

Community Transport

Driver's Handbook



**VOLUNTEER DRIVER
DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**
COMMUNITY TRANSPORT - THE DRIVING FORCE

Appendix 4 INCIDENT INFORMATION FORM

NB: This is included as an aide memoir. Your scheme may require a more detailed report.

Date..... Time..... Weather.....

Location of the incident

The other party Name.....

Address

Telephone number.....

Vehicle make/model No. plate

Driving licence number Insurer.....

Witness Name..... Telephone

Address

Witness Name..... Telephone.....

Address

What happened?.....

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Draw a diagram below to help illustrate where the vehicles were when the collision occurred.



VOLUNTEER DRIVER DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT - THE DRIVING FORCE

This handbook was produced by the
Volunteer Driver Development Project
Hosted by Herefordshire Voluntary Action

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Appendix 3 UPDATES AND INFORMATION

From time to time volunteer drivers will receive updated information to either complement or replace existing procedures. A record of these updates should be entered below (example filled in), and the old information deleted, in order to avoid confusion. This handbook will be updated and re-issued as it becomes necessary (it is anticipated that this will be biennially).

Date	Page	Item
31.10.2004	20	Checks - mobile phone - add "..... make sure it is charged"

Appendix 2 EMERGENCY CONTACTS

It is important that drivers are able to contact the scheme at any time when they are on duty and also outside of office hours to notify staff of illness, vehicle breakdown or any other emergencies.

In the first instance drivers should try the office on:

If there is no reply on this number then emergency numbers are as follows:

If no contact is made then a final resort should be to telephone:

Please enter information specific to your scheme below.

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Looking after an accident victim

It is important to provide basic first aid to an accident victim, to enable survival until the victim reaches a hospital. Quite often, though willing to help, people are unable to break a psychological barrier and just stand and watch. Stop and think what you can do. First call an ambulance. Try to give as much information as possible - number of injured people; number and types of vehicles involved; any other dangers, etc.

If there are any injuries, treat them within the range of your emergency first aid knowledge.

Knowing how to protect an airway, how to stop bleeding and how to perform CPR is something well worth thinking about NOW. Training is freely available for all.

If there are other people around, try to ensure that a helper stays with each casualty.

Do not give painkillers, alcohol, other drinks, food or cigarettes to the road accident victim.

It is instinctive for anyone on the scene of an accident to feel that the victims must be removed from the wreckage, but unless they are in danger from a fire or explosion or any other life-threatening situation, do not move them. Moving a casualty with head, neck, internal or spinal injuries could paralyse them.

You can also work to make the scene of the accident safe. Turn off the ignition switches of the crashed cars. You can use the headlights of other cars to light up the area. Make sure nobody smokes at the site of the accident. If power lines have fallen, keep people clear of them. If power lines are touching a car, stay away.

Road accidents are now considered to be the third largest killer after cancer and heart diseases the world over. In Britain approximately ten people die on the roads every day (3600 per year). Many more are seriously injured.

Appendix I ACCIDENTS

What to do in the event of an accident

- First and foremost, remain as calm as you possibly can
- If you require help, then contact the emergency services immediately, and give clear directions to the incident. In addition to the 999 emergency number, you may also dial 112 (which is the European standard emergency number)
- If the damage is minor, move the vehicles off the road and clear any traffic obstructions. If you can't move the vehicles, warn other drivers of the accident by using emergency triangles or a passer by to reduce the chance of a second accident
- You must call the police if someone has been even slightly injured. You should also call police if the other driver appears to be under the influence of drink or drugs, or driving without a licence

In the aftermath of an accident, even a minor one, it's easy to skip over details that could later prove crucial to filing your accident report. First, write down the names and addresses of any witnesses to the accident - don't wait for them to volunteer - it's OK to ask around. Second, exchange information with the other party or parties, and note particulars about the circumstances of the collision. Lastly, do not admit fault or sign any documents other than those supplied by the police.

It will also be useful to gather the following information (use the incident information form on page 34):

- Date, time and location of the accident.
- A sketch diagram showing where the vehicles were when the collision occurred
- The other party's personal information - name, address, telephone number, vehicle make/model/year, number plate and driving licence number
- Name and number of the police officer dealing with the incident

Be prepared

Consider:

- Carrying a first aid kit in your car at all times
- Getting a mobile phone (even if only for emergency use)
- Getting first aid training

I PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is to present clear guidelines and procedures to volunteer drivers within community transport schemes. In addition to the information contained in this handbook, some schemes may offer further guidance to their volunteers on procedures and practices relevant to their organisation.

It is good practice for all volunteers to have adequate information on their duties and responsibilities. This ensures that both the volunteer coordinator and the volunteers themselves will have a clear idea of the range of activities in which they may be involved. The information contained in this handbook will also be a safeguard to volunteers, by giving guidelines on good practice and setting the boundaries of their responsibilities. It should be noted that going beyond the scope of the duties detailed in this handbook could mean that a volunteer is no longer covered by the scheme's public liability insurance.

The handbook reflects best practice advice available. We believe that it covers the vast majority of situations, although we recognise that no handbook can cover every conceivable eventuality. If you feel there are any omissions, or you have any suggestions for improvement, then please contact us at the address on page 3.

2 ABOUT COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Most community transport schemes have come into being since the 1970's. They provide transport for people who do not have access to public or private transport, particularly older and disadvantaged people.

Community transport schemes are entirely dependent on their teams of volunteer drivers, who either drive their own vehicles (owner-drivers) or use specialist vehicles to provide transport throughout their area. Journeys may be for appointments at doctors, hospitals and dentists, as well as for visits to shops, day centres, clubs, libraries, friends, restaurants, places of interest etc.

Passengers or agencies book transport in advance through the scheme coordinator. Each journey is then allocated to a volunteer driver, or a scheme vehicle, according to availability and various other factors.

Your scheme will be one of a network of schemes throughout the country. These schemes operate under legislation which allows minibuses to be driven without a PCV licence, and owner-drivers to share their vehicles. Owner-drivers may also receive payments for the journeys, provided they do not make a profit.

3 DRIVER ASSESSMENT AND TRAINING

Assessment

All prospective volunteer drivers are initially interviewed to assess their experience and suitability and to explain how the scheme operates. References are then sought from two independent people who are asked to comment on the candidate's suitability in terms of driving ability, temperament, punctuality etc. Due to the nature of the duties, a criminal records bureau (CRB) check will also be undertaken.

Finally, all new owner-driver volunteers should have an on-the-road assessment of their driving abilities. This typically takes 30 - 40 minutes, after which the assessor will talk to the driver about his/her good points and any areas where he/she might need to improve a little. This is done in a friendly non-confrontational manner and volunteers nearly always comment on how useful and reassuring they have found it (please note, this is not a formal driving test - you cannot lose your licence as a result of it). The assessments may be repeated at suitable intervals to ensure that a satisfactory standard is being maintained.

Minibus drivers will undertake similar assessment, but this will be coupled with awareness training, probably under the MiDAS scheme (see 'Training' below).

Training

A short induction for new volunteers will be carried out before commencing work with their chosen community transport scheme (hereafter referred to as 'the scheme'), to emphasise the more important features of this handbook and to explain the role of community transport.

If the volunteer is to drive minibuses, then he/she will be required to obtain a MiDAS (Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme) certificate or an alternative qualification recognised by the scheme. The scheme will organise and pay for this.

Drivers are encouraged to attend occasional training sessions based on subjects such as first aid, disability awareness, wheelchair handling etc. both initially and later on, as "refresher" training if needed. A record will be kept of all training offered to volunteers and which sessions were attended. The purpose of the training is to ensure that drivers are adequately equipped to carry out the tasks involved and are fully aware of the extent of and limits to their responsibilities.

The scheme coordinator is always open to considering new ideas for training volunteers.

16 DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE FOR VOLUNTEERS

Community transport schemes aim to treat all volunteers with the same respect and rights as paid employees. In return, the schemes expect that all volunteers will work within the same code of conduct that applies to paid employees.

There may be times when the actions or behaviour of a volunteer is not of the high standard expected. In such a situation, volunteers will be subject to the same disciplinary procedure as applies to paid employees to ensure fairness.

17 RESIGNATIONS

Where Life Changes

Where a volunteer decides to retire, move on or give up the driving role for whatever reason, he/she should inform the scheme coordinator, preferably in writing. This will enable the scheme to remove the driver's name from the active list, and amend their records accordingly. It will also give the scheme the opportunity to show their appreciation to individuals for their service.

Where an Individual has an Issue

If for any reason a driver feels aggrieved and is tempted to resign, the issue should be discussed with the scheme coordinator. We are all human and things do go wrong. The scheme staff want to treat individuals with understanding and respect, and strive to get things right. Please tell the scheme coordinator if something is causing upset or annoyance, and he/she will do their utmost to resolve it. The scheme does not want to lose good people for the wrong reasons.

Where the Scheme has an Issue

If for whatever reason a volunteer cannot deliver the service at the standard required, or for some reason no longer shares the scheme's ethos of volunteering, the scheme coordinator will ask the volunteer to discuss the issues with him/her, and where appropriate use the disciplinary procedure mechanism. Following this, if the differences are too great, either party may sever the connection.

When a volunteer resigns, whatever the reason, all materials, documents, ID cards, vehicle badges etc. should be returned to the scheme as soon as possible.

15 FEEDBACK, GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS

Feedback

Volunteer drivers are often in a unique position regarding many of the scheme's service users. The latter are quite often vulnerable people living on their own and volunteer drivers may be the only people they see from one week to the next. They may therefore be well placed to spot if a client's health, either physical or mental, is deteriorating and this should be reported promptly to the scheme coordinator.

Similarly if a driver observes what may be signs of abuse to a passenger this should also be reported; however, drivers should never tackle suspected perpetrators of such abuse directly or discuss the matter with anybody apart from the scheme coordinator (see guidance in section 12, paragraph 2).

In addition to the above, drivers may also from time to time inform scheme staff of situations where they feel the system is being abused. It is essential that the scheme's resources are used to help those who need them the most. Again, the passenger should not be challenged directly in this situation.

Complaints and Grievances

The scheme is committed to resolving any grievances or complaints arising from drivers or clients, in accordance with its written procedures (see the scheme's grievance and complaints procedure).

Suggestions

The scheme is continually trying to improve the service it offers to its users, and welcomes comments from its volunteers on any aspect of the service and how it might be improved. All suggestions will be carefully considered and may be made by letter, telephone or by calling in to the office to discuss ideas with scheme staff.

Some schemes also have steering groups or management committees that include volunteers as members.

4 VEHICLES AND MOTORING LAW

Regular Checks

Volunteers' cars will be checked, usually at the same time as the driving assessment, to ensure that they are of an appropriate construction and in good general condition.

Drivers should carry out daily checks on lights, tyres, oil, water, seat belts, mirrors etc. to ensure that the vehicle is maintained in a roadworthy condition.

Cleanliness

Whilst it is accepted that the external condition of a vehicle depends on the weather and journeys undertaken on a particular day, vehicles should be kept as clean as possible, both internally and externally, in keeping with good quality transport service.

Documentation

A copy of the driving licence will be taken when a driver first registers with the scheme, and annually thereafter. In addition, for owner-drivers, copies of the vehicle insurance certificate and MoT certificate (where applicable) will be required. It is then the driver's responsibility to ensure that these are renewed as appropriate; indeed, when a driver makes an entry on a journey record sheet he/she is effectively confirming that this has taken place. Any driving convictions/endorsements incurred must be reported immediately to the scheme coordinator, as should any change in vehicle insurer.

General Motoring Law

Volunteer drivers must comply with all legal requirements that govern everyday motoring (which all drivers should adhere to in any case). The main points to observe are as follows:

- The vehicle must be properly licensed (must display a valid tax disc)
- The use of the vehicle must be properly insured
- The driver must hold a valid driving licence
- The vehicle must have a valid MoT Certificate where required by law
- The driver's eyesight must meet the legal requirements (you must be able to read a modern number plate from a distance of 67 feet)
- The vehicle should be kept in a roadworthy condition and should comply with the relevant "Construction & Use" regulations
- The vehicle should be driven safely and with consideration for all other road users (i.e. in accordance with the Highway Code)

- The law states that: “A failure on the part of a person to observe a provision of the Highway Code shall not of itself render that person liable to criminal proceedings of any kind, but any such failure may in any proceedings... be relied upon by any party to the proceedings as tending to establish or negate any liability which is in question in those proceedings”
- The law regarding seat belts - see ‘Seat Belts’ below
- It is illegal for the driver to use a hand held mobile phone whilst driving or whilst stationary with the engine running

Seat Belts

All new cars must have front and rear seat belts fitted and these must be worn. Older cars (those made before 1983) do not need to have seat belts fitted; however, if they are fitted, then they must be worn. Normally, schemes would not accept cars without seat belts fitted.

Vehicles owned or kept by schemes are fitted with seat belts and these must be worn at all times by drivers and passengers.

	CAR FRONT SEAT	CAR REAR SEAT	RESPONSIBILITY
DRIVER	Must be worn if fitted	-	Driver
CHILD under 3 years of age	Appropriate child restraint must be worn if available	Appropriate child restraint must be worn if available	Driver
CHILD aged 3 to 11 and under 1.5 metres (about 5 feet) in height	Appropriate child restraint must be worn if available. If not, an adult seat belt must be worn if available	Appropriate child restraint must be worn if available. If not, an adult seat belt must be worn if available	Driver
CHILD aged 12 or 13 or younger child 1.5 metres or more in height	Adult seat belt must be worn if available	Adult seat belt must be worn if available	Driver
PASSENGERS over the age of 14	Must be worn if available	Must be worn if available	Passenger

14 EXPENSES

Mileage Allowance

All volunteer drivers are paid a mileage allowance (which includes dead mileage) to cover their car running costs as a flat rate per mile, irrespective of the type of vehicle, age or engine size etc. This rate is usually set after consultation with community transport schemes in a given area. It is adjusted periodically to allow for inflation. It is intended that the allowance should cover ongoing costs such as fuel, oil etc. as well as helping towards fixed costs such as insurance and depreciation. The legislation under which car schemes operate forbids drivers working for profit. The Inland Revenue publishes guidelines each year regarding the mileage limit above which they consider an individual to be making a ‘profit’. To obtain a copy of this leaflet or advice on mileage limits, please contact the scheme office.

Exceeding the Inland Revenue mileage limits to the point where you are deemed to have made a profit is also likely to invalidate your car insurance.

Scheme staff will try to help drivers stay within the relevant limits, but this depends in turn on drivers keeping the scheme coordinator informed about any other income which they derive from voluntary driving, whether formally or informally.

Gratuities

Drivers should not accept gratuities from passengers as this might affect the ‘profit’ situation. If passengers are insistent, the ‘tip’ should be taken on the understanding that it is donated to the scheme and should be entered on the journey record sheet as such.

Meal Allowance

Schemes do not pay a fixed meal allowance. However, if an individual round trip lasts 5 hours or more, then the driver may be entitled to claim an amount towards the cost of a meal on production of a receipt. This should be clarified with the scheme coordinator.

Other Expenses

Costs incurred through parking, necessary telephone calls and travel to and from scheme meetings, will be met by the scheme where appropriate. However, the volunteer should endeavour to keep these to a minimum in view of budgetary constraints.

12 CONFIDENTIALITY

Drivers should be aware that information obtained about passengers or other volunteers is confidential and must not be discussed with any third party. This includes information about a person's health, financial circumstances or any other details of a personal or private nature.

If a driver is concerned about any information disclosed by or about a client, (e.g. suspected abuse), then an appointment should be made to discuss the matter in strict confidence with the scheme coordinator. This is one of the few occasions when confidentiality should be broken.

The scheme's passengers are often vulnerable people who place a great deal of trust in its staff and volunteers. Incautious remarks can easily damage this relationship and place the passenger in a difficult or embarrassing situation. Any breaches of confidentiality are likely to result in the scheme's disciplinary procedure being applied.

13 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The scheme is committed to the principle and practice of equality and diversity and all scheme staff and volunteers are obliged to act in accordance with its equality and diversity (equal opportunities) policy. Drivers should familiarise themselves with the scheme's policy.

Offensive or racist remarks are unacceptable within the scheme, and if clients make any such comments, drivers should remember that they represent the scheme and must not be drawn into any discussion.

Training in 'equality and diversity' and 'disability awareness' may be offered by some schemes. Where this is the case volunteers are urged to attend at the earliest opportunity.

Minibuses and coaches carrying three or more children on an organised trip must be fitted with either three-point seat belts or lap seat belts.

	MINIBUS FRONT OR EXPOSED SEAT	MINIBUS REAR SEAT	RESPONSIBILITY
DRIVER	Must be worn if fitted	-	Driver
CHILD under 3 years of age	Appropriate child restraint must be worn if available	Appropriate child restraint must be worn if available	Driver
CHILD aged 3 to 11 and under 1.5 metres (about 5 feet) in height	Appropriate child restraint must be worn if available. If not, an adult seat belt must be worn if available	Appropriate child restraint must be worn if available. If not, an adult seat belt must be worn if available	Driver
CHILD aged 12 or 13 or younger child 1.5 metres or more in height	Adult seat belt must be worn if available	Adult seat belt must be worn if available	Driver
PASSENGERS over the age of 14	Must be worn if available	Buses under 2500kg - must be worn. Buses over 2500kg - not legally required (but strongly recommended they be worn if available)	Passenger

Exemptions From Wearing a Seat Belt

The legislation provides for a number of specific exemptions from the seat belt wearing requirements on medical and other grounds.

These include (only those relating to CT volunteer drivers are shown):

- Medical exemption (after consultation with a doctor)
- A person driving a vehicle while performing a manoeuvre which includes reversing
- A disabled person who is wearing a disabled person's belt

Wheelchair Fixings and Seat Belts

If the vehicle is adapted to carry wheelchairs, drivers must have proper training in correct and safe use of wheelchair clamps, straps and seat belts.

5 INSURANCE

Vehicle Insurance

Whilst the driver and passenger are in the vehicle, whether moving or stationary, they are covered against any accidents by the owner's or scheme's vehicle insurance, whether comprehensive or third party.

In the latter case the owner will not be able to claim compensation from their community transport scheme, or its funders, for the cost of any repairs due to accident or otherwise.

Owner-drivers are encouraged to take out fully comprehensive insurance in order to avoid any such difficulties.

An owner-driver's insurance company should not charge any additional premium on the driver joining a community transport scheme. The Motor Conference, which is the Standing Joint Committee of the British Insurance Association and Lloyds Underwriters Association, has recommended that insurance companies should not charge additional premiums where the car is being driven within a social car scheme, as long as expenses are claimed on a strictly non-profit basis.

Owner-drivers **MUST** notify their insurance company of the intention to drive for the scheme. The scheme should be able to provide a standard letter for notifying insurance companies.

Public Liability Insurance

The scheme takes out public liability insurance on behalf of all its volunteers to cover the possibility of any claim being made against them whilst carrying out their duties outside of the vehicle. It is important, however, that all volunteers are aware of the limits of their duties and responsibilities (see section 7), as they may not be covered if they are found to be acting beyond them.

No Claims/Excess Protection

If a volunteer driver has to claim on his/her vehicle insurance as a result of an incident during an authorised trip, then a further policy held by the scheme will reimburse the driver for any loss of no claims bonus or excess up to certain limits which are reviewed annually.

11 ACCIDENTS, INCIDENTS, BREAKDOWNS

Breakdowns

If a breakdown should occur whilst driving for the scheme, the following procedure should be noted:

- Explain to passenger(s) what has happened and tell them if it is necessary to go and call for assistance
- If the breakdown is of a minor nature it may be possible to effect a repair and continue with the journey. Where this is the case drivers should have particular regard for passenger safety (e.g. tyres should not be changed with passengers on board)
- If unable to complete a journey, contact the scheme office as soon as possible - the coordination staff will do their utmost to get another driver to help out
- If a breakdown occurs before the passenger has been picked up, call the scheme office as soon as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made
- The scheme should have an emergency telephone number for use when the scheme office is closed - please check with the scheme coordinator

Accidents

In the event of an accident, the procedure described in Appendix 1 on page 30 should be followed. It is good practice to carry a suitable first aid kit.

Reporting

It is very important that a record is made of any accident or incident that occurs whilst acting on behalf of the scheme. A basic report form is included in appendix 4 on page 34. The scheme may require a different form to be completed - please check with the scheme coordinator.

In the event of a vehicle accident the information detailed in the accident procedure should be recorded on the form. However, for other types of incidents it is also important to have a record of what happened, which can be referred to in the event of a disputed claim. It is difficult to be precise about the sort of incident that should be reported, however any occurrence resulting in injury to the driver, passenger or a third party should obviously be noted, as should instances of substantial dispute or verbal abuse.

As a rule of thumb, any incident where a driver considers that it might be prudent to have a written record to refer back to, should be noted on a standard report form.

10 JOURNEY RECORD SHEETS

Completing and Returning Records

Drivers should give attention to completing record sheets accurately and clearly, as they are often the only reliable record of what actually took place. Weekly or monthly, depending upon the requirements of the scheme, all record sheets should be sent or taken into the scheme office. This needs to be done promptly so that drivers can receive their mileage allowance, as various agencies for which the scheme provides a service are invoiced in arrears for reimbursement of this money.

Use the Correct Sheet

Trip details should be recorded on the appropriate sheet, which may be coloured for administration purposes.

Journey Return Time

This may be given in advance or agreed between passenger(s) and driver. It is the time when the passenger is collected for the return journey, not the time they arrive home.

Mileage

The 'total mileage' is all mileage from the driver's home until returning there after the journey is completed; this includes mileage where the driver returns home whilst waiting for a client. Dead mileage is the mileage covered when there is no client in the vehicle; it is included in the total but will also be identified separately.

Comments

If a situation arises which does not fit the normal pattern, or if a driver needs to explain any apparent irregularity on the record sheet, the "Comments" column should be used. If necessary, contact the scheme office for advice.

Totals

It will help with the swift processing of the record sheets if drivers total each column and carry forward the total from one sheet to the next.

6 OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

This section aims to assist drivers in providing a safe, efficient transport service for clients and deals with various operational matters that apply to some or all of the journeys undertaken by volunteer drivers.

Travel Arrangements

Details such as date and time of travel together with the passenger's name and address, destination etc. will be given to the driver with any other relevant information by the scheme staff. It is important that drivers keep to these instructions, particularly where several journeys are scheduled to fit together. Passengers are asked to give details when a trip is booked and these should not be altered on the day of travel without good reason.

Volunteer drivers should only carry out trips requested by their scheme. If passengers try to book journeys directly with drivers, they must be referred to the office to follow the proper booking procedure.

If drivers carry out journeys which are not booked through the office, they will not be covered by the scheme's insurance and may not be reimbursed for mileage incurred.

Passenger Numbers

Drivers should only carry authorised passengers (and escorts, where required). If additional passengers are expecting to travel with the authorised passenger(s), then these should only be taken if there is sufficient room in the vehicle, time in the schedule, and the scheme office is informed. Drivers should ensure that they do not carry more passengers than their vehicle is legally allowed to carry. Wherever possible, passengers with similar journey requirements are to travel together in the same vehicle to reduce costs (e.g. two people with similar appointment times at the same hospital). Drivers are required to be flexible in accommodating these arrangements.

Regular Journeys

Many drivers carry out regular journeys involving the same passengers, days and times each week. Journeys are booked through the office in the usual manner and continue on a regular basis until the passenger cancels the trip. If a driver is not available to carry out their regular trips due to holidays etc. then a cover driver will be found for those particular dates. It is, therefore, important that

drivers report any changes (e.g. times, destination), to regular journeys they undertake, so that office records are kept up to date, and correct details are given to cover drivers. During holiday periods (e.g. Christmas and Easter) drivers should try to ascertain from the passenger(s) involved when journeys are due to finish and restart. If this is not possible, the office should be contacted for advice.

Journey Length

Some drivers have a preference for longer or shorter journeys and this will certainly be taken into account when trips are allocated. However, all drivers should be prepared to undertake some short journeys, as otherwise, drivers who are willing to undertake the shorter trips end up doing nothing else.

Return Journeys

Whilst some journeys are one-way only, the majority of passengers require a return trip. Quite often the driver will wait at the doctor's surgery, hospital etc. and take the passenger home when he/she is ready. However, if the waiting time is of such a length that the driver could use their time more profitably by returning home between the outward and return journeys then this may be done and the appropriate mileage recorded. In this instance, the driver can either return at a pre-arranged time or leave a phone number where he/she can be contacted when the passenger is ready to return. Drivers should also consider whether they can use the waiting time to go shopping, visit friends, conduct other personal business, etc.

Abortive Journeys

Cancellations are usually notified to the coordinator in advance so that the driver can be informed. Nonetheless, abortive journeys still occur from time to time for various reasons. If for any reason a journey does not go ahead as arranged, a note should be made of this on the journey record sheet. If the journey planned should have been to a hospital or doctor's surgery then the driver should inform the office at the earliest opportunity so that the information can be passed on. If a driver suspects that a passenger is at home but unable to come to the door this also should be reported immediately. Neighbours may also be able to give information on the whereabouts of a passenger who does not appear to be at home.

Route

The route used by a driver should be the most direct possible, having due regard to passenger comfort, appointment time and traffic conditions.

Dead Mileage

Passengers are only charged for the mileage incurred whilst they are in the vehicle, i.e. excluding the dead mileage.

Recording

Journey details and all fares collected should be recorded as per the scheme's instructions.

Queries

If a driver has any queries regarding fares, or if a passenger questions the fare, advice should be sought from the scheme office.

9 FARES

Payment

Fares are normally collected on the day of travel, usually at the end of the journey. Payment is usually made in cash, however, if a cheque is offered, this should be made payable to the scheme, and submitted with the journey record sheets. Some schemes accept Transport Tokens, whilst others don't. Drivers should clarify the scheme's position regarding tokens.

Single Fares

These are charged when the passenger does not require a return journey.

Return Fares

Ideally, a return fare should be twice the cost of the single fare.

However, where a scheme's return fare is less than the cost of two singles, the return fare would normally be charged where the passenger makes the return journey within **1 hour** of his/her outward trip, **and** where the driver waits for the passenger.

Where the return journey is begun more than 1 hour after the outward trip, the passenger should be charged two single fares.

It is recognised that where there is a long wait, the driver may wish to return home and pick up the passenger later, either at a pre-arranged time, or when the client telephones to say they are ready.

Multiple Fares

Where there is more than one passenger on board, they all pay the relevant fare set by the scheme. Where a passenger is accompanied by a friend, relative or escort, then both are normally required to pay a fare, as they would on a bus or train. However, as policy on this may differ, drivers should be aware of their own scheme's requirements.

Child Fares

These are usually charged for children between the ages of 5 and 15 years inclusive. Under 5s go free, but must be accompanied by an adult.

Parking

Drivers should park so that passengers can step in or out of the vehicle with ease and safety. Wherever possible, the vehicle should be parked so that passengers can alight on the kerbside. If it is suspected that parking may be difficult at the destination, consider sitting the passenger(s) in the rear of the vehicle to allow them to alight from either side.

Normal parking restrictions apply to community transport scheme drivers unless they (or their passenger) have a blue badge. Parking in hospital car parks is usually controlled by a private contractor. Drivers should, therefore, contact the parking attendant on arrival at a hospital for advice on parking for community transport drivers. There are often spaces set aside for community transport scheme drivers, which they may be able to use. Displaying an official window sticker, showing that the car is being used for a community transport journey, should also help here. The official badge may also allow parking in some council owned car parks whilst on duty, however this should be checked with the scheme coordinator to prevent embarrassment or fines.

Passenger Assistance

When a passenger books a journey, the scheme staff always try to find out whether or not the passenger has any difficulties walking and what, if any, assistance is required. Drivers are not expected to provide physical assistance to passengers beyond a steadying hand or arm. If it is clear that lifting or similar help is required, then the passenger will be asked to provide an escort to do this. Drivers should resist the temptation to give more assistance than they can safely provide, even if this means a trip cannot go ahead as planned.

Luggage

If a passenger is intending to take more than just a bag with him/her on a journey (e.g. folding wheelchair), then drivers should be informed of this in advance. Drivers should also ensure that any luggage is properly secured so that it does not move and cause injury if the vehicle swerves or stops suddenly. Drivers are not expected to lift heavy bags or equipment.

Pets

A guide dog will be conveyed with its owner (subject as always to a driver being available). Drivers are not normally expected to provide transport for pets. If however, a passenger needs to get a pet to a vet, the scheme will try to find a sympathetic driver to help with such requests.

Identification Cards

All volunteers will be issued with an identification (ID) card when they join the organisation. This should be carried at all times when the driver is on the scheme's business, and shown to anyone who has reasonable grounds for asking to see it. Ideally the badge should be displayed by being clipped on the outer garment (some schemes insist on this). Drivers may also be issued with a window sticker for their cars, showing that they drive for a community transport scheme, which should be displayed in a prominent position.

Child Seats

If a passenger requires a child seat or other restraint system, these may be provided by the scheme. If the scheme cannot provide them, then it is the passenger's responsibility to do so. Where the law requires a seat or restraint, and it is not available, the trip cannot proceed.

General

All other sections of this handbook also apply to volunteer drivers of specialised vehicles, unless they specifically state that they apply only to owner-drivers.

Some vehicles have very low ground clearance, so drivers should be careful over uneven roads, especially speed humps. In the event of a puncture or breakdown, the driver should telephone the scheme coordinator, or if the scheme has a different procedure for breakdowns, this should be used.

Do not use a hand held telephone whilst mobile. To do so you must be stationary with the engine switched off. You may answer a telephone call whilst mobile **ONLY** if you are using a hands free system.

Ensure that you know how to operate the vehicle equipment (e.g. tail lift, ramp, wheelchair clamps/straps) correctly and safely, especially if you are using a different vehicle to normal. If you find gaps in your knowledge, make your coordinator aware of your training need.

Using Your Own Car

When using your own car to travel to and from home in order to drive the scheme vehicle, you are entitled to the standard mileage allowance paid by your scheme (see also section 14).

Background Information *N.B. This section is for information only and is not intended to state the law in full or in detail. Each scheme must satisfy itself as to whether or not they can operate under the legislation outlined below.*

A section 19 Small Bus Permit allows a scheme to charge for travelling in the vehicle, but it does not allow the scheme to carry the general public. It must be a non-profit making operation, and must be concerned with one or more of education, religion, social welfare, recreation or 'other activities of benefit to the community'. The vehicle must not have more than 16 seats (17 with the driver).

A section 22 Community Bus Permit allows the scheme to run what is, effectively, a public bus service - the scheme may 'ply for hire'. It must be a non-profit making operation; the general public may be carried; advance booking is not necessary; it will run to a published timetable; the vehicle must not have more than 16 seats (17 with the driver); drivers may not be paid.

The important thing to be aware of, if using a vehicle and receiving any financial gain as a result (e.g. grants, fares, donations, fund-raising, club funds etc.), is that the scheme **MUST** have a permit in order for their drivers to drive the vehicle legally.

8 SPECIALISED VEHICLES

Driving Licence Requirements

The holder of a car licence obtained prior to 1997 may drive a minibus of 16 seats or less, without being the holder of a PCV licence, provided that:

1. The vehicle is being driven on a strictly 'not for profit' basis
2. The scheme holds an exemption from the PCV laws (e.g. a section 19 permit)
3. If aged over 70, he/she has passed a medical examination to PCV standards

A driver who has passed a car test since 1st January 1997 may drive a minibus, but in addition to the above, the following criteria must be met:

4. He/she is over 21
5. He/she has held a full Group B driving licence for at least two years
6. He/she receives no payment or other consideration for driving the vehicle (except out of pocket expenses)
7. The vehicle weighs no more than 3500kg GVW (4250kg if carrying specialised equipment)

Checks

The driver of a scheme vehicle, whether it is a minibus or other type of specialised vehicle, should follow the guidelines below on each occasion that he/she uses the vehicle.

- Look around the vehicle for any new damage. Ideally a damage chart of the vehicle should be kept, and any new damage reported immediately so it can be rectified where necessary
- Check that tyres are at the recommended pressures, have good tread and no apparent defects such as bulges, cuts, serious scrapes or embedded objects
- Ensure that all lights, wipers, heaters etc. work correctly, and that there is sufficient fuel
- Check that the tail lift, ramps or any other equipment is working correctly
- Check that all wheelchair restraining clamps and/or straps are present
- Ensure all doors are closed before driving off
- If you have a mobile telephone in the vehicle, make sure it is charged and available for use

These checks are the minimum required. The scheme will probably require a more comprehensive check using a check list.

7 RESPONSIBILITIES OF DRIVERS

Limits of Responsibility

The prime responsibility of volunteer drivers is to provide transport! Although this is stating the obvious, it can be surprising how many people can lose sight of this when passengers start asking for help with other things.

Whilst it is recognised that volunteer drivers want to help people, it is important that they are aware of the limit of their responsibilities. Going beyond this point may place the volunteer in a vulnerable position, and he/she may not be covered by the scheme's public liability insurance.

Essentially, volunteers are responsible for providing safe transport for clients and, where appropriate, assisting them to and from the vehicle. Anything beyond this places the volunteer in a grey area.

Although it is impossible to cover every situation that may arise, it is reasonable to assume that making sure a passenger has his/her keys and appointment card before leaving home would probably be OK. Changing a plug, lighting a fire or cleaning windows would certainly not be! As a rule, if the driver is in any doubt about something a passenger is asking him/her to do, a polite but firm refusal should be the response. The scheme coordinator will be happy to discuss any situations about which the driver is unsure.

Drivers are not normally responsible for a client once the client has left the vehicle at their destination. However, it is recognised that some elderly or vulnerable clients may appreciate the assistance of a driver in getting from the vehicle to the door of their house or other place.

It is also desirable that drivers, wherever possible, ensure that clients have gained access to their property before driving away. Drivers should be aware of the possible dangers of entering a client's house and the scheme recommends that he/she does not do so.

General Responsibilities

Over several years, and through the efforts of its volunteers in providing a reliable, good quality service, the scheme will have built up a positive image of itself within the local community. For all concerned, it is important that the quality of service is maintained.

Punctuality is obviously vital and drivers need to make every reasonable effort to arrive at the passenger's house in good time and similarly to convey him/her to

the destination at the appointed time. Allowing time to find new addresses and for traffic hold-ups is part of good journey planning.

It is also important for the image of the service that drivers present themselves in a clean and tidy manner. Similarly, drivers should endeavour to be polite and helpful to passengers and others at all times. There will, of course, be the occasional passenger who is uncooperative or difficult to please, but drivers should always try to avoid getting drawn into arguments and confrontations. Any difficulties of this nature should be reported to the scheme coordinator.

Driving

Drivers should drive in a steady manner with due regard for the safety of themselves, their passengers and other road users. It should be remembered that many passengers will be elderly and/or frail and will experience considerable discomfort if subjected to sudden movements or bumps.

Drivers should also be realistic about the amount of driving they want to do and not be tempted (or feel pressurised) to do more than they feel comfortable with. Fatigue or stress in driving can lead to mistakes and possibly accidents.

Assistance with Seat Belts

Passengers will occasionally need help fastening their seat belts in the proper manner. If it appears that the person needs help, always ask permission to assist first. Situations have arisen, especially with disabled people, where a driver has assumed they need help and invaded personal space without permission, giving rise to offence. Most disabled people are perfectly capable of managing for themselves, so be aware.

Generally speaking, seat belts must be worn where provided in order to meet the requirements of the law (see section 4 for full details). Drivers should decline to take passengers who refuse to wear seat belts unless a certificate is provided, exempting him/her on medical grounds.

Vulnerable Clients

Vulnerable clients are those who, because of age, infirmity, disablement or other needs, require assistance or guidance in order to complete their journey.

Occasionally a vulnerable client may require an escort to travel with them to look after and/or occupy them on the journey. If an escort accompanies the client, then the escort should be responsible for the client's needs. If there is no escort, the needs of the client must not be allowed to compromise the driver's concentration. A vulnerable client should not be left alone in the vehicle.

Children under 5 years of age **MUST** be accompanied by an adult. Some schemes stipulate a higher age. Be aware of the scheme's policy on this.

Smoking and Drinking

Whilst it is appreciated that the scheme's drivers are volunteers and may be using their own vehicles, nevertheless, they should refrain from smoking whilst carrying passengers.

Likewise, drivers should ask passengers not to smoke even if they are not bothered by it. If passengers get into the habit of smoking with one particular driver, another driver might find it more difficult to ask them to refrain.

Under no circumstances should drivers consume alcoholic drinks whilst on duty or prior to starting work (that is, on the same day). Whilst a driver may genuinely have only one small glass of wine and be well within the legal limit, a passenger is likely to be concerned if a driver arrives smelling of alcohol, and the reputation of the scheme would undoubtedly suffer.