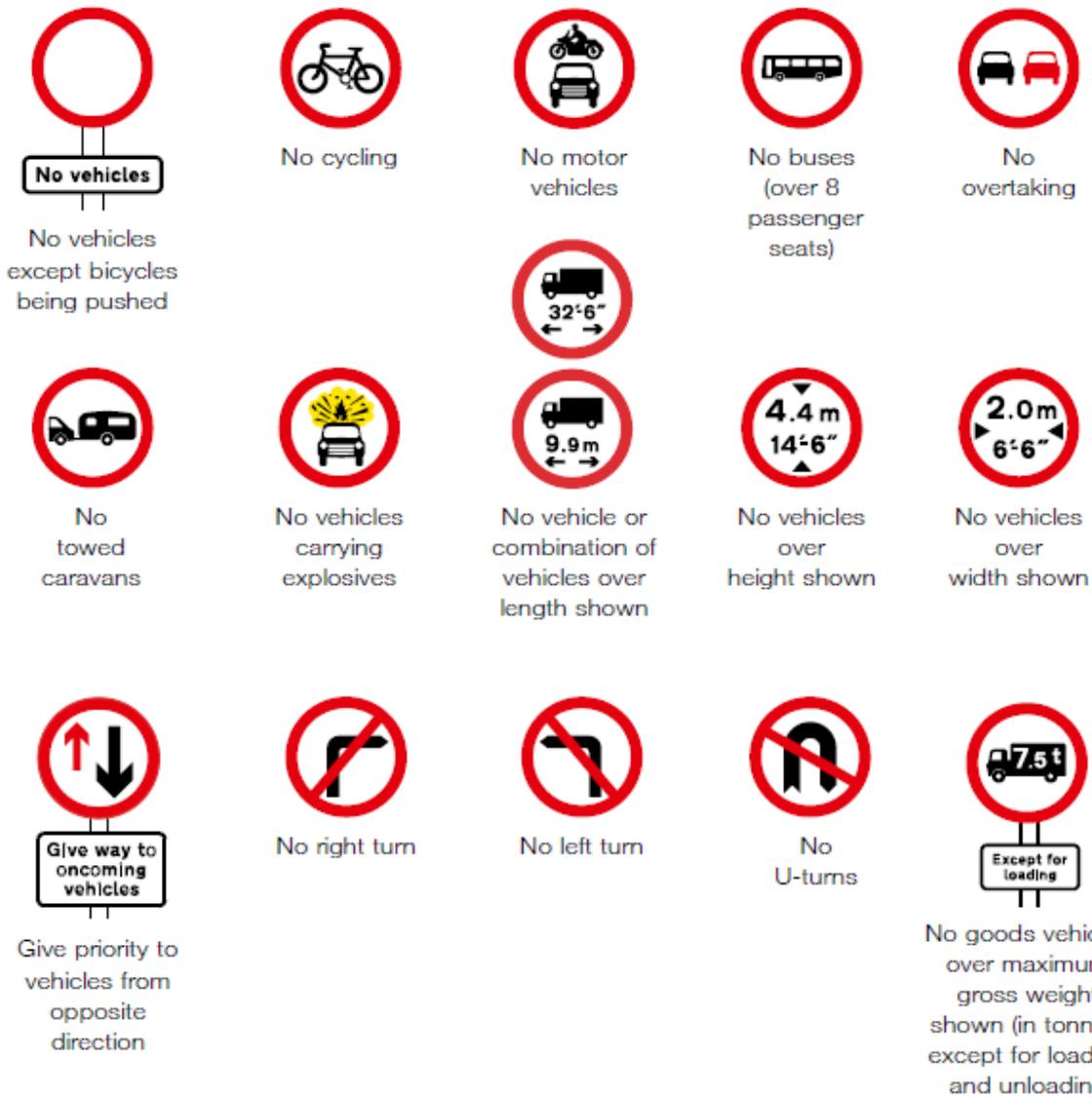
Give way to traffic on major road



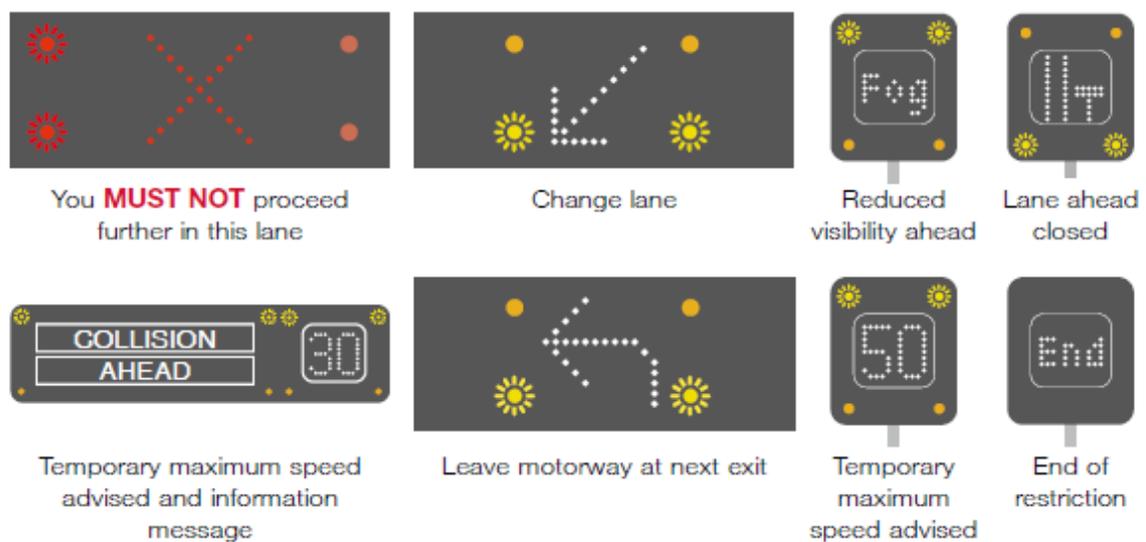
Manually operated temporary STOP and GO signs



No entry for vehicular traffic



Motorway signals



Signals and variable signs at the entrance to a motorway



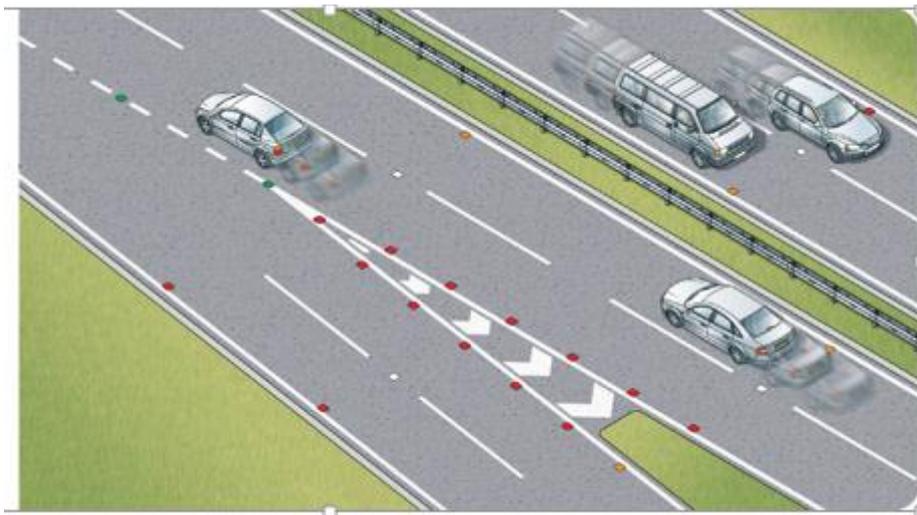
All lanes closed (signs for carriageways with four, three or two lanes). Do not enter the motorway when the red lamps are flashing in pairs from side to side

Reflective studs

Reflective studs are provided on dual carriageways and motorways to help drivers to see in poor visibility. The colours of reflective studs are:

- red - On the left-hand edge of the carriageway;
- white - To indicate lane markings;
- amber - Between the right-hand edge of the carriageway and the central reservation;
- green - At slip roads and lay-bys; and
- yellow/green fluorescent - At roadworks contraflow systems.

On some country roads there are black and white marker posts with red reflectors on the left-hand side and white reflectors on the right-hand side of the road. All these reflective devices are designed to help you know where you are on the road.



Reflective studs

Emergency diversion routes

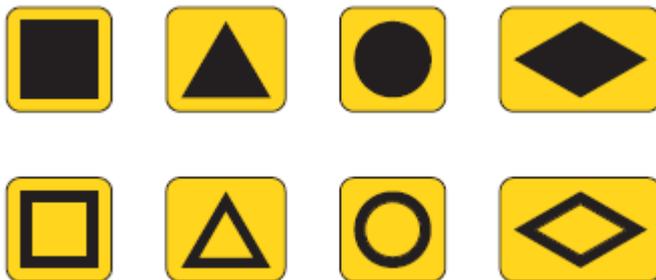
In an emergency, when it's necessary to close a section of motorway or other main road to traffic, a temporary sign may advise drivers to follow a diversion route. This route guides traffic around the closed section, bringing it back onto the same road further along its length.



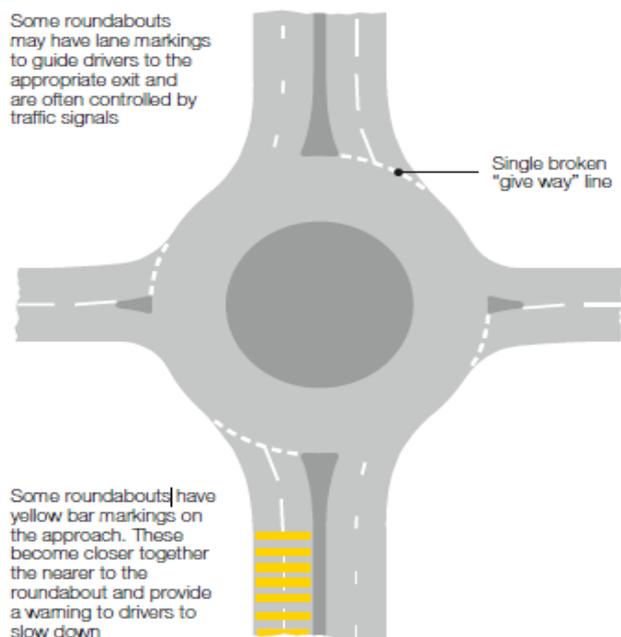
To help drivers navigate the route, black symbols on yellow patches may be permanently displayed on existing direction signs, including motorway signs. A trigger sign will initially alert road users to the closure and then the symbol is shown alongside the route that drivers should follow.

A number of different symbols may be used, as in some places there may be more than one diversion operating. The range of symbols used is shown below.

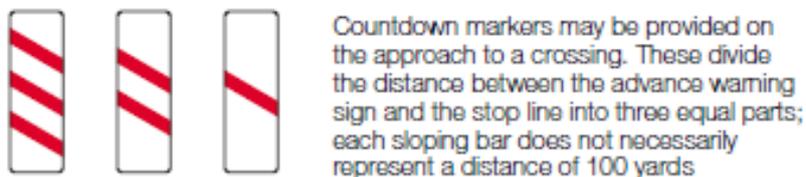
Drivers should follow signs bearing the appropriate symbol. These may be displayed on separate signs or included on direction signs, giving the number of the road to follow. If you're driving a double-deck vehicle, in the interests of safety you may need to check a map, satellite navigation equipment or other route information before proceeding, for any low bridges that may be present along the diversion route.



Road Markings at Roundabouts



Approach to Railway Crossing



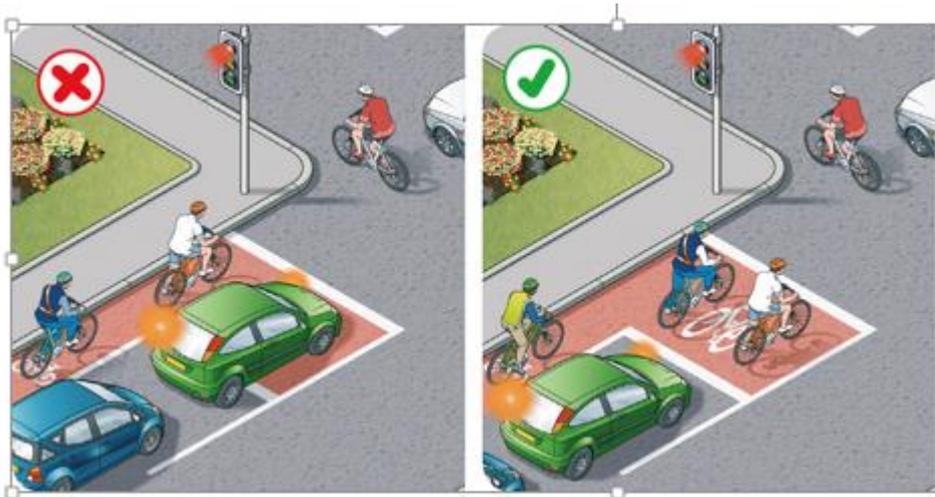
Advanced Stop Lines

Some signal-controlled junctions have advanced stop lines to allow cycles to be positioned ahead of other traffic (see diagram below).

Motorists, including motorcyclists, must stop at the first white line reached, and should avoid blocking the way or encroaching on the marked area at other times, such as for example, if the junction ahead is blocked.

If your vehicle has proceeded over the first white line at the time that the signal goes red, you must stop at the second white line, even if your vehicle is in the marked area.

Allow cyclists time and space to move off when the green signal shows.



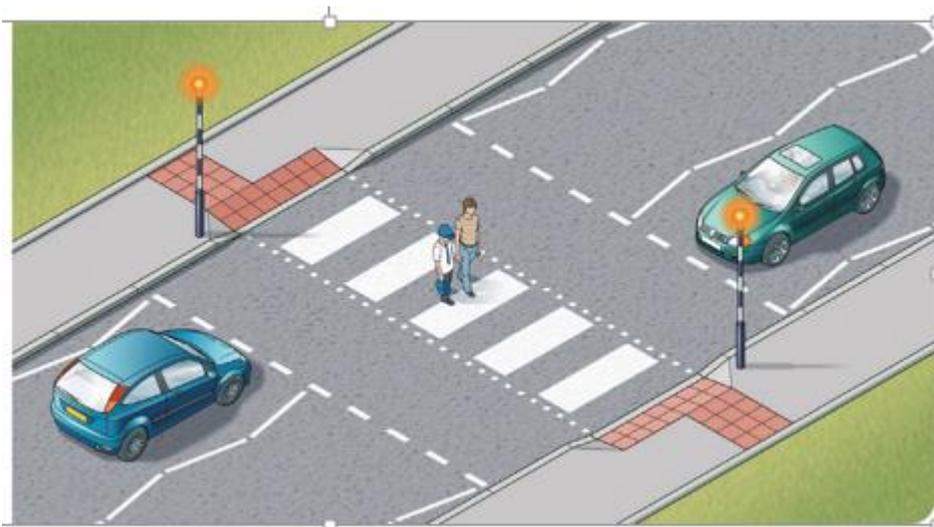
Advanced Stop Lines

Zebra crossings

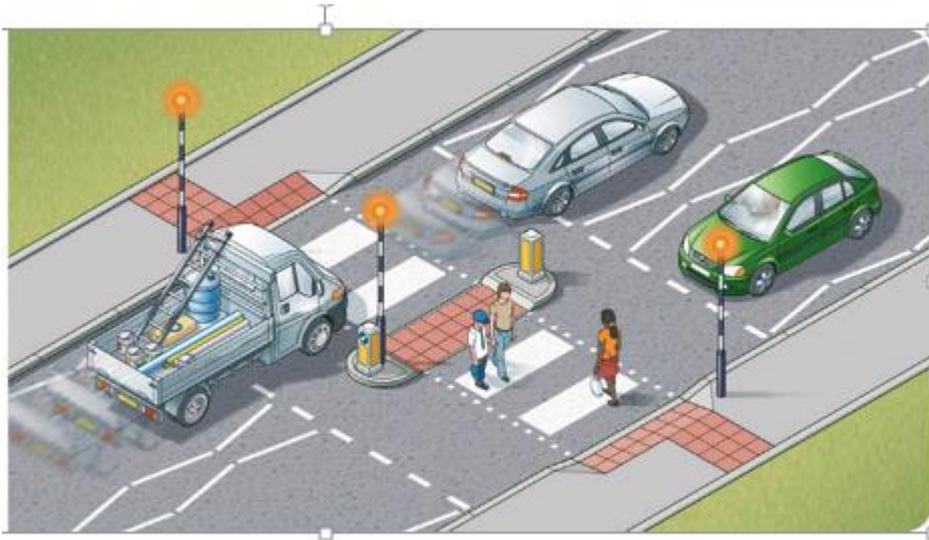
Advice for using a Zebra crossing

Give traffic plenty of time to see you and to stop before you cross. Vehicles will need more time when the road is slippery. Wait until traffic has stopped from both directions, or the road is clear before crossing.

Remember that traffic does not have to stop until someone has moved onto the crossing. Keep looking both ways, and listening, in case a driver or rider has not seen you and attempts to overtake a vehicle that has stopped.



Where there is an island in the middle of a zebra crossing, wait on the island and follow the above rule before you cross the second half of the road – it is a separate crossing.



Toucan, Puffin and Equestrian crossings

These are similar to pelican crossings, but there is no flashing amber phase - the light sequence for traffic at these three crossings is the same as at traffic lights.

If the signal-controlled crossing is not working, proceed with extreme caution.

Tactile paving

Raised surfaces that can be felt underfoot provide warning and guidance to blind or partially sighted people. The most common surfaces are a series of raised studs, which are used at crossing points with a dropped kerb, or a series of rounded raised bars which are used at level crossings, at the top and bottom of steps and at some other hazards.

Road junctions

Take extra care at junctions.

You should:

- watch out for cyclists, motorcyclists, powered wheelchairs/mobility scooters and pedestrians as they are not always easy to see - be aware that they may not have seen or heard you if you are approaching from behind;
- watch out for pedestrians crossing a road into which you are turning - if they have started to cross they have priority, so give way;
- watch out for long vehicles which may be turning at a junction ahead; they may have to use the whole width of the road to make the turn;

- watch out for horse riders who may take a different line on the road from that which you would expect;
- not assume, when waiting at a junction, that a vehicle coming from the right and signaling left will actually turn. - Wait and make sure; and
- look all around before emerging, do not cross or join a road until there is a gap large enough for you to do so safely.



Watch out for pedestrians crossing

Signals

Signals warn and inform other road users, including pedestrians.

You should always:

- give clear signals in plenty of time, having checked it is not misleading to signal at that time;
- use them to advise other road users before moving off, changing course or direction or stopping;
- cancel them after use; and
- make sure your signals will not confuse others.

If, for instance, you want to stop after a side road, do not signal until you are passing the road. If you signal earlier it may give the impression that you intend to turn into the road, your brake lights will warn traffic behind you that you are slowing down.

Use an arm signal to emphasise or reinforce your signal if necessary.

Remember that signalling does not give you priority.

You should also:

- watch out for signals given by other road users and proceed only when you are satisfied that it is safe; and
- be aware that an indicator on another vehicle may not have been cancelled.

Country roads

Take extra care on country roads and reduce your speed at approaches to bends, which can be sharper than they appear, and at junctions and turnings, which may be partially hidden.

Be prepared for pedestrians, horse riders, cyclists, slow moving farm vehicles or mud on the road surface. Make sure you can stop within the distance you can see to be clear. You should also reduce your speed where country roads enter villages.

Horse riders

Be particularly careful when approaching horses, especially those ridden by children. Give horse riders as much room as you can.

As a taxi driver you should:

- look out for horses being led or ridden on the road;
- slow down when you see a horse rider on the road, give them plenty of room and be prepared to stop;
- not sound your horn or rev your engine;
- look out for signals given by the riders and heed a request to slow down or stop;
- always pass the rider wide and slow; and
- avoid revving the engine until you are clear of the animal.

Dealing with other road users

You should always avoid:

- sounding the horn unnecessarily;
- deliberately revving the engine;
- flashing your lights unnecessarily;
- beckoning pedestrians to cross the road;
- edging forward when pedestrians are crossing in front of your vehicle; and
- showing any signs of irritation or aggression towards other road users, especially the more vulnerable.

Motorcyclists and Cyclists

When passing motorcyclists and cyclists, give them plenty of room. If they look over their shoulder it could mean that they intend to pull out, turn right or change direction. Give them time and space to do so.

Motorcyclists and cyclists may suddenly need to avoid uneven road surfaces and obstacles such as drain covers or oily, wet or icy patches on the road. Give them plenty of room and pay particular attention to any sudden change of direction they may have to make.

Windy weather

High-sided vehicles are most affected by windy weather, but strong gusts can also blow a car, cyclist, motorcyclist or horse rider off course. This can happen on open stretches of road exposed to strong cross winds, or when passing bridges or gaps in the hedges.

In very windy weather your vehicle may be affected by turbulence created by large vehicles. Motorcyclists are particularly affected, so keep well back from them when they are overtaking a high-sided vehicle.

First aid

Some taxi drivers carry first aid equipment. Although the carriage of such equipment isn't a legal requirement, as a professional driver, you are encouraged to take some first aid training which could in the event of an emergency help save a life. In addition, the training if delivered by an approved training body may go towards your periodic training requirement for your taxi licence.

First aid on the road

The following information may be of general assistance, but there's no substitute for proper training. Any first aid given at the scene of an incident should be looked on only as a temporary measure until the emergency services arrive. If you haven't had any first aid training, the following points could be helpful.

1. Deal with danger

Further collisions and fire are the main dangers following a crash. Approach any vehicle involved with care. Switch off all engines and, if possible, warn other traffic. Stop anyone from smoking.

2. Get help

Try to get the assistance of bystanders. Get someone to call the appropriate emergency services on 999 or 112 as soon as possible. They'll need to know the exact location of the incident and the number of vehicles involved. Try to give information about the condition of any casualties, e.g. if anyone is having difficulty breathing, is bleeding heavily or doesn't respond when spoken to.

3. Help those involved

DO NOT move casualties still in vehicles unless there's the threat of further danger. **DO NOT** remove a motorcyclist's helmet unless it's essential. Remember the casualty may be suffering from shock.

DO NOT give them anything to eat or drink. **DO** try to make them warm and as comfortable as you can. Protect them from rain or snow, but avoid unnecessary movement. **DO** give reassurance confidently and try not to leave them alone or let them wander into the path of other traffic.

4. Provide emergency care

Remember the letters DR A B C:

D – Danger - Check that you're not in danger.

R – Response - Try to get a response by asking questions and gently shaking their shoulders.

A – Airway - If the person isn't talking and the airway may be blocked, then place one hand under the chin and lift the chin up and forward. If they're still having difficulty with breathing then gently tilt the head back.

B – Breathing - Normal breathing should be established. Once the airway is open, check breathing for up to 10 seconds.

C – Compressions - If they have no signs of life and there's no pulse, then chest compressions should be administered.

Place two hands in the centre of the chest and press down hard and fast – 5–6 cm at a rate of 100/minute. You may only need one hand for a child and shouldn't press down as far. For infants, use two fingers in the middle of the chest when delivering compressions and don't press down too far.

Unconscious and breathing

Don't move a casualty unless there's further danger. Movement could add to spinal or neck injury. If breathing stops, treat as recommended under 'DR ABC' above. Don't attempt to remove a motorcyclist's helmet unless it's essential – for example, if the casualty isn't breathing normally – otherwise serious injury could result.



The recovery position

If an adult or child is unconscious and breathing, place them on their side in the recovery position (as shown).

- place the arm nearest you straight out. Move the other arm, palm upwards, against the casualty's cheek;
- with your other hand, grasp the far leg just above the knee and pull it up, keeping the foot flat on the ground; and
- pull the knee towards you, keeping the casualty's hand pressed against their cheek, and position the leg at a right angle. Make sure that the casualty's airway remains open and that you monitor their condition until medical help arrives.

Bleeding

First, check for anything that may be in the wound, such as glass. Taking care not to press on the object, build up padding on either side of the object. If there's nothing embedded, apply firm pressure over the wound to stem the flow of blood. As soon as practical, fasten a pad to the wound with a bandage or length of cloth. Use the cleanest material available. If a limb is bleeding but not broken, raise it above the level of the heart to reduce the flow of blood.

Any restriction of blood circulation for more than a short time could cause long-term injuries. It's vital to obtain skilled medical help as soon as possible. Make sure someone dials 999 or 112.

Dealing with shock

The effects of shock may not be immediately obvious.

Warning signs to look for include:

- rapid pulse;
- pale grey skin;
- sweating; and
- rapid, shallow breathing.

Prompt treatment can help to deal with shock:

- don't give the casualty anything to eat or drink;
- reassure the casualty confidently and keep checking on them;
- keep casualties warm and make them as comfortable as you can;
- talk firmly and quietly to anyone who's hysterical;
- don't let anyone suffering from shock wander into the path of other traffic;
- try not to leave any casualty alone;
- don't move the casualty unless it's necessary; and
- if a casualty does need to be moved for their own safety, take care to avoid making their injuries worse.

Burns

Check the casualty for shock, and if possible, try to cool the burn for at least 10 minutes with plenty of clean, cold water or other non-toxic liquid. Don't try to remove anything that's sticking to the burn.

Be prepared

Always carry a first aid kit – you might never need it, but it could save a life. Learn first aid – you can get first aid training from a number of different organisations or any suitably qualified body.

At the scene of an incident

If you are one of the first to arrive at an incident scene, your actions could be vital. Find a safe place to stop, so that you do not endanger yourself, your passengers or other road users.

As a general rule, your first priority is to secure the scene, this includes getting help and/or calling the emergency services. This should be followed by checking any casualties, especially the quiet ones, they may not be breathing.

If someone is screaming for example it is a good indication that their breathing is not compromised. It is the quiet ones you need to check first.

You must ensure that either you or others:

- warn other traffic by using hazard warning lights, beacons, cones, advance warning triangles, etc;
- check that there are no naked lights, or take the correct action if there are;
- telephone 999, giving full details of what has happened;
- check that all hazard flashers can be seen. If other road users confuse your signals it could make things worse;
- switch off all engines; and
- stop anyone from smoking.

If it is your vehicle that's involved in a collision, you should also check your passengers for signs of injury.

Dealing with injuries

It is best to avoid moving injured people until the emergency services arrive. You should be extremely careful about moving casualties – it could prove fatal.

Casualties should only normally be moved if:

- they are in need of resuscitation (that is, if they are not breathing); and/or
- they are in immediate danger (from fire, chemicals, fuel spillage, etc).

You should:

- move any apparently uninjured people away from the vehicle(s) to a safe place;
- give first aid if anyone is unconscious;
- check for the effects of shock. A person may appear to be uninjured but might be suffering from shock;
- keep casualties warm but do not give them anything to eat or drink; and
- give the facts (not assumptions, etc.) to medical staff when they arrive.

You should not remove a motorcyclist's helmet unless it is essential to do so; for example, if they are not breathing normally.

Tyres

All tyres on your vehicle and any trailer must be in good condition. They need to be checked weekly for damage or wear and to ensure that they're at the correct pressure. Follow manufacturer's recommendations for the correct pressure required. Neglecting tyre pressures is a major cause of tyre failure - check your tyre pressures when the tyres are cold; that is, before the vehicle is used.

The life of a tyre will depend upon the load, inflation pressure and the speed at which the vehicle is driven. Under inflated tyres will increase wear of the outer edges of the tread area of the tyre. Over-inflated tyres will distort the tread and increase wear in the centre of the tread area of the tyre.

Radial ply tyres have textile cords arranged radially across the tyre almost at right angles to the width of the tread. The tyre walls are quite supple and a rubber-covered steel mesh belt, which runs around the tyre underneath the tread rubber, braces the tread area. The belt keeps the tread in flat contact with the road to improve traction and grip. Energy-saving tyres have a reduced rolling resistance so they contribute to better fuel economy.

Tyres should be checked regularly for damage or bulges, tread wear, and correct pressure. Any serious fault such as a lump or bulge in the tyre wall, exposed ply or cord, or deep cuts more than one inch (25 mm) long will make that tyre illegal.

Keeping tyres correctly inflated will help prevent failure and also improve fuel consumption, using radial ply tyres can improve consumption by 5–10%.

The tread depth of tyres used on cars must be at least 1.6 mm across the centre three quarters of the breadth of the tread, and in a continuous band around the entire circumference.

Check wheels and tyres for balance to avoid uneven wear. When a wheel and tyre rotate they're subject to centrifugal forces. If the mass of the wheel and tyre is dispersed uniformly then the wheel is balanced. Balance weights are used to rectify any imbalance. Unbalanced wheels, bulge on tyre or loose wheel nuts can cause a vibration whilst driving.

Daily safety check

A daily walk-round check (including items that need to be checked from inside the vehicle) **MUST** be undertaken and should cover:

- brakes (fluids, ABS warning lights, pedal); **do not drive with faulty brakes.**
- lights and indicators;
- bodywork;
- tyres;
- windscreen wipers and washers;
- horn;

- fuel tanks/caps;
- mirrors;
- speedometer;
- number plates;
- reflectors and reflective plates;
- exhaust system;
- seat belts; and
- taxi plates/roof sign.

Any defects **MUST** be repaired. Make sure you know the defect reporting procedure (if applicable).

Oil use

The amount of oil an engine will use depends on:

- the type of engine;
- the amount of wear; and
- how you drive.

Don't

- run the engine when the oil level is below the minimum mark; or
- add so much oil that the level rises above the maximum mark. You'll create excess pressure that could damage the engine seals and gaskets, and cause oil leaks. Moving internal parts can hit the oil surface in an overfull engine and may do serious or even terminal damage.

Vehicle checks (DES)

You should first of all check your vehicle to make sure it's safe and ready for the road. This includes checking your instrument panel for any illuminated warning lights which may not have gone out after starting the engine. There are many different types of warning lights so make sure you familiarise yourself with the warning lights on your vehicle.

Manufacturers try to be consistent with the images used but it's important that you are aware of the meaning of the lights on your vehicle and the possible action you have to take.

Below are some examples of the types of warning lights you might see:



Oil Pressure



Airbag



Seat Belt



Brake Condition



Particulate Filter



Doors Open

Some warning lights if they remain on must be checked out immediately – Oil, Seatbelt, and Airbag etc. Check your vehicles handbook for further information.

Others such as the Particulate Filter warning light advise that action is required, but not necessarily immediately. If this light is illuminated it means that the particulate filter is upwards of 45% blocked with the soot residue from the burnt oil from the engine.

Depending on the make and model of your car there are a number of actions you can take to extinguish this light. One such example is to drive your car for a short time on higher than normal speed roads, such as a motorway, where the exhaust temperature can be raised sufficiently to burn off the residue which should extinguish the light. You should however consult your vehicle's handbook for the appropriate action for your type of vehicle

Power-assisted steering

To reduce the effort required and the amount that the driver has to turn the steering wheel, modern vehicles are fitted with a power-assisted steering (PAS) system.

PAS reduces the driver's efforts when turning. However, it only operates when the engine is running. If a fault develops you can retain control of the steering, but much greater effort is needed to turn the steering wheel. Movement at the steering wheel may also be felt as a series of jerks.

Don't attempt to drive a vehicle fitted with PAS:

- without the engine running – that is, coasting; and/or
- if the system is faulty.

If a fault develops while travelling, stop as soon as you can safely do so and seek expert assistance.

Coolant

Most vehicles today use a mixture of water and anti-freeze to make up the coolant. This stays in the radiator all year round and helps to keep the engine comparatively cool while it's running. The anti-freeze stops the coolant from freezing in cold conditions.

The anti-freeze also contains a corrosion inhibitor, which reduces rust and oxidation and prolongs the life of the system. In cold weather, keep the recommended strength of anti-freeze. Have it checked at least annually – late summer or early autumn is best.

You should check the coolant level frequently, particularly before a long trip, topping it up as necessary. Look for the high/low level markings on the header tank, where one is fitted.

The need to top up often might indicate a leak or other fault in the cooling system. Have it checked by your garage or dealer.

It's a good idea to carry a spare supply of coolant in your vehicle.

Warning

- never remove a radiator or header tank cap when the engine is hot;
- never add cold water to an overheated engine; let it cool for a while first; and
- don't overfill or the system will blow the excess out as soon as it warms up.

Overheating	Possible Cause	Remedy
Overheating	Fan belt snapped or hose leaking	Replace belt or hose Tape hose for temporary repair
	Fuse blown on electric cooling fan	Replace fuse

Hydraulic brakes

With hydraulic brakes, if the brake pedal travel increases or reduces, this could indicate a system malfunction.

You should check the brake fluid level (and the brake fluid warning light, if fitted) as part of your daily check.

Before you move off, press the brake pedal to get a feel for it. If it's too hard, it suggests a loss of vacuum or that the vacuum pump or servo is faulty.

If the brake pedal gives too little resistance and goes down too far, it suggests a loss of fluid or that it's badly out of adjustment.

If the brake pedal feels spongy, it suggests that there is air in the braking system. If there are any problems, you should get the system checked by a qualified mechanic before moving off.

In addition test the brakes every day as you set out. Choose a safe place to do this. If you hear any strange noises or the vehicle pulls to one side, consult a qualified mechanic immediately.

Anti-lock braking systems

Some vehicles are fitted with anti-lock braking systems (ABS). Wheel-speed sensors in these systems detect the moment during braking when a wheel is about to lock. Just before this happens the system reduces the braking effort and then rapidly re-applies it.

This action may happen many times a second to maintain brake performance.

Preventing the wheels from locking means that the vehicle's steering and stability is also maintained, leading to safer stopping. But remember, ABS is only a driver aid. It doesn't remove the need for good driving practices, such as anticipating events and assessing road and weather conditions.

Driving Down Hill

On steep hills, you'll normally need to reduce speed. Change down to a lower gear to give yourself more braking power and control. By selecting a lower gear, you should be able to avoid using your brakes too much. Excessive braking on hills can result in 'brake fade' and loss of control. Brake fade is a loss of braking power caused by the heat generated by continuous use of the brakes. Look for 'escape lanes', which are designed to stop runaway vehicles.

Fire extinguishers

All taxis must carry at least one fire extinguisher. It must be carried in an easy accessible location on the vehicle.

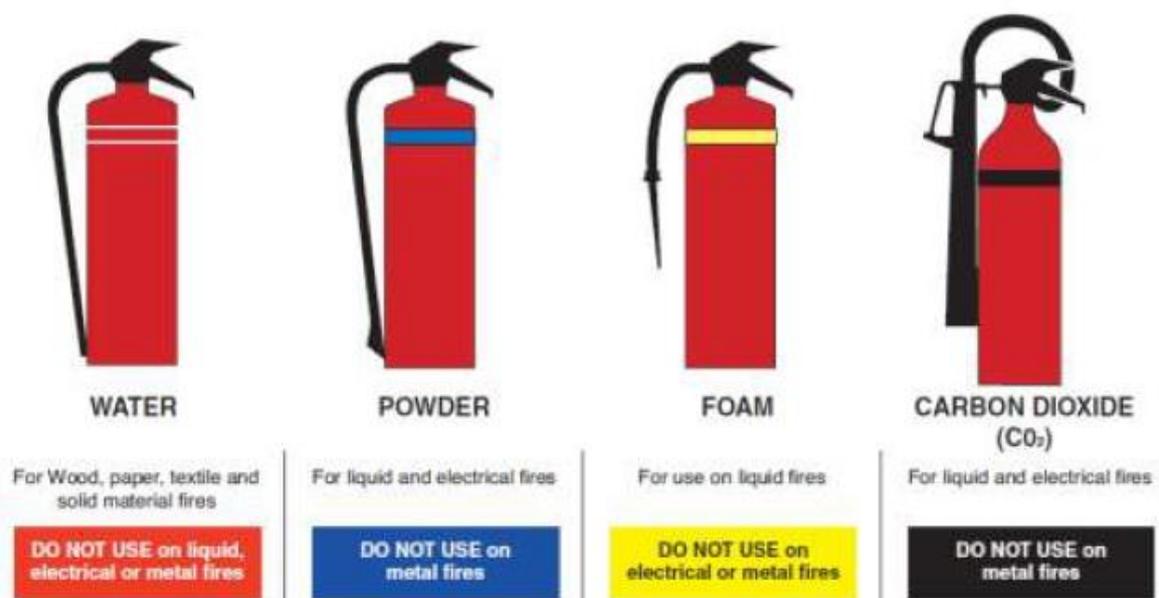
Regulations specify the type and size of fire extinguisher that must be carried on your vehicle. You should be able to recognise the various types of fire extinguisher and know which fires they're intended to tackle. For example, it's dangerous to tackle a fuel fire (flammable liquid) with a water or carbon dioxide fire extinguisher, since this may only spread the fire further. Each extinguisher will have a coloured label or badge relevant to its content.

Most extinguishers are intended to smother the source of the fire by either the action of an inert gas or a dry powder. Try to isolate the source of the fire. Also, avoid operating a fire extinguisher in a confined space.

Never put yourself in danger when tackling a fire. Always call the fire service as quickly as possible because they're the experts. Make sure you get all the passengers out and direct them to a place of safety.

Types of Fire Extinguishers

Their uses and their colour coding according to BS EN 3: 1996



Band 3 - Health & Safety, Legal Responsibilities & Safe Loading of the Vehicle

Diet and driving ability

The medical standards that apply to taxi drivers are higher than for car drivers. Many common conditions in middle age, such as heart disease and diabetes, are linked to poor eating habits.

Long-term health effects from bad eating habits

One of the key factors for ensuring long-term general good health is a well-balanced diet. A pattern of poor eating habits will increase your risk of developing serious long-term health problems in middle age, such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease. These diseases will increase your risk of sudden incapacity at the wheel, as well as making you more likely to develop serious illness at other times and increase your probability of an early death.

Other factors such as smoking and lack of exercise also increase these risks. The development of these serious diseases takes many years and your dietary habits in earlier years will contribute to your risk of disease when you are between 40 and 70 years of age.

Diet and performance while driving

Concentration, and therefore safe driving, will be improved by regular, light, balanced meals, timed to fit into rest breaks rather than continuous snacking while on the move.

Regular meals are preferable to snacks when trying to control diet as, with the exception of fruit, most snack foods are high in sugar, fat or salt

When driving through the night or on late evening or early-morning shifts you need to consider the following points:

- an additional meal is desirable at the start and in the middle of the period of work;
- at the start of night work, after a period when night-time sleep would be customary, digestion is likely to be less efficient and you may need to adjust the amount and type of food eaten to take account of any feelings of discomfort;
- if it is not possible to find a meal other than one containing a high fat content or quick-release calories, it may be better to prepare your own food in advance; and
- take care to balance your eating patterns for the rest of the day to avoid an excessive intake of calories.

Fluid intake

Your fluid requirements will depend, in part, on the temperature of your cab and the physical demands of your job during loading and unloading. You should carry water in case of delays on the journey, especially in summer.

Water is the ideal drink; it quenches thirst for longer than drinks such as tea and coffee, which increase urine production. The only advantage of bottled waters over tap water in developed countries is their convenience. A large amount of hidden sugar and hence calories can be consumed in bottled and canned drinks that are not marked as low in calories or sugar.

Change in health

It is your responsibility to notify us (PTLD) immediately if you have or have developed any serious illness or disability that could affect your ability to drive.

Medical standards

You may be refused a taxi driver's licence if you suffer from any of the following:

- liability to epilepsy/seizure*;
- diabetes requiring insulin (unless you held a licence on 1 April 1991 and we had knowledge of your condition);
- eyesight defects;
- heart disorders;
- persistent high blood pressure (see notes on form TLM1);
- a stroke within the past year;
- unconscious lapses within the last five years;
- any disorder causing vertigo within the last year;
- major brain surgery or severe head injury with serious continuing after-effects;
- mental disorders;
- alcohol/drug problems; or
- serious difficulty in communicating by telephone in an emergency.

*An applicant or licence-holder failing to meet the epilepsy, diabetes or eyesight regulations **MUST** by law be refused a licence.

Alcohol

It is an offence to drive with:

- a breath alcohol level in excess of 35 microgrammes (μg) per 100 millilitres (ml); or
- a blood alcohol level in excess of 80 milligrammes (mg) per 100 millilitres (ml).

Alcohol will:

- give a false sense of confidence;
- reduce co-ordination and slow down reactions;
- affect judgment of speed, distance and risk;
- reduce your driving ability, even if you're below the legal limit; and
- take time to leave your body - you may be unfit to drive in the evening after drinking at lunchtime, or in the morning after drinking the previous evening.

The best solution is not to drink at all when driving, because any amount of alcohol can impair driving ability. If you are going to drink, arrange other means of transport.

Be aware that alcohol may remain in the body for around 24–48 hours. Your ability to react and judge situations quickly may be reduced, and the effects will still be evident the next morning so you could still fail a breath test.

Your body tissues actually need up to 48 hours to recover, although your breath/blood alcohol levels may appear normal after 24 hours. The only safe limit, ever, is a zero limit.

Drugs

You mustn't take any of the following drugs, classified as banned substances, while driving:

- amphetamines (e.g. diet pills);
- barbiturates (sleeping pills);
- benzodiazepine (tranquilizers);
- cannabis;
- cocaine;
- heroin;
- methaqualone (sleeping pills);
- methylamphetamines (MDMA);
- morphine/codeine;
- phencyclidine ('angel dust'); and
- propoxyphene.

Check whether any medication will cause drowsiness

Unlike alcohol (the effects of which last for about 24–48 hours), many of the effects of drugs will remain in the body for up to 72 hours.

Off-the-shelf remedies, even everyday cold or flu remedies can cause drowsiness. Read the label of any medicines carefully. If in doubt, consult either your doctor or pharmacist. If still in doubt, **do not drive**.

If you are being prescribed any medication by your doctor, make sure you tell them that you intend to drive and that you are a professional driver.

Driving time and rest periods

Recommendations as to working hours and the required duration of breaks for taxi drivers.

Taxi drivers should not work for more than an average of ten hours per day. The usual break should be 30 minutes for a shift of between six and nine hours.

For shifts lasting more than nine hours, breaks should be at least 45 minutes. For shifts lasting twelve hours, a minimum of two breaks of 60 minutes each are recommended.

Drivers should take at least 11 hours off in between shifts.

Tiredness and distractions

As a professional driver you may be driving for long hours. Even though your hours aren't restricted like those of a bus or coach driver, you should make sure that you don't drive for so long that you become exhausted.

You have a duty to yourself as well as your passengers not to drive when you're tired. You should normally take a break of at least 15 minutes after every two hours of driving.

You must make sure that you're always fit and able to concentrate for the whole of your shift.

If you know that you'll have a long journey at the end of the day, such as an airport run, plan your day and your rest periods so that you can make this journey safely.

Factors causing fatigue include:

- time of day – natural alertness is at a minimum between 2.00am and 7.00 am. There is another, smaller dip between 2.00pm and 4.00pm;
- lack of sleep;
- continual glare from oncoming headlights. This is very tiring on the eyes and can lead to general tiredness; and
- limited lighting (street lights, pedal cycles) causing strain on the eyes when reading signs, looking for premises or seeing other vehicles.

As a professional driver you must make sure you are always fit for duty, alert and able to concentrate for the whole of your shift.

Good techniques for lifting

Here are some practical tips to remember when lifting a load:

Think before lifting/handling - Plan the lift. Can you use handling aids? Where are you going to place the load? Will you need any help with the load? Remove any obstruction beforehand.

Keep the load close to your waist - Keep the load close to your body for as long as possible while lifting. Keep the heaviest side of the load next to your body. If a close approach to the load is not possible, try to slide it towards your body before attempting to lift it.

Adopt a stable position - Your feet should be apart with one leg slightly forward to maintain balance (alongside the load, if it is on the ground). Be prepared to move your feet during the lift to maintain stability. Avoid tight clothing or unsuitable footwear, which may make this difficult.

Get a good hold - Where possible, hug the load closely to your body. This may be better than gripping it tightly with hands only.

Start in a good posture - At the start of the lift, slight bending of the back, hips and knees is preferable to fully flexing the back (stooping) or fully flexing the hips and knees (squatting).

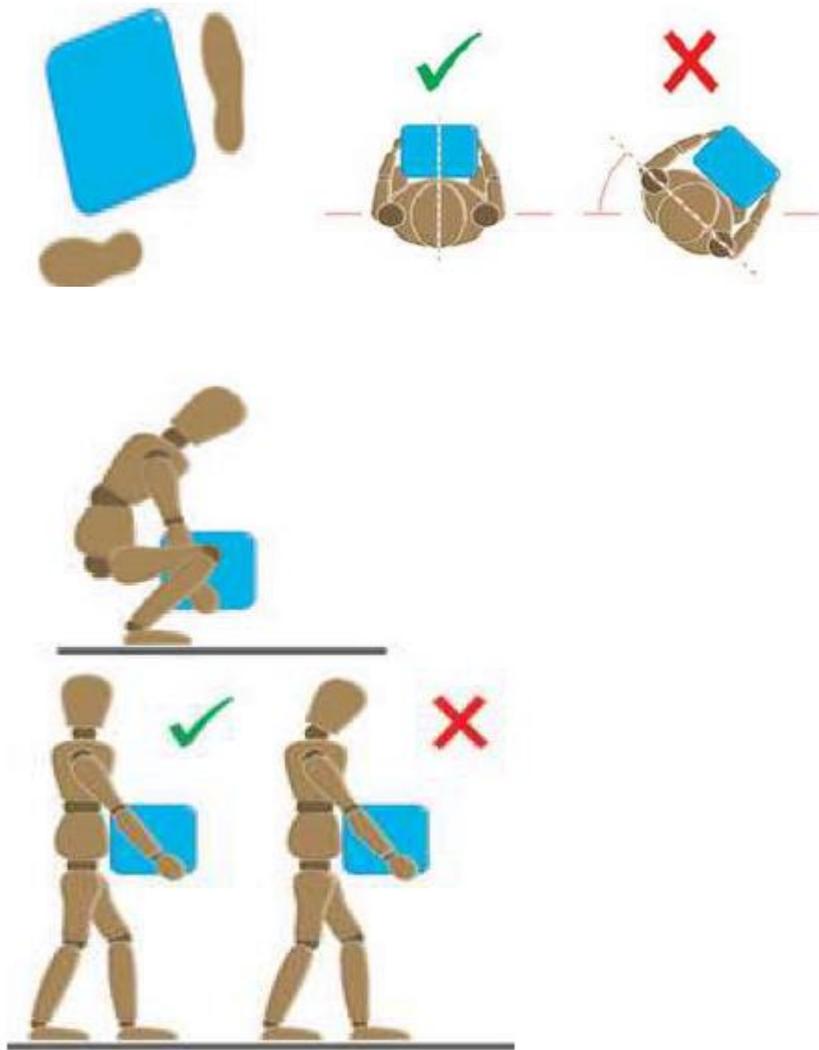
Avoid twisting or leaning sideways, especially while your back is bent - Keep your shoulders level and facing in the same direction as your hips. Turning by moving your feet is better than twisting and lifting at the same time.

Keep your head up when handling - Look ahead, not down at the load, once you are holding it securely.

Move smoothly - Do not jerk or snatch the load as this can make it harder to keep control and can increase the risk of injury.

Do not lift or handle more than you can easily manage - There is a difference between what people can lift and what they can safely lift. If in doubt, seek advice or get help.

Put down, then adjust - If precise positioning of the load is necessary, put it down first, then slide it into the desired position. Avoid lifting a heavy load with a straight back and slightly bent knees. This can lead to injury and result in time off and a loss of earnings.



Lifting Techniques

Ramp and wheelchair fittings

If you have the facility to carry wheelchairs, you must make sure that the wheelchair is correctly loaded and secure.

To safely load a passenger in a wheelchair you should:

- prepare for your passenger - fit the wheelchair restraint and make space available for the wheelchair;
- make sure the door is fully opened and secured. Pull out the ramp and add an extension if necessary;
- gently push the wheelchair and its user into the vehicle and stow the ramp;
- if you need to let go of the wheelchair to stow the ramp, make sure you apply the wheelchair brakes;

- position the wheelchair so that it can be secured using the equipment provided by the vehicle manufacturer;
- make sure that all straps and belts that secure the wheelchair and its user are fastened according to the manufacturer's instructions; and
- close the door.



To unload the wheelchair at the end of the journey, you should:

- open the door fully and secure it;
- release the restraining straps and belts;
- pull out the ramp and fit the extension if it's needed - if you need to move the wheelchair to do this, make sure you apply the brakes before letting go of the wheelchair;
- wheel out the wheelchair - walk backwards for the safety of your passenger and so that you can retain full control;
- remove the ramp and stow any equipment in the appropriate place; and
- close the door.

Personal safety

Even if the activities involved in your job have no requirement for such things we would recommend that you carry a fluorescent and reflective high-visibility jacket or vest to maximise your visibility if you need to change a wheel during the night or you break down.

Personal safety awareness

Consider your personal safety throughout any journey. Be aware of what's going on around you during breaks or when locking and unlocking your vehicle, etc. Proceed with caution – watch for anything unusual such as people who seem to be loitering or taking an interest in your activities. Follow any instructions given by your operator, stay aware and stay safe.

Diffusing an awkward situation

You must always ensure your own safety. Be alert at all times to the possibility of an awkward situation developing. If one does, do not refuse help from customers but do not try to force their involvement.

Drivers should stay in their vehicles, unless there is no alternative, as this gives some physical protection and control of the vehicle. You are also within easy reach of the radio if you need to call for assistance.

If you are already out of your vehicle when a situation develops, and physical violence seems like a possibility, your body language can be important both to protect you and to help calm things down.

You could benefit by:

- standing at a 45-degree angle to the aggressor. This presents less of a target area which helps protect you - also you appear physically smaller and less threatening;
- keeping your hands raised and open towards the aggressor. This helps signal nonaggression but also allows you to deflect a blow;
- tilting your head slightly back and to one side, which lessens the effect of any impact;
- keeping your body weight on the back foot, which increases the distance between you.

If you are confronted by an angry passenger, take nothing that's said personally. Accept that people do get angry on occasions and, as a company representative, you will be the focus of this anger. They do not have the right to vent that anger at you, but you still need to be able to handle the situation correctly.

Do not aggravate any situation by losing your temper in return. You need to appear calm while being assertive in a positive and very specific way, using three main steps. The order in which these occur can be important in resolving a situation successfully.

You should be:

Calming - Focus on what the other person is saying. Listen and encourage them to keep talking. Often all they want is to be heard. Avoid prolonged eye contact, finger pointing or standing too close, all of which can seem intimidating.

Assuring - Once calm, the aggressor needs to feel you've listened. Repeat the main points of their argument back to them to confirm this. Show some understanding of their situation. Avoid any body contact as this can be misinterpreted.

Controlling - This is partly about offering a solution or a way out which is mutually acceptable. But think about what you are saying and how you say it. A raised voice could change the message you are trying to give from polite to threatening. Avoid sarcasm, or hot phrases such as 'So what?', 'I do not care', 'Whatever', as these can instantly give the wrong message.

Annual vehicle inspection

The majority of vehicles used on our roads today must go through an annual inspection. A taxi is no exception and must be presented for inspection every year from new. This inspection is of a similar type to your private car but additional rules apply. One of these additional rules relates to the production of evidence of taxi vehicle insurance.

This can be a cover note of the actual insurance policy. In either case this must be produced at the time of the inspection and comply with all the legal requirements and cover the policy holder (taxi driver) to carry passengers for hire and reward. If your vehicle passes the test a notification letter will be issued. Your vehicle licence and taxi plates will be forwarded to you by post within five working days.

Taxi plates / license Taxi plates are unique to each vehicle and re-issued annually following successful completion of the vehicle's annual inspection (Taxi (Vehicle) Licence Test). If you change your vehicle at any time, the plates and paper licence **MUST** be returned to the department within 14 days of the change. Failure to do so is an offence. The replacement vehicle **MUST** be subject to a vehicle test and on successful completion, a new set of plates and paper licence specific to that vehicle, will be issued.

Conditions attached to a taxi vehicle licence

A taxi vehicle licence is valid for one year and is issued once your vehicle has successfully completed its annual inspection. One of the conditions attached to your taxi vehicle licence relates to parking at your taxi depot. You **MUST** park your vehicle in a safe, legal and convenient location within **45 metres** of the licensee's place of business (Usually the taxi depot). A full list of the conditions attached to your taxi vehicle licence is included in the Taxis Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

Evidence to support your right to work in the UK

If you are applying for a Taxi Operator's Licence you need to prove that you have the right to live and work in the UK. If you do not possess this right then your application will be refused.

Documents which show ongoing entitlement to work in the UK

- a passport showing that you are a British citizen or a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies and have the right of abode in the United Kingdom;
- a passport or national identity card showing that you are a national of the European Economic Area or Switzerland;
- a residence permit, registration or certificate or document certifying or indicating permanent residence issued by the Home Office, Border and Immigration Agency or UK Border Agency to a national of a European Economic Area country or Switzerland;
- a permanent residence card issued by the Home Office, Border and Immigration Agency or UK Border Agency to a family member of a national of a European Economic Area country or Switzerland;
- a Biometric Immigration Document issued by the UK Border Agency to the holder which indicates the person named in it is allowed to stay indefinitely in the United Kingdom, or has no time limit on their stay in the United Kingdom;
- a passport or other travel document endorsed to show that the holder is exempt from immigration control, is allowed to stay indefinitely in the United Kingdom, has the right of abode in the United Kingdom, or has no time limit on their stay in the United Kingdom;
- an Immigration Status Document issued by the Home Office, Border and Immigration Agency or UK Border Agency to the holder with an endorsement indicating that the person named in it is allowed to stay indefinitely in the United Kingdom or has no time limit on their stay in the United Kingdom, when produced in combination with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance Number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer;
- a full birth certificate issued in the United Kingdom which includes the name(s) of at least one of the holder's parents, when produced in combination with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance Number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer;
- a full adoption certificate issued in the United Kingdom which includes the name(s) of at least one of the holder's adoptive parents, when produced in combination with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance Number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer;
- a birth certificate issued in the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or Ireland, when produced in combination with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance Number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer;

- an adoption certificate issued in the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or Ireland, when produced in combination with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance Number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer;
- a certificate of registration or naturalisation as a British citizen, when produced in combination with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance Number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer; or
- a letter issued by the Home Office, Border and Immigration Agency or UK Border Agency to the holder which indicates that the person named in it is allowed to stay indefinitely in the United Kingdom, when produced in combination with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance Number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer;

Reporting new convictions

An operator must inform the Department, within 7 working days, if any person associated with the operator licence is convicted of any offence.

Action taken by the Department in respect of new convictions including fixed penalty notices being brought to its attention will depend on for example:

- the seriousness of the offence(s);
- whether the conviction was incurred in the course of the role as an operator;
- any previous criminal history;
- any earlier warnings;
- promptness of advising the Department; and
- the relevance of the conviction(s) to an operator licence.

Driver affiliation conditions

A driver can only be affiliated to more than one taxi operator at any one time when the driver is employed in:

- wedding transport;
- funeral transport; and/or
- Education & Library Board contracted home to school transport.

Periodic training requirements

All taxi licence holders, in order to retain their taxi licence, **MUST** complete periodic training.

The purpose of periodic training is to raise the standards of the taxi industry and to develop the current skills of taxi drivers.

Benefits include improvements to road safety, a better understanding of the environmentally friendly driving techniques which aid a reduction in fuel consumption and exhaust emissions and to complement and enhance a taxi driver's professionalism.

Taxi drivers who obtained their taxi licence on or after 1st September 2015 **MUST** complete **a minimum of 35 hours** periodic training every five years in order to retain their taxi driver's licence. For existing taxi licence holders the number of hours training will vary depending on the date of renewal. If you do not complete the training by the due date your taxi licence will not be renewed.

These courses have a MINIMUM legal duration of 3 hours 30 minutes. Any course which does not comply with the legislation cannot be attributed to periodic training and uploaded against a driver's record.

In addition, if a course exceeds the minimum period but falls short of the next acceptable time period of 7 hours, (i.e. any time between 3 hours 30 minutes and 7 hours) the extra time cannot be attributed towards an individual's periodic training record.

In order to fully comply with the periodic training requirement, one of the courses within each 35 hour period (or number of hours required at time of renewal) **MUST** be on 'Disability Awareness'. It **MUST** also be **at least 3 hours 30 minutes** in duration. A taxi licence will not be issued if you fail to include a course which is linked to this topic.

Seating capacity of vehicles

In the majority of cases taxi drivers will drive standard saloon or hatch back vehicles with 3 or 4 passenger seats. However in some case you may be driving larger vehicles such as limousines, taxi buses and novelty type vehicles which have a seating capacity greater than 4 but not exceeding 8 excluding the driver.

Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) enforcement officers

Powers of enforcement officers

Like the police, DVA enforcement officers have the powers **to stop all vehicles** on all types of roads including motorways. It is an offence not to comply with the directions given by an enforcement officer. **Refer to The Official Highway Code for Northern Ireland, Rule 107.**

DVA enforcement officers have the power to caution you and issue you with an on the spot fine and a fixed penalty notice for certain offences, which includes any breaches in the legal requirements which apply to taxi drivers.

If asked to do so you **MUST** produce your driving licence and / or your taxi driver's licence to an authorised / enforcement officer on demand or at least within 7 days. Failure to do so is an offence and could lead to the suspension or revocation of your taxi licence.

Production of taxi vehicle licence (TV10)

A DVA enforcement officer may require you to produce your taxi vehicle licence (TV10). If you do not have this at the time of the roadside check, the Enforcement Officer may instruct you to produce it to an office of the department for inspection within **10 days**. If this request is made by a Police Officer, the taxi vehicle licence **MUST** be produced to a police station within **5 days**.

Band 4 - Customer Care, Carriage of Vulnerable Passengers & Passenger Comfort and Safety

Customer care

Make sure you know how many seats your vehicle is licensed for and **DO NOT** exceed that number under any circumstances as you may be putting both your passengers and your safety at risk.

If you are faced with a situation where you have more passengers than you are legally licensed to carry, you should offer your passengers the option of waiting for an alternative vehicle that can carry everyone or arrange to leave a passenger or passengers behind until alternative transport can be arranged.

You cannot refuse to take at least some of the passengers as you have an obligation to complete the hire.

The number of seats your taxi is licensed for can be found on the taxi plates or labels issued at the time of licensing and should be attached to the vehicle.

Eliminate gaps from the kerb. Many passengers find it difficult to board or get out of a taxi if it pulls up too far away from the kerb. So where possible always pull up within a reasonable distance from the kerb.

Always:

- acknowledge customers promptly and politely, and speak to them in a way that promotes confidence in your company;
- give customers information that's within your own limits of knowledge or authority;

- refer customers to other appropriate people if you do not have the knowledge to help them, or if their need goes beyond your responsibilities;
- follow approved procedures and policies for promoting good customer service;
- record, accurately and completely, (if required) information from customers that may affect the company; and
- identify and report, to the appropriate person, possible difficulties that could affect customers/passengers.

Give passengers time to get seated and fit their seat belts before you move off. A few extra seconds at this point will add very little time to your journey but demonstrates good customer care.

Always make sure the doors are closed and secure before moving off. If your taxi (limo or taxi bus) has an open platform, you **MUST NOT** allow passengers to stand on the platform while the vehicle is moving. Anyone doing so would be at risk, especially if the driver has to brake suddenly or turn at a sharp corner.

Good customer care is important for maintaining the business. For example if you are delayed in any way it is important to try and make arrangements to let the customer know.

They will appreciate being kept fully informed which may lessen their dissatisfaction on your arrival. Drivers are the first point of contact with passengers. If you arrive late make sure that one of the first things you do is apologise. This may be the difference between receiving and not receiving a complaint.

To help your passengers, you should:

- when stationary, look directly at them when you speak to them; it can help you to communicate effectively; and
- make sure they are comfortably seated and their seat belt is fitted before you move away.

In the event of a breakdown, show consideration towards your passengers' safety and the completion of their journey. If possible arrange onward transportation through your depot.

Caring for your passengers is an important part of taxi driving. As the driver, you're responsible for the safety and comfort of your passengers as they get into and out of your vehicle, as well as during the journey. Your job is to carry your passengers to their destination:

- safely;
- comfortably;
- efficiently; and
- courteously.

Professional service

Courtesy and consideration are the hallmarks of a professional driver. You, your company and your profession will be on display every time you drive. Therefore, you should show a good example of skill, courtesy and tolerance. Be a credit to yourself, your company and your profession, and aim for the highest standards.

Display of your taxi badge

While a taxi is being used for public or private hire, excluding use in connection with a wedding or a funeral, the taxi driver **MUST** wear their badge. The badge is supplied by the Department and **MUST** be displayed in such a position and manner as to be plainly and distinctly visible on your person. Failure to do so is an offence.

The badge should not be defaced or mutilated in any way and cannot be transferred to any other taxi driver.

Dealing with lost property

While carrying passengers in your vehicle it is their responsibility to look after their personal possessions or property. However, if you find any property in your vehicle after the passenger has left, you should hand it in to a police station as soon as possible. Taxi operators are required to maintain a record of all lost property that is found in their taxis.

Forces at work

You should understand something of the various forces that act on a vehicle and its passengers. The effects of these forces can seriously undermine your control, so it is important to be aware of them and to act appropriately.

A vehicle travelling in a straight line under gentle acceleration is relatively stable.

Forces are applied to a vehicle when it:

- accelerates;
- brakes; or
- changes direction.

Depending on how violent or sudden the changes are, the greater the forces will be. Sudden, excessive or badly timed steering, braking and acceleration will introduce forces that can result in a loss of stability and control particularly if your vehicle is laden with passengers and their luggage.

Steering should always be:

- planned;
- smooth;
- controlled; and
- accurate.

Braking should always be:

- progressive;
- correctly timed;
- smooth; and
- sensitive.

Acceleration should always be:

- progressive;
- used to best economic advantage;
- well planned; and
- considerate.

Most of the forces described here act on a vehicle in motion. If you disregard them you will probably lose control, so allow for them in your driving.

Cornering force

When a vehicle takes a curved path at a bend the forces acting upon it tend to cause it to continue on the original, straight course. This is known as cornering force. If a vehicle takes a bend too fast, cornering force will cause the passengers to be thrown towards the outside of the bend.

Depending on your direction of travel, on a right hand bend you will be thrown forwards and to the left and on a left hand bend, forwards and to the right. The vehicle may even skid, especially if the road surface is at all slippery. Do not take a bend too fast; this could cause passenger discomfort and may cause a loss of control.

Kinetic energy

The energy that's stored up in the vehicle and its passengers when travelling is known as kinetic energy. This is converted into heat at the brake pads and discs when braking occurs. Continuous use of the brakes results in them becoming over heated and losing their effectiveness (especially on long downhill gradients). This effect is known as 'brake fade'.

More effort is needed to stop a fully laden vehicle than an unladen one travelling at a similar speed. It is important, therefore, to avoid harsh braking. Plan ahead and take early action.

Sudden faults

Occasionally, faults occur that can't be anticipated. It is important to take immediate action to correct these in the interests of safety for your passengers as well as yourself.

For example, if you begin to smell fuel or exhaust fumes in the vehicle while travelling, or if a passenger reports such odours, you **MUST** stop immediately and call the emergency services. Do not try to fix it yourself.

Smoking in your vehicle

Legislation was introduced in April 2007 in Northern Ireland concerning smoking in certain vehicles, this includes smoking in taxis.

The law requires:

- any enclosed vehicle used by members of the public, including taxis, to be smoke-free. This means that neither the driver nor the passenger can smoke in a taxi; and
- taxi vehicles **MUST** be smoke-free **AT ALL TIMES** even if there are no passengers in the vehicle or if the vehicle is being driven by a person other than the registered owner/driver, or when the vehicle is being used for personal business by either the registered owner/driver or any other person.

Therefore, you **MUST NOT** smoke in public transport vehicles or in vehicles used for work purposes. You **MUST** also display, in a prominent position, no-smoking signs and ensure that you are aware of, and adhere to, all the legal restrictions relating to the type of vehicle you drive.

Failure to comply with the legislation can be reported to the Environmental Health Department who will carry out an investigation and any taxi driver who fails to prevent someone smoking in their vehicle can be prosecuted and fined up to a maximum of £2,500.

Anyone found smoking in a taxi can be issued with a £50 fixed penalty notice or be prosecuted and face a fine of up to a maximum of £1,000.

Failure to display the correct signage can result in a fixed penalty notice of £200 and if prosecuted carries a fine of up to £1,000.

Communication, mobile phones and in-car equipment

You **MUST** exercise proper control of your vehicle at all times. Don't allow the use of in-car equipment to distract you from driving carefully and safely. It's illegal to operate a hand held mobile phone or similar device when driving.

You should also never use a handheld microphone while driving. Find a safe place to stop before using such equipment.

If your taxi is fitted with a communications radio or telephone, you should only use it while driving if it's fitted with a hands-free microphone.

However, even using hands-free equipment is likely to distract your attention from the road. It's far safer not to use this equipment, or tune the radio, while driving.

Driving a taxi demands your full attention all of the time.

Other safety issues

Before allowing your passengers to open the doors to get out of your vehicle, particularly on the off-side, you should always apply the parking brake and put the gear lever into neutral and check the mirrors and look around for any passing vehicles.

Also when you leave your vehicle make sure the parking brake is applied and the engine is switched off.

Loading your vehicle

It is your responsibility as a driver to ensure that your vehicle is not overloaded. Never exceed the weight limits for your vehicle as this can be dangerous. It will also mean that your vehicle uses more fuel as the engine has to work harder.

You **MUST** also ensure that any load:

- is fastened securely;
- does not obscure your view; and
- does not stick out dangerously.

Consider fitting a specially designed roof box to carry bulky items. This is streamlined to save fuel and will also secure the load more safely. If you do fit a roof box or rack, take it off when it is not in use to reduce wind resistance. The drag on a roof box can increase the fuel consumption by more than 15%.

Weight

The loading and distribution of the luggage can affect the axle weights and the stability of the vehicle. The weight of your vehicle will also have a bearing on the overall stopping distance of your vehicle – the heavier it is the longer the distance it will need to stop.

Make sure that any objects or animals you carry are secured safely:

- dogs should be strapped in with a special car harness or travel behind a grille. Other animals should be carried in cages or special carry-boxes which should be secured with the seat belt. The only exception to this is assistance dogs which can travel with their owner on the floor of your vehicle (when possible).
- make sure packages are securely stored, preferably in the boot of the vehicle where they should be strapped down or wedged in to stop them moving around.

You also need to consider the effect a full complement of passengers will have on your braking distances, handling characteristics and stability. When loaded you need to increase your separation distance to allow for an increase in your stopping distances.

Ramp and wheelchair fittings

If you have the facility to carry wheelchairs you must ensure that you are able to correctly load and secure the wheelchair so that the passenger can be transported safely. A separate restraint for both the wheelchair and the passenger should be used.

Ramps or lifts should be lowered on request or manual ramps provided, and you must ensure that wheelchair users are correctly positioned within the wheelchair space.

Passengers in wheelchairs usually sit with their back to the direction of travel, and the chair brakes must also be applied.

To load the wheelchair user you should:

- prepare for your passenger. Fit the wheelchair restraint and make space available for the wheelchair. Ensure the door is fully opened and secured. Pull out the ramp and (if necessary) add an extension;
- push the wheelchair user into the vehicle, preferably using the handles and stow the ramp. If you need to let go of the wheelchair to stow the ramp, make sure you apply the wheelchair brakes;
- position the wheelchair so that it can be secured using the equipment provided by the vehicle manufacturer;
- ensure that all straps and belts that secure the wheelchair and its user are fastened according to the manufacturer's instructions; and
- close the door.

To unload the wheelchair at the end of the journey, you should:

- open the door fully and secure it;
- release the restraining straps and belts;
- pull out the ramp and fit the extension if it is needed. If you need to move the wheelchair to do this, make sure you apply the brakes before letting go of the wheelchair;

- wheel out the wheelchair. Walk backwards for the safety of your passenger and so that you can retain full control;
- remove the ramp and stow any equipment in the appropriate place; and
- close the door.

Any straps and/or securing devices that connect to the wheelchair, to prevent its movement while in transit, should be secured by you. If, however, the passenger prefers to do this themselves, then you must also inspect the fixings to make sure they are secured safely.

Occasionally, machinery such as boarding devices will break down, despite best efforts to service it. You won't have failed in your statutory duties if the boarding device breaks down and there is no other means of assisting the passenger.

You can refuse to carry out any particular duty, if it is considered unreasonable to do so, on the grounds that it might risk the health and safety of the person with a disability, other passengers, yourself or the security of your vehicle.

Visually and hearing impaired passengers

Some passengers with special needs can be identified very obviously. A person carrying a white stick, a long white cane or accompanied by a guide dog is visually impaired. If the stick has a red ring or red and white checks painted on it, or the dog has a red and white harness, they also have impaired hearing.

Use of a swivel seat

A person with limited mobility might also find the swivel seat helpful. Often this will need to be used in conjunction with the intermediate step. As they get into your vehicle, you should:

- ensure the door is fully opened and secured;
- pull down the seat and swing it outwards until it is locked in position;
- help the person onto the seat (if necessary);
- swivel the seat back into the travelling position until it is locked in position; and
- offer to help secure the seat belt before closing the door.

Payment of fares

If a passenger refuses to pay their fare, you should not get into a situation where aggression or violence is allowed to develop. Where possible take the individual's name and address, note the reasons why they are refusing to make payment and pass this information onto your depot manager so he can take the necessary steps to address the issue. A passenger has a legal obligation to pay a fare providing no extenuating circumstances led to an increase in that fare which were not of their making.

Passenger seat belts

Passengers **MUST** wear seat belts where they are fitted.

- adult passengers and children aged 14 and over are responsible for their own actions.
- you are responsible for ensuring that children under 14 years of age wear their seat belts.

It is unreasonable to expect the right child seat or booster to be available in a taxi unless a parent or carer has brought it with them.

There is therefore a qualified exception, if child restraints are not available in a licensed taxi:

- a child under three years old may travel unrestrained but in the rear only – this is the only exemption for a child under three years old; and
- a child aged three years and above **MUST** use an adult belt in the rear seat only.

Any child up to 135 cm (approx. 4 feet 5 inches) in a front seat of any vehicle **MUST** use the seat belts or child restraints available.

Regardless of the size or age of a passenger you must ensure they are correctly seated and their seat belt is fitted **before** moving off.

A rear-facing baby seat **MUST NOT** be fitted into a seat protected by an active frontal airbag, as in a crash it can cause serious injury or death to the child. If a rear-facing baby seat does have to be positioned in the front passenger seat the passenger air bag (if fitted) **MUST** be deactivated.

Seat belts (general information)

Seat belts save lives and reduce the risk of injury. Unless you're exempt, you must wear a seat belt if one is available.

The following table summarises the legal requirements for the wearing of seat belts. It's important that seat belts are always correctly adjusted and are comfortable, with both the lap belt and the diagonal belt, where available, protecting the body.

The driver is responsible for ensuring that all children under 14 years old wear seat belts or use an approved child restraint.

You may temporarily release your seat belt while carrying out any manoeuvre involving reversing. However, you **MUST** refasten it once the manoeuvre has been completed.

If an inertia reel seat belt has temporarily locked because the vehicle is parked on a gradient, you may move the vehicle to release the mechanism. As soon as the mechanism has released, you should stop and put on the belt.

Legal requirements for the wearing of seat belts

	Front seat – all vehicles	Rear seat – cars and small minibuses*
Driver	Seat belt MUST be worn if fitted	–
Child under 3 years old	Correct child restraint MUST be used	Correct child restraint MUST be used*
Child from 3rd birthday up to 1.35m in height (or 12th birthday, whichever they reach first)	Correct child restraint MUST be used	Correct child restraint MUST be used where seat belts fitted**
Child over 1.35m (approx 4ft 5ins) in height, or 12 or 13 years	Adult seat belt MUST be worn if available	Adult seat belt MUST be worn if available
Adult passengers aged 14 years and over	Seat belt MUST be worn if available	Seat belt MUST be worn if available

* If the correct child restraint isn't available in a licensed taxi or private hire vehicle, the child may travel unrestrained.

** If the correct child restraint isn't available in a licensed taxi or private hire vehicle, or for reasons of unexpected necessity over a short distance, or where two occupied child restraints prevent fitment of a third, then an adult seat belt **MUST** be worn.

If your vehicle is fitted with forward and rearward fixed seats, any passenger using these seats **MUST** wear their seat belt.

Children in taxis

Drivers, who are carrying children in taxis, should also ensure that:

- children should get into the vehicle through the door nearest the kerb;
- child restraints are properly fitted to manufacturer's instructions;
- the child safety door locks, where fitted, are used when children are in the vehicle; and
- children are kept under control.

Taxis taking children to school

Many taxi companies are responsible for transporting children to and from school during term time. A great deal of responsibility is placed on the driver to ensure that the child or children are properly restrained and do not interfere with or distract you while driving.

Examples of good practice include the following:

- consider the safety of yourself and other road users: the safety of school children and other members of the public must be your priority;
- avoid all physical contact with schoolchildren under any circumstances other than
 - genuine self-defence
 - a medical emergency
 - to prevent a serious offence or threat to safety;
- schoolchildren may not, in words or actions, be told to get out of the taxi or be refused transport;
- racist or other offensive or abusive language won't be tolerated or permitted from any taxi driver;
- do not make any threats; and
- drivers should not react to verbal abuse.

If there is a risk of a disruptive young person or young people causing damage to your vehicle or endangering the safety of all concerned, you should take the following steps:

- bring the taxi to a halt;
- ask them to calm down; and
- if the disruptive behaviour continues, call for help.

It is essential that you remain calm during any situation and avoid doing or saying anything that implies you are asking them to leave the vehicle. Act in a confident manner and keep your behaviour in proportion to the provocation.

You should:

- think about your approach;
- be aware of warning signs and think ahead;
- show that you are willing to listen;
- avoid body language that could inflame the situation, such as pointing of fingers; and
- inform the school and your company of any persistent problems.

It has been found that using a dedicated driver for a particular school run enables a long-term relationship to develop between the driver and passengers. This helps reduce the need for young people to test the boundaries of what's acceptable.

Retaliation whilst driving

Everyone makes mistakes or misjudgements at times, which may cause others to take avoiding action. How you react is important, in terms of the safe control of your vehicle and the safety and wellbeing of your passengers. In areas where there are side roads or parked vehicles obstructing your view, be particularly alert.

If something happens that means you have to stop quickly, be tolerant, remain calm, try not to react and learn from the experience. You must resist the temptation to get upset or retaliate in order to 'teach someone a lesson'.

While your brain is processing strong emotions like anger and frustration, your attention can be taken away from what you are doing. As a result, concentration, anticipation and observation skills are likely to be much reduced. This could increase your likelihood of being involved in a road traffic incident. If appropriate, consider stopping and taking a short break.

Always drive:

- courteously;
- with anticipation;
- calmly, allowing for other road users' mistakes; and
- in full control of your vehicle.

You should not act aggressively as this could adversely affect the comfort and safety of your passengers, your professional standing and that of your company, and has the potential to lead to a loss of vehicle control.

Breakdowns - assessing the dangers

If your vehicle is creating an obstruction or is a potential danger to other road users, tell the police as soon as possible. This is particularly important when you are carrying passengers, especially schoolchildren. Their safety must come first.

If you think that there is a serious risk of collision, escort your passengers to a safe location. Ensure that they wait somewhere well away from the traffic. Explain carefully what you are doing and ask someone to go for help if necessary.

Make sure that you:

- know where your passengers are;
- know what they are doing; and
- keep them informed.

If you breakdown on a motorway, pull onto the hard shoulder as far to the left as possible ensuring that your steering is turned slightly to the left so that if you are hit from behind, your vehicle will not be pushed on to the main carriageway.

Ask your passengers to get out of the vehicle via the nearside door away from passing traffic and to wait near the vehicle but on the embankment away from the hard shoulder. If you are carrying any animals keep them inside the vehicle. Once you have done this contact the emergency services.

Rather than use a mobile phone, use the roadside emergency telephone, if possible, which will help pinpoint your location. When you do use the emergency telephone make sure you face the traffic to help ensure your safety. The phone is connected to the police and they can help to arrange the recovery of your vehicle etc.

You will be asked for the:

- number on the emergency telephone, which gives your precise location;
- details of your vehicle; and
- details of the fault.

Environmental issues

Vehicle designers and maintenance staff all have a part in helping to reduce the effects that vehicles have on the environment. You can also help. You should be aware of the effects your vehicle, and the way in which it is driven and operated, can have on the environment around you.

The taxi industry has a major role to play in limiting the effect drivers and their vehicles have on the environment. For example, a badly maintained or poorly driven taxi can cause unnecessary pollution.

There are many things you can do to help:

- follow manufacturer's recommendations for servicing;
- if you do your own maintenance, make sure you take your old oil which should be in a suitable container, batteries and used tyres to a garage or local authority site for recycling or safe disposal. It is illegal and harmful to pour oil down a drain and if you get it on your skin it can cause major skin problems;
- make regular checks of your vehicle and ensure that any defects are reported and sorted out;
- check excessive exhaust smoke (the public are encouraged to report vehicles emitting excessive fumes);
- check uneven running;
- check brake faults, which can cause drag;
- have correct tyre pressures;
- make sure filters are changed regularly; and
- check suspension system faults, which may result in road damage.

Always drive with fuel economy in mind. Operators keep careful checks on vehicle running costs, and fuel economy is a key factor for profitability as well as reducing waste.

You should:

- plan routes to avoid congestion;
- anticipate well ahead;
- avoid the need to make up time;

- avoid over-revving;
- drive smoothly. This can reduce fuel consumption by up to 15%. Avoid rapid acceleration as this leads to greater fuel consumption, and increased wear and tear;
- avoid using the air-conditioning continuously as this increases fuel consumption by about 15%;
- consider the use of cruise control where fitted, as this will help reduce fuel costs;
- brake in good time (all braking wastes energy in the form of heat);
- make good use of regenerative retarders (possibly fitted to novelty vehicles). This is a braking system which allows the use of the vehicle's drive motor, or motors, to convert the vehicle's kinetic energy into electrical energy during deceleration; and
- switch off your engine when stationary for some time, especially where noise and exhaust fumes cause annoyance.

Tailgating

If you find another vehicle is tailgating, that is, driving too close behind you, gradually reduce your speed to increase the gap between you and any vehicle ahead. You will then be able to brake more gently and remove the likelihood of the close-following vehicle running into you from behind.

If another vehicle pulls into the safe separation gap you are leaving, ease off your speed to extend the gap again.

Never drive, at speed, within a few feet of the vehicle in front. It is not only car drivers in motorway right-hand lanes who commit this offence. Lorry and bus drivers can sometimes be seen driving much too close behind another vehicle – often at normal motorway speeds. If anything unexpected happens, a road traffic incident could follow.

You must not rely on someone else to plan ahead for you. They may not possess the same skills as you. Always keep your distance.

Safer Drivers, Safer Vehicles



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