

**Cumberland
Council**

Handbook for drivers

**Your guide to driving for
Cumberland Council**

cumberland.gov.uk

Foreword

In 2024, almost 30,000 people were either killed or seriously injured on UK roads. This is an increase of 1% in the number of fatalities from the previous year with 1,633 people killed, a rate of four/five deaths each day. A study on behalf of National Highways and Road Safe confirmed that 29% of the fatalities and 21% of those injured resulted from collisions involving someone driving for work.

Whilst 2025 saw a slight reduction in the number of fatalities, the trends continue with little change in the overall number of those killed or seriously injured on UK roads.

These are chilling statistics but do not truly reflect the sudden, devastating, and lasting impact that the loss of a parent, child, friend or colleague can have on all of us. As a responsible employer, Cumberland Council takes its duty in this regard very seriously and has developed this handbook to help keep you safe and on the right side of the law whilst driving for 'work'. This is not about teaching you how to drive but it does highlight some important road safety messages and sets out clear standards and expectations when you are driving for work.

The standards set out in this handbook apply to everyone driving their own vehicle, or a fleet, hire or lease vehicle on Council business. The standards apply equally to staff, including casual and agency workers, volunteers and to elected members.

Further information and links to other policies are referenced. But, if you have any queries or require further advice, please email [**Fleetcompliance@Cumberland.gov.uk**](mailto:Fleetcompliance@Cumberland.gov.uk)



Councillor Mark Fryer
Leader of Cumberland Council



Andrew Seekings
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Part 1: Driving for work

Advice for drivers and managers



1. Introduction

This Handbook reflects best practice and fulfils our responsibility/ duty of care to reduce risk for staff, elected members and other road users when travelling on business. Driving may be a frequent and core part of the role for some staff, but for others it may be an infrequent requirement. The Handbook sets out a reasonable and proportionate approach to managing occupational road risk for all drivers, including:

- Pre-employment checks and ongoing health screening.
- Regular 'on-line' driving licence checks.
- Additional checks and declarations for those driving their own vehicle (insurance and MOT).
- Training, assessment, and other checks for drivers of fleet vehicles, and in some cases for those driving their own vehicles.
- Driver familiarisation/handover training where appropriate.
- Guidance, standards and expectations to mitigate risk.
- Additional training and guidance for drivers of fleet vehicles/ plant operators.
- Monitoring performance for quality, safety, and other compliance purposes.

1.1 Scope

Drivers are required to follow the Highway Code and any additional standards set out in this Handbook when driving for work reasons. Failure to do so increases the risk of incident and may result in action to suspend 'authorisation to drive'. This may impact on your ability to fulfil the duties of your employment and may trigger an investigation under the Council's Disciplinary Policy.

The Handbook applies to everyone who may be required to drive for work purposes, including:

- Drivers of Council owned, leased, or hired vehicles.
- Drivers of privately owned or leased vehicles when used for business journeys.
- Any other persons authorised to drive vehicles owned, hired, or leased by the Council, for example casual staff, agency workers, councillors, volunteers, and
- Any relatives and partners authorised to drive lease cars allocated to staff.

If you are unclear how this applies to you, please discuss this with your line manager initially.

1.2 Application

Cumberland Council will regularly review its approach to managing occupational road risk to:

- Reduce incidents/mitigate impacts and costs.
- Enhance reputation and ensure compliance.
- Reflect legislation, changes or emerging trends.

The Council will reduce risk and negative impacts on the environment through:

- Reducing the need for travel for example through virtual meetings.
- Encouraging alternative travel options, vehicle sharing, public transport.
- Setting clear standards and expectations for all drivers supported by measures to ensure competency and compliance.
- Ensuring that managers fulfil their responsibility to reduce occupational road risk for staff.

- Maintaining a 'culture' where staff do not feel under pressure to 'speed' to appointments, not tempted to use the phone when driving and are able to plan safe/fuel efficient journeys.
- Ensuring staff are confident in making the right travel choices.
- Ensuring that Council owned, and privately-owned vehicles, used for Council business, are appropriately insured, taxed, and maintained.

The Council will ensure that fleet vehicles are fit for purpose and roadworthy. Drivers share this responsibility and are required to carry out robust pre-journey checks, to report defects timely, and must never knowingly take an unroadworthy vehicle on to the road.

1.3 Responsibilities

Directors, Assistant Directors, Service Managers are responsible for:

- Implementing the standards across their service area.
- leading by example, demonstrating the behaviours/ standards set.

Managers/supervisors are responsible for:

- Implementing the standards and checks across their teams.
- Leading by example, demonstrating the behaviours and standards set.

Actions include:

- Maintaining a list of staff authorised to drive on Council business, recording that:
 - o A satisfactory **on-line** driving licence check has been undertaken through Fleet Services, **before** they drive on business.

- o Authorised persons have produced evidence to confirm that they have appropriate business use insurance before driving their own vehicle for work, and
- o Staff, using their own private vehicle, have signed declarations to confirm the vehicle to be driven is 'taxed' with a valid MOT where relevant
- o Completed the required training module to confirm awareness and understanding of the standards and expectations set out on this Handbook
- Undertaking and regularly reviewing risk assessments and controls to ensure appropriate safe systems of work are in place which recognise driving risk.
- Promoting alternative travel options and shared use of vehicles to mitigate risk, reduce cost and environmental impacts.
- Ensuring 'drivers' are appropriately qualified, licensed, and competent to drive the vehicle.
- Monitoring performance to ensure compliance to the standards and expectations required.
- Advising Fleet Services of any occupational road risk or incidents.

Employees (approved drivers) must:

- Ensure that their behaviour and performance reflects the standards set out in this Handbook and the Highway Code.
- Respond to requests for on-line / documentation checks in a timely way.
- Co-operate with any drug or alcohol screening, including random checks, in line with the Council's Drug and Alcohol policy.

- Inform their line manager of:
 - Any motoring convictions or prosecutions-pending, related to at work travel and personal, non-work travel
 - Any changes in health or vision, or any medication being taken that may affect your ability to drive. There are requirements to notify DVLA of certain health changes
 - Occupational road risk issues that may arise
 - Training/support needed to carry out the role / driving duties safely
- Wear seatbelts when driving.
- Never smoke/vape in a fleet vehicle at any time or in your own vehicle during work time.
- Wear appropriate footwear for driving. Drivers can face fines of up to £5,000 for not wearing suitable footwear (Highway Code Rule 97).
- Co-operate with any post-incident investigation or following a report or concern raised about driving behaviour.

Health and Safety, responsible for:

- Providing advice on the health and safety aspects of this policy, associated procedures and will support compliance monitoring across the council.

Fleet Services, responsible for:

- Ongoing review of this Handbook.
- Providing advice and guidance on fleet, transport, licensing requirements.
- Monitoring to ensure compliance to standards.

1.4 Code of conduct for drivers

Drivers must:

- Drive safely and responsibly, observe the Highway Code, and avoid aggressive or reckless behaviour.
- Observe speed limits and adjust your driving style and speed to reflect road and weather conditions.
- Never knowingly drive an unsafe vehicle and should always carry out a 'first use' check prior to each journey.
- Abide by the standards set out in this Handbook.

Drivers must **not** drive on or over a pavement, footpath or bridleway except to gain lawful access to property, or in the case of an emergency. Driving on pavements is an offence (Highway Code Rule 145).

Failure to meet the standards potentially places drivers and others at risk, could damage the reputation of the Council, and may trigger an investigation and potential action under the Council's Disciplinary Policy.

1.5 Permission to drive

Permission/authorisation to drive will lapse/be withdrawn when a driver:

- No longer holds a valid driving licence for the appropriate class of vehicle to be driven in the course of their employment.
- Has convictions/prosecutions/cautions, including prosecutions-pending, which disqualify the person from driving. Or where there is an adverse pattern of poor driving performance, for example, action/behaviour that may place themselves or others at risk, driving whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol, reckless driving, repeated speeding offences, and driving whilst distracted.

- Has failed to complete satisfactory driving assessment/training, or where they have demonstrated a lack of learning/improvement in relation to repeated incidents on the road and/or failure to abide by the standards set.
- Is taking medication that may impact their ability to drive, and/or suffer from any physical or mental health issues that may be reportable to the DVLA
- Fails to notify the Council/line manager of any relevant medication/health condition which would affect their ability to drive.
- Has been instructed not to drive a council vehicle, or their own vehicle on business, by an authorised officer of the Council.
- Is issued a notice from the Council's designated Fleet/Transport Manager, under their statutory obligations under the Heavy Goods or Public Service Vehicle Operator Licences, that they should cease driving Council vehicles until further notice, pending review.
- The individual ceases to be employed or engaged by the Council.

1.6 Driving licence and insurance checks

Driving licences:

Driving licences will be checked at recruitment, and periodically thereafter, for posts where driving is a requirement of the role.

On-line checks will be undertaken through an approved third-party agent or DVLA. Checks will be carried out at least annually, with more frequent checks, for those in higher risk categories, such as:

- Drivers of fleet vehicles.
- High mileage drivers.
- Drivers with six or more penalty points or a history/pattern of penalty points.
- Drivers involved in incidents or where complaints/concerns have been reported.

For drivers with licences issued outside of the UK, additional checks, assessment and training may be needed. Further advice is available from <https://www.gov.uk/exchange-foreign-driving-licence>

Motor insurance:

Driving without valid insurance is a motoring offence. Drivers using their own vehicle for business travel, whether expenses claims are submitted or not, must ensure that their motor insurance covers travel for business purposes.

- Drivers must produce their insurance documents at least annually or on request for inspection.
- Drivers will also be asked to complete a declaration form.

Failure to disclose any relevant facts could invalidate your insurance.

It is imperative that the driver informs their line manager of any licence endorsements or motoring convictions as soon as possible.

1.7 Fitness to drive

Alcohol and drugs

If you are unfit to drive/work due to alcohol or drug use, you must inform your line manager immediately. You must not carry out your duties under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

- One in five drivers convicted of drink driving are caught the 'morning after'. Ensure you leave sufficient time to be clear of any alcohol before driving.
- Drivers and other staff will be subject to checks if there is any suspicion that they are unfit to drive/work due to alcohol or drugs. This may include random checks.

The Drug and Alcohol Policy will provide further information.

Health

It is the driver's responsibility to ensure they are fit to drive. Drivers must inform their line manager if they are taking medication or suffering from any short-term or long-term health concerns that may impact their ability to drive safely. It may be necessary to consider alternative duties, pending further advice/review. If needed, advice from a competent health professional can be sought.

Drivers should be free from undue stress and anxiety which may prove a distraction. Please discuss any concerns in confidence with your line manager, HR advisor or union representative.

It is a criminal offence to fail to notify the DVLA of the relevant medical conditions. Further information from www.gov.uk/driving-medical-conditions

Fatigue

Driving whilst tired increases the risk of collision. Consider if the journey is necessary or if other travel options are available. Do not start your journey if you are overly tired. If you start to feel drowsy, stop in a safe place.

Managers must ensure that workload demands do not contribute to drivers becoming fatigued, stressed, or feeling under pressure to break speed limits. Drivers should report any concerns to their line manager.

- Where necessary/practical, overnight stays and/or the use of public transport should be considered for longer journeys.
- Drivers are advised to take a 15minute break every two hours on longer journeys. Ideally get out of the vehicle, 'stretch your legs' and get some fresh air.
- If bad weather or lengthy delays prevent onward travel, drivers should take a break and if necessary, stay overnight somewhere.
- Drivers with more than one job must remember that they are at greater risk of fatigue if they work long hours. If either job involves driving, staff will need to ensure they do not breach the rules on driving hours or duty time. Employees with more than one job must advise their manager as necessary and complete a 'Driver Declaration' form.

Information on drivers' hours is available from Fleet Services.

Eyesight

It is a criminal offence to drive a motor vehicle if you are unable to read a standard number plate in good daylight from 20.5m (67 feet), using glasses or contact lenses if necessary.

You may be required to undergo a basic eye-sight test before being handed the keys to a fleet vehicle or before any training/assessment session. You must tell DVLA if you've got any problem with your eyesight.

Driving comfort

Ensure your seat, head restraint, steering wheel and mirrors are correctly adjusted before driving.

1.8 Seatbelts

In a crash, you are twice as likely to die if you are not wearing a seatbelt. It is a legal requirement and Council policy that you and your passengers must wear a seat belt when travelling in a vehicle.

- Drivers/passengers not wearing a seatbelt are breaking the law (fine up to £500).
- Drivers and passengers aged 17-34 have the lowest seatbelt-wearing rates combined with the highest accident rate.
- Evidence shows that people are less likely to use seatbelts on shorter journeys, placing them at serious risk of injury in a crash.

Exemptions are only allowed for drivers when reversing and for holders of medical exemption certificates. Drivers will be required to produce, on the spot, any medical exemption certificates to the Police following an incident, and/or as part of any compliance monitoring. Pregnancy does not provide any automatic exemption to the requirement to wear a seatbelt.

Whilst there is an exception for drivers making deliveries or collections in goods vehicles when travelling less than 50 metres (approx. 162 feet), the Council's policy is clear, staff who repeatedly enter/exit a vehicle (refuse and street cleaning operatives for example) must wear a seatbelt when travelling.

Children must use seat belts and car seats appropriate for their age, size, weight. Further information is available in Part 04.

1.9 Driving assessments and training

Anyone driving for Cumberland Council will need to undergo driver training and assessment. This will be specific to role and risk, and for most, will require completion of periodic 'on-line' training modules to confirm awareness and understanding of the standards and expectations when driving for work. Drivers in higher risk categories, will require further training, specific to their role and the category of vehicle driven. This will include statutory CPC training where required.

Recruitment to posts where driving is a key element should involve a driving assessment before the final offer of employment is made. Assessment will be carried out by a trained driving assessor.

- Where driving is a relatively infrequent part of the job role, the potential candidate or member of staff may still undergo a driving assessment at the discretion of the line manager.
- Driving assessments are in addition to the minimum driving licence and documentation checks.
- In reaching a decision about suitability for appointment, consideration should be given to the number of penalty points, the nature, history, and pattern of any motoring offences of the candidate.

Referring staff for a driving assessment may form part of any management action where there are concerns over the performance/behaviour of a driver or following an incident. Advice is available from Fleet Services.

1.10 Pre-journey vehicle checks

Drivers have a legal responsibility to ensure the vehicle they are driving is roadworthy before setting off. This applies to private vehicles as well as fleet/hire/pool vehicles. Checks should include:

- Engine oil/coolant level/fluid levels.
- Windscreen wipers/washers.
- Horn (Do not use the horn whilst stationary in built-up areas between 23:30 - 07:00 except when another road user poses a danger).
- Tyre checks: pressures, tread-depth, and condition.
- Lights and indicators.
- Glass and mirrors.
- Instrument panel.

Additional checks may be needed for drivers of fleet or hire vehicles specific to the individual vehicle. Further information is provided in part 02.

1.11 Carrying passengers

Unauthorised passengers (family/friends etc) are not permitted to travel in fleet vehicles at any time; this includes hire and pool vehicles. This restriction also applies to animals/pets.

If your role involves the regular transportation of infants, children, or passengers for example travelling in a wheelchair, please ensure that you are aware of the latest legislation and guidance, and that you are competent/trained to install/use child car seats or restraint systems.

Further information about carrying passengers is provided in Part 04.

Never carry more passengers than the vehicle is designed for – one passenger per seat. Passengers must never travel in a vehicle where there is no passenger seat.

Passenger seats maybe forward or rear-facing and must have seatbelts. Travelling in side-facing seats in a car, van or 4x4 is not allowed, with or without a seatbelt.

1.12 Speed

Breaking the speed limit is not an acceptable business risk - do not speed. Driving at speeds too fast for the road and traffic conditions is dangerous. Reduce speed when:

- The road layout or conditions present hazards.
- Sharing the road with others eg:
 - o Pedestrians, particularly children
 - o Cyclists, motorcyclists, horses
- Weather conditions make it safer to do so.
- Driving at night or when visibility is reduced.

Further information on speed limits is available from www.gov.uk/speed-limits

Know the penalties for speeding

Drivers are responsible for any fines resulting from an offence/conviction. Inform your line manager as soon as practically possible of any speeding offences or prosecutions pending. Offences for drivers of fleet vehicles should be reported to Fleet Services whether committed whilst driving a fleet vehicle or a personal vehicle outside of work. For HGV and PSV drivers, such offences may also be reportable to the Traffic Commissioner who has the power to suspend/disqualify entitlement.

1.13 Mobile phone use whilst driving

Using a mobile phone or other device, whilst driving for work is not authorised under any circumstances. Use of a hands-free kit, provides no exception. This standard applies to those driving private vehicles (grey fleet) whilst on work journeys. Anyone found doing so may face disciplinary action. This applies whilst stopped at traffic lights or queuing in traffic, sending/reading messages, scrolling screens, or taking a photograph/video.

Drivers who use a hand-held or hands-free mobile phone while driving:

- Are much less aware of what's happening on the road.
- Fail to see road signs.
- Fail to maintain proper lane position and steady speed.
- Are more likely to 'tailgate' the vehicle in front.
- React more slowly, take longer to brake and longer to stop.
- Are more likely to enter unsafe gaps in traffic.
- Feel more stressed and frustrated.

You could be fined and receive six points on your licence for using your phone whilst driving. For newer drivers, six penalty points could lead to a loss of licence. Challenge the fixed penalty and you could be taken to court, risking larger fines and disqualification.

Drivers of goods vehicles face larger fines (up to £2,500) and six penalty points. Goods vehicle drivers may also be required to attend a meeting with the Traffic Commissioner.

It can be illegal to use a hands-free phone while driving.

Depending upon the individual circumstances, you could be charged with 'failing to have proper control of your vehicle'. This could result in prosecution for careless or dangerous driving.

Managers who require staff to use mobile phones while driving for work could also be prosecuted if the investigation determined that use of the phone contributed to the incident. Claims in the civil courts could also result. The law includes an offence of "causing or permitting" a driver to use a hand-held phone while driving. This can apply to employers who will be guilty of an offence if they require or permit their staff who drive for work, to use a hand-held mobile phone while driving. Use of a hands-free option does not provide a robust defence in the event of a serious incident.

The Council will support any police investigation and will make mobile-phone records and driver details available as requested. If you call someone and suspect they are driving (often obvious given the background noise), then you should end the call politely; the driver can call back when safe to do so.

If your driving is bad, or if there's an incident while you're using the phone, you could be prosecuted for careless or dangerous driving. If someone is killed, you could be charged with causing death by careless or dangerous driving. Fines can be much greater and a prison sentence almost certain if a death is caused.

As a manager/supervisor you must...

- Lead by example, both in the way you drive and by challenging any poor driving practice observed.
- Ensure your staff fully understand their responsibilities not to use a phone when driving.

- Develop a 'culture' where staff do not feel under pressure to use a phone when driving and that they have time to plan their journeys safely.
- Monitor the policy to ensure compliance.

As a driver you must...

- Never use a hand-held or hands-free phone when driving on business.
- Plan longer journeys to include breaks when messages can be checked, and calls returned.
- Ensure the phone is either switched off or set to take messages while you are driving.
- Co-operate with monitoring, reporting and investigation procedures.

Using satellite navigation

When using a sat-nav, you should:

- Plan your journey in advance, make all the inputs to the unit before setting off.
- Avoid touching the unit whilst driving.
- Not solely rely on the sat nav instructions; continue to check signs and road markings.

Portable Sat Nav units fitted to windscreens must not restrict your field of vision. Remember to remove any portable units when not in use or when leaving the vehicle unattended.

1.14 Re-fuelling/re-charging vehicles

Take care when re-fuelling. Do not fill to the brim; allow 'breathing-space' for fuel to expand. Ensure the fuel filler cap is secured after filling.

Do not leave your vehicle unattended when refuelling. Do not lock the fuel-nozzle open and walk away.

If you put the wrong fuel in a vehicle, do not start the engine and attempt to drive it. This is likely to result in very expensive damage. If you misfuel a fleet or hire vehicle, contact Fleet Services immediately and alert the forecourt staff.

Do not use your mobile phone in a fuel station – this is an offence.

Driving and recharging electric vehicles

Those unfamiliar with driving an electric fleet/pool vehicle will be required to attend a familiarisation session to cover the safe operation of an electric vehicle including how to charge them. Further information is available from Fleet Services.

Filling fuel containers/safe storage of fuel

Petrol and other fuels release vapours which are extremely flammable; treat with the utmost care.

Storage of fuel in vehicles at home or the workplace is restricted to either metal containers with a maximum capacity of 10 litres, or approved plastic containers of a maximum 5 litres capacity and must be clearly labelled. To reduce manual handling risks, 20litre containers should not be used.

Fuel containers must be designed for this purpose and be fitted with a screwcap or closure to prevent escape of fuel or vapour.

Do not fill containers to the brim - allow breathing-space for the fuel to expand. Ensure containers are sealed and securely restrained in the vehicle to prevent from spilling during transit.

The maximum amount of fuel to be carried is 20 litres.

When fuel is transferred from a container into a vehicle - follow basic health and safety precautions:

- No smoking, no naked lights in the vicinity.

- Decant in the open air - not indoors.
- Use a spout or funnel.
- Where suitable PPE, and change clothing if splashed with fuel as soon as possible.

1.15 Smoking in vehicles (includes vaping)

The Council's policy on smoking must be observed by all those travelling in vehicles for work purposes. This standard applies to fleet vehicles and to those driving their own car during work time. The rules apply to e-cigarettes/vaping.

It is an offence to smoke in a vehicle with children as passengers.

You can be prosecuted for failing to have proper control of the vehicle if smoking while driving.

1.16 Breakdowns

In the event of a breakdown, you should follow the appropriate procedure for callout and repair. The vehicle should not usually be driven unless advised to do so by Fleet Services. Moving the vehicle to a safer location may be possible but be careful that your actions do not increase the risks to you, your passengers or other road users. Be aware if the vehicle is leaking fuel, oil, or hydraulic fluid, driving may incur further damage and increase the risk to others. Spill kits are provided in some vehicles and can be deployed where safe to do so.

The vehicle should be stopped in a safe place with warning lights/ beacons illuminated. If there is a warning triangle supplied with the vehicle, where safe to do so, place it at least 100 metres behind the vehicle to warn approaching traffic (not on a motorway). Call for Assistance.

On a motorway, the driver should:

- Leave by the next exit, if possible. Or pull onto the hard shoulder, stop as far to the left as possible. Use hazard warning lights.
- Where possible get all the passengers safely out of the vehicle and onto the bank or nearby land exiting by doors away from the carriageway where possible.
- Use your mobile phone, or find the nearest emergency phone, indicated by arrows on the motorway marker posts. Return to a safe position near the vehicle.
- Children and vulnerable clients must be kept under constant supervision.
- Do not deploy a warning triangle on the hard shoulder.

The driver should not sit in the vehicle unless they feel at risk from attack.

Those using their own vehicle are advised to subscribe to a breakdown recovery service.

1.17 Incidents

In the event of a road traffic incident, you must stop where safe to do so. It is an offence not to do so. Priority should be given to the safety and welfare of anyone involved. Fleet vehicles are provided with an advice sheet on the action to take following an incident.

- Stop and switch off the engine to reduce the risk of fire.
- Switch on hazard warning lights or beacons.
- Do not attempt to move injured people unless they are at risk of further injury.
- Phone for medical assistance/ambulance response when needed.

- Contact the Police, where:
- There is an injury to a person, an animal (dog or larger), or there is damage to property.
- The third-party refuses or is unable to give their details or fails to stop after the collision.
- Leave the vehicle in the event of a fire and remain at a safe distance from the road and vehicle. Phone the fire service and follow instructions given. Do not attempt to fight a vehicle fire.
- Where possible move vehicles to a safe place and alert other road users to any danger.
- Remain at the scene where possible, but do not display any form of aggression or become involved in any altercations. Remain calm and co-operate fully with all concerned.
- Complete an incident report form. These are available from Fleet Services.

Drivers should not:

- Admit or assume liability for any incident.
- Apologise or offer any payment. To do so could invalidate any insurance claim. Conversely, no offer to pay for any damage to your vehicle should be accepted.

Information gathering following an incident:

The driver must obtain the following details:

- Start and intended finish time of journey.
- Purpose of the journey.
- The date and time of incident.
- Exact location of incident.
- Environmental/driving/visibility conditions at time of incident.
- A brief but adequate account of the incident.

- Photographs/video of the scene and damaged vehicles/property etc are useful. Do not put yourself at increased risk to obtain photos.

Without placing yourself at risk, drivers should also seek to obtain as much additional information as practical from witnesses and any third parties involved, to include:

Third party details:

- Names, and telephone numbers of driver(s)/owners of the vehicle.
- Insurance company(s) including policy numbers.
- Make, model, colour, and registration of vehicle(s).
- Details of all damage - photographs/video evidence is helpful.
- The number of people in the vehicle(s).

Witness/other details:

- Names, and telephone numbers of any witnesses.
- The registration number of any vehicle whose occupants may have seen the incident.
- Name, collar number and station of any attending police officers.

Further reporting:

Drivers should also report any incidents to their line manager and to Fleet Services. In the event of an injury to a member of staff, the incident should be reported to Health and Safety. It may be appropriate in some cases for the line-manager to convey this information on behalf of the driver.

Fleet Services must be notified of any incident involving a council owned, leased, or hired vehicle which may give rise to an insurance claim (loss/ damage to the vehicle or to third party property or injury to third parties, passengers or drivers).

Even if you think there is no damage, the vehicle may need inspection by Fleet Services.

At the scene of the collision, if you feel that the fleet vehicle is no longer roadworthy inform your line manager and request workshop assistance. Do not attempt to drive the vehicle if it is unfit to do so. If you are in any doubt, please contact Fleet Services.

Post incident review:

Following an incident, risk assessments should be reviewed. Your line manager will initiate this. Advice from Fleet Services or Health and Safety is available.

Information from incidents and driving performance will be used to develop individual driver profiles and may lead to further training and/or action where there is no sign of improvement following repeated or avoidable incidents.

1.18 Theft/attempted theft

As soon as a theft or attempted theft is discovered the police must be informed immediately and the driver must make a note of the incident number.

1.19 Personal safety and safeguarding against violence

- Secure the vehicle when unattended, close all windows and lock all doors/boot. Remain vigilant to any risk to personal safety or theft of equipment/possessions.
- Where possible park in a well-lit, populated area. Consider what the conditions may be like for your return later that day
- If you are involved in an incident, remain calm and professional. Remain in the vehicle and lock doors and close windows if needed.

- Contact the Police by phone.
- If possible, drive to a well-lit populated area or to the nearest police station.
- If the behaviour of a passenger becomes disruptive, the vehicle must be stopped where safe to do so, until the situation is resolved.

Incidents involving violence, or a threat of violence, must be reported using the Violence/Aggression Report Form.

1.20 Carrying equipment/sensitive information

- Items of value, including sensitive information/documents should not be left in vehicles unattended. Store them out of sight in the boot or under a cover when travelling and transfer such items to a secure location if the vehicle is to be left unsupervised.
- Items must not impair visibility or distract whilst driving.
- Cab interiors should be kept clean and clutter free to reduce the risk of items rolling and being trapped under pedals affecting braking etc.
- Heavy or sharp items must not be stored in overhead lockers.

1.21 Record keeping

Effective record keeping is essential. In the event of an injury to a member of staff or public, the Police, Traffic Commissioner or HSE may request copies of records as part of an investigation. Are you confident that:

- Risk assessments, safe working procedures/guidance are relevant and current.

- Staff are aware of the risks, controls and safe operating procedures.
- Staff are competent to drive/operate the vehicle/equipment.
- Vehicles, plant, and equipment have been serviced, inspected, and tested in line with manufacturer recommendations, Operator Licence requirements, and legislation such as LOLER.
- Training records are up to date
- Arrangements for monitoring compliance can be evidenced.

Other reading

This Handbook complements other policy, guidance, protocols, and legislation in place, in relation to:

- One Council, One Fleet: Corporate Fleet Management Strategy.
- Health and Safety Policy.
- Code of conduct for staff.
- Lone working advice.
- Drug and alcohol policy.
- Smoking in the workplace.
- Driving hours and Working Time regulations.
- Lease car – terms of hire and lease car agreements.
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH).
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER).
- Lifting Operations, Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER).

Part 2: Drivers of fleet & hire vehicles

In addition to the general advice and standards set out in part 1, drivers of fleet and hire vehicles have other requirements



2.1 Pre-journey checks

It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that the vehicle taken on to the road is safe and roadworthy. Failure to ensure this could lead to a fine, penalty points, disqualification, or other action. It is vital that a robust pre-journey check of the vehicle is carried out.

The pre-journey check must be carried out and recorded when you take control of the vehicle. It does not matter that it may have already been driven that day by someone else. Evidence of pre-journey checks may be required by your line-manager or from Fleet Services. Checks may be electronic, or paper based.

Specialist vehicles will require more detailed checks to include the safe operation of auxiliary equipment. As a basic guide...

Before entering the vehicle, check:

- If it is sitting evenly - if not, it may be poorly loaded, have a flat tyre or faulty suspension.
- For pools of fluid present underneath that may indicate a leak.
- Oil and fluid levels (see operator manual, or speak to your line manager/Fleet Services).

Enter the vehicle, to check:

- Driver's side foot-well and dashboard/cab area is clear of clutter.
- Operation of controls - Indicators, light switches, horn, de-mister, wipers and washers and gauges.
- Seating position and mirrors are set.
- The view of the road is not obscured.
- Seatbelts are in good working order.
- Operation of the parking brake.

Walk around the vehicle, to check:

- Wheels and tyres for condition, tread depth, cuts or bulges in the sidewall, exposed cords, correct inflation, damage, wear and loose or missing wheel nuts.
- Bodywork for damage and sharp edges.
- Security and cleanliness of mirrors.
- Lights, reflectors and number plates are clean and undamaged.
- Operation of lights (help may be required for rear lights).
- Windscreen/windows are undamaged and clean, and clear of snow or frost/dirt.
- Load, is it appropriate for the vehicle type? Is it secure? Within the weight tolerance of the vehicle? Not likely to be a concern for other road users.

Start the vehicle, to check:

- Steering wheel operation for excessive play or roughness.
- The brake pedal and note any excessive travel or 'creep'.
- For excessive clouds of exhaust smoke.
- For any unexpected rattling noises.

Vehicle condition should be continuously monitored throughout the day. Defects must be reported to Fleet Services immediately.

2.2 Wheels and tyres

The importance of checking tyre tread depth and condition cannot be overstated. This is a key part of pre-journey checks and must be conducted thoroughly. Tyres do not go bald overnight. If you are involved in an incident on the road, it can be difficult to explain why you did not identify a bald tyre as part of regular pre-journey checks.

Fleet Services will arrange for new tyres to be fitted before they reach minimum tread depth (typically when this reaches 3mm depth). Please ensure that you report any concerns in a timely way. Legal minimum requirements for tyre tread depth are:

- At least 1.6mm for vehicles under 3.5T MAM.
- At least 1.0mm for vehicles over 3.5T MAM.
- This should be consistent across the central width throughout the entire circumference. The remaining tread pattern must be visible.
- Tyre pressure must be to the correct setting, including for spare tyres.

As well as checking tread depths, the condition of the tyre must be checked for cracks and exposed cords to avoid the risk of a tyre blow-out. If in doubt, ask for advice from Fleet Services. Never take an unroadworthy vehicle on the road.

Apart from the major health and safety risks, drivers face significant penalties for driving a vehicle with illegal tyres. This includes fines and penalty points on your licence. Such action would also be regarded as a major breach of safe working, potentially gross misconduct, and may lead to further investigation and potential action under the Council's disciplinary process.

Drivers are responsible for paying any fines for driving unroadworthy vehicles on the road.

Wheel safety

Wheel nuts should be tightened to the manufacturer's specifications using a calibrated torque wrench. Regular, robust inspections are essential; tyre and wheel safety is a core part of pre-journey checks. Drivers should remain alert to unusual 'signs' while driving. Be prepared to stop and seek advice as needed.

What to look out for

Wheel Nut Indicators: These point to each other when the nuts are properly tightened. If an arrow is out of alignment, the corresponding nut is loose.

If the indicators appear to be melted/warped, it could indicate overheating from a brake or wheel hub.

Shiny/bright metal, where the wheel nut and washer meet the wheel, it could be an indication the nut is rubbing against the wheel.

Brown streaks (steel wheels) or black streaks (alloy wheels) radiating from the wheel nuts, could indicate loose wheel nuts.

Check for:

- Gaps between the wheel nut and the wheel rim. Wheel nuts must sit flush to the wheel rim surface
- Other damage, such as ovaling/elongation of the stud holes which indicate the wheel has been moving
- Missing or loose wheel nuts; if you can turn a nut with your fingers, it's dangerously loose. Caution wheels nut may be hot to touch.
- Knocking sounds; Loud knocking sounds while driving can indicate a loose wheel.
- Vibration: Excessive vibration while driving can also be a sign of loose wheel nuts.

2.3 Record keeping

Pre-journey checks

Fleet Services is rolling out electronic solutions using mobile-phone or in-cab technology to record pre-journey checks. Where this option is not available, paper records must be used.

Each journey must be recorded noting the start and finish mileage, journey details and name of driver. The mileage record book should remain in the vehicle.

The daily check book must be filled out for each pre-journey check. Records must be submitted to Fleet Services on a weekly basis. It is the driver's responsibility to ensure this takes place. Any defects found must be noted and reported to Fleet Services immediately. For those completing electronic checks, different arrangements for submitting reports may apply.

Driving hours

Council fleet vehicles over 3.5 tonne MAM are generally covered by driving hours' regulations. The nature of the service will also dictate the rules to be followed. For vehicles fitted with digital tachographs, drivers may be required to use their digital tachograph cards to support the safe and compliant operation of the corporate fleet. Training and advice will be provided. Contact Fleet Services for advice. Separate guidance will be issued to drivers in this regard.

In the event of an incident, driver records may form part of the investigation.

2.4 Reporting defects

Defects identified during the driver's pre-journey check or across the journey must be recorded and reported to Fleet Services immediately. Drivers must never take an unroadworthy vehicle on the road. If you are not sure, seek advice from Fleet Services.

Ignoring the defect or advice given, places you, your passengers and other road users at risk of serious injury or fatality. It may also lead to avoidable damage to the vehicle, increasing repair costs, and impacting on service delivery, leading to complaints.

2.5 Vehicle standards

Fleet vehicles represent a major financial investment by the Council and as such they should be treated with respect by drivers. They should be driven in a safe, responsible, and fuel-efficient manner, avoiding rapid acceleration, excessive speed, harsh braking, and cornering. Information from vehicle telemetry and on-board cameras, as well as from complaints, claims and reports received, may be used to monitor driver performance. Information may be used to develop individual driver 'profiles' to identify both positive and negative driving traits/habits, designed to avoid future incidents. Information will support future training, driver development or intervention as necessary.

Passengers are also required to treat vehicles with respect by helping to keep the cab clean, removing litter and clutter, and keeping feet and any food/drink off the dashboard.

Drivers are responsible for keeping the vehicle clean, inside and out. Excessive build-up of dirt can contribute to avoidable maintenance and repair costs and increase safety risks for staff. Keep the vehicle and equipment clean, paying particular attention to lights, windows, warning notices, switches and safety stop buttons. Vehicles should be left in a clean condition. Keep all windscreens and windows clean and report any cracks/chips via the defect reporting system to Fleet Services.

2.6 Acceptable use of Council vehicles

Fleet, pool-car and hire vehicles are provided for authorised business travel only. They are not a substitute for a personal vehicle and must not be used for:

- Personal journeys.
- Transport of family, friends, or others.

- Transport of hitchhikers.
- Transportation of animals/pets.
- Carriage of unauthorised goods.
- Travel or tasks which are beyond the vehicle's rated capability.
- Transport of any item or equipment projecting from the side, front or rear of the vehicle affecting safe driving, or creating a hazard to pedestrians, other road users.

Drivers are also required to plan their journeys to follow the most efficient, safe route suitable for the type of vehicle, mindful of roadworks and closures, weight / height restrictions, heavy traffic etc. 'Rat runs' through estate roads should be avoided. Drivers are trusted to make sensible, reasonable decisions when planning routes, including any need to deviate for example for comfort reasons. Fleet vehicle movements may be monitored for operational, health and safety, and efficiency purposes; information may be used to support any investigations. Excessive travel for example to pick up a sandwich from your favourite shop, or to go home for a toilet stop, when alternative, closer options are available, is unlikely to be regarded as authorised travel.

For those travelling 'out of area' or staying overnight, the same principles apply. Travel for meals or to collect 'urgent' medication from a chemist, seek medical attention at a hospital, would be regarded as reasonable in most circumstances, applying the common-sense approach above.

2.7 Safe reversing

One quarter of fatalities from workplace incidents involving vehicles occur during reversing. Many more incidents result in injury or costly damage to vehicles, equipment, and property. Drivers are trusted to make sensible decisions and should carry out 'Dynamic Risk Assessments' to determine if it is safe to carry out a reversing manoeuvre:

- Plan routes to avoid the need for reversing.
- Keep reversing to a minimum and avoid lengthy reverses where possible.
- Keep speed low and continually check for pedestrians and other vehicles.
- Avoid reversing from a side road onto a main road without the use of a reversing assistant.
- Use a trained 'reversing assistant' when safe to do so.
- Recognise that other road users can be unpredictable.
- Keep mirrors clean and free of damage and ensure reversing lights and reversing aids are in good working order.
- If necessary, get out of the vehicle and check for obstacles/hazards.

To ensure the safe delivery of operational services, some services may have further requirements for reversing vehicles. Speak to your line-manager for advice.

2.8 Driving licence categories

For the latest information on driving licence categories and entitlements, check **[Driving licence categories - GOV.UK](#)**

Remember:

- The image on photo-card licences must be updated every 10 years.
- You must notify the DVLA if you change your address.
- Failure to do so could result in a fine of up to £1,000.

2.9 Risk Assessments

Risk assessments for work activities should identify risks and controls associated with driving, stopping and operating vehicles on the highway. They should be subject to periodic review and

always reviewed following an incident. Risk assessments and reviews should be undertaken by competent officers. Advice from Health and Safety is available. It is important to consult with staff to ensure all hazards are identified and appropriate control measures, safe working practices implemented.

2.10 Servicing and maintenance

Vehicle maintenance will be carried out in line with manufacturer recommendations or Operator Licence requirements. Vehicles must be presented on time in accordance with the service and inspection schedule. Vehicles must be presented in a suitable condition, clean and unladen. The driver of external leased/hired vehicles must ensure that the service book is completed and stamped when the vehicle is serviced.

Fleet Services must be informed as soon as is practicable if there is conflict between the planned service schedule and the department's vehicle requirements. Operational requirements do not over-ride fleet safety/risk.

- All vehicles will be MOT tested with any additional equipment fitted calibrated, inspected, and certified to ensure regulatory compliance.
- Line managers should ensure that drivers are reporting defects/concerns in a timely manner, not allowing the list to grow for reporting at the end of the week.

2.11 Parking and security of vehicles and equipment

Vehicles must be parked responsibly in a safe place, not obstructing the highway or footpath. Images of a fleet vehicle parked on double-yellows or in a disabled parking bay never look good.

- Use hazard warning lights and beacons where appropriate. Switch them off when they are not required.
- Vehicles must be locked when unattended with all windows closed.
- Where possible, vehicles left for any length of time, especially during darkness, should be left in a well-lit area where there is passing traffic/pedestrians, rather than in a secluded location.
- Contents that could encourage theft should be removed or placed out of sight.
- Confidential/sensitive/personal information should never be left in an unattended vehicle.
- Keys must never be left in the vehicle unattended. All windows and doors should be closed and locked.
- Equipment should be locked in vehicle tool stores or secured when not in use.

2.12 Parking fleet vehicles off site overnight

The default position is that all fleet vehicles will be operated from and returned to designated locations (depots, offices, car parks). Fleet vehicles may only be parked off-site in exceptional circumstances, with approval subject to a robust business case and when supported by a parking impact assessment. The business case will need to be signed by the relevant Service Manager and submitted to the Head of Fleet Services for approval. This will ensure consistency across the organisation. Fleet is managed as a corporate asset and vehicles may be available to other services when not in use.

The business case must consider:

- Is the vehicle above 3.5ton MAM (Maximum Authorised Mass)?

- Yes, the vehicle must be parked in a depot/designated location. Parking in residential areas is not authorised.
- No, approval may be granted, subject to the following considerations/business case:
- Is there a genuine business efficiency reason to support parking the vehicle at home/off-site?
 - Fuel costs/distance to depot/distance to parking location/staff costs etc.
 - What are the wider impacts with access to the fleet vehicle being unavailable to other staff/services?
 - What arrangements are in place for monitoring to ensure compliance?
 - What are the implications for servicing, repair and maintenance if parked off-site.
- Is there a safe, legal, and 'appropriate' space to securely park the vehicle overnight (see impact assessment below).
- Is this consistent with other decisions across the council?
- Is the member of staff on call/emergency stand-by?
 - What is the frequency of this?
 - How is the vehicle returned for periods of absence?
 - Are there any personal taxation liabilities for staff?
- How will the service monitor compliance (pre-journey checks/cleanliness/approved use)

2.13 Parking impact assessment

Cumberland Council strives to be a good neighbour. It is essential therefore that consideration is given to the impact of parking fleet vehicles off-site where this may present risks for both the member of staff, the vehicle or its load; or where it may be regarded as being detrimental to the local area, eg creating

access, safety, or environmental concerns. Considerations in this regard could include identifying a more appropriate location, and/or choosing an alternative vehicle. A smaller van may be less impactful in the area than a larger vehicle but may still meet the essential business reason. A site visit may be appropriate to inform this assessment, and the decision kept under periodic review.

The impact assessment should also consider how often the vehicle will be parked at the location, and to be mindful of any impact in residential areas, including noise.

Reminder, Fleet vehicles:

- Are not a substitute for personal vehicles and must never be used as such (see acceptable use).
- Must be returned by the driver to a designated location for any periods of planned absence.
- Are subject to compliance checks by both client operating teams and Fleet Services officers.

2.14 Hire vehicles

Fleet Services will typically check hire vehicles delivered to some depots. Drivers will assume this responsibility for any hire vehicles delivered to a home address or other location. Faults must be recorded on the inspection sheet and notified to the hire firm immediately. It is a good idea to take a photograph or video from all sides of the vehicle using a mobile phone camera on delivery and prior to its return. Check the body work and wheels for scuff marks/scratches, and the interior for any damage/marks. It can be difficult to prove you did not cause the damage if you did not notice it at collection. It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that hired vehicles are returned to the hire company in the condition in which they were received. Remove all litter.

2.15 Supplementary advice/ regulations

Managers must ensure that anyone driving for work is competent to do so. This includes safe loading/unloading and carriage of goods and passengers, and the operation of any equipment fitted. This could include routine and regular operations such as tipping, operating a tail-lift, using bin hoists, winter maintenance activities, carrying chemicals, operating generators, jet-washing etc.

2.16 Further information:

- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH).
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER).
- Lifting Operations, Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER).
- Driving Hours.
- Working Time Regulations.

2.17 Protecting your safety and corporate assets

In line with the Fleet Strategy and duty of care, fleet vehicles may be fitted with on-board telemetry and cameras. Information will be used to support route planning, to identify asset location and support service planning and response to incidents/service requests.



General information (vehicle location/moving/idling) may be displayed in a control room environment, to facilitate the efficient deployment of resources, protect staff and assets.

Access to more detailed data and use of video evidence for purposes, over and above day-to-day operational requirements, is restricted to designated officers from fleet operating services, and to Fleet Services centrally. For example, reviewing camera footage and telemetry data post incident or following an incident, injury, complaint, claim, service, or compliance failure.

- GPS trackers/telemetry typically record location, speed, route travelled, as well as driving performance (rapid acceleration, harsh braking, and cornering).
- On board cameras often also record similar information, but also record images which may include front, rear and side view from the vehicle. As camera technology develops, and subject to business need, cameras with real-time viewing may be installed. Access to live images is further controlled and never covert.
- Systems do not monitor or record sound/voice.
- Cameras are typically outward facing. Any variation to this will be by exception, for example for passenger carrying services to protect the safety of staff and passengers.

Such technology is commonplace in the fleet sector, including increasing use of AI enabled solutions as this technology develops. Benefits far outweigh the investment and support the Council to defend its staff in the face of claims and complaints and to ensure compliance to safe working. Deliberately tampering/ interfering with vehicle camera systems, trackers or safety systems would be deemed gross misconduct and may lead to action under the Council's Disciplinary Policy.

The Council has a legitimate interest in processing this data, necessary for the health and safety of staff, and for operational efficiency and service planning purposes. The Council's Privacy Notice will set out how this information will be stored and processed.

2.18 Additional equipment and alterations to vehicles

No additional equipment may be used with or fitted to Fleet vehicles unless authorised by Fleet Services. If authorised, such equipment must only be installed by approved technicians.

Staff should not fit any additional equipment or apply any unauthorised stickers, banners, flags etc to fleet vehicles.

To support national or local campaigns, approval may be granted to display some items. Such items should be removed once the campaign has ended. In all cases, prior approval should be sought from Fleet Services. Items fitted must not restrict driver visibility nor affect vehicle safety or performance.

Lease car holders must observe the terms of their lease regarding fitting additional equipment or altering the vehicle in any way.

2.19 Fuel card

Fuel cards are accepted at most fuel stations and are for the purchase of fuel for use in Council vehicles only. Use of fuel cards is monitored. Staff should avoid purchasing premium fuel for vehicles.

Advice on how to use a 'fuel card' to charge an electric vehicle is or this will be part of driver familiarisation.

2.20 Load security

Drivers are responsible for the security and safety of the vehicle and the load being carried even if loaded by someone else.

An unsecured load or overloaded vehicle/trailer can lead to prosecution and endorsements on your licence. There are no grey areas; a vehicle is either overloaded or it is not. An overloaded vehicle is not only illegal, but also dangerous, affecting braking and handling, and may contribute to a serious or fatal incident.

Where available, on-board weighing equipment should be used. Drivers are responsible for reporting any faults to Fleet Services.

The maximum allowable weight will be shown on the VIN plate of the vehicle or contact Fleet Services for advice. Attention must also be paid to the distribution of the load to avoid gross and axle overloading. If a vehicle is:

- Leaning at the front or rear, one of the axles may be overloaded (traffic offence).
- Sitting low, then it may be overloaded (traffic offence).

Loose loads carried in pick-up/open back vehicles or trailers must be covered when travelling, using a secured net or tarpaulin.

- Loads carried on roof racks must be appropriately secured and must not exceed safe working loads for the rack or vehicle. Details of these can be found in the vehicle manual.
- Use mechanical means to load vehicles/trailers where possible to reduce manual handling risks. Risk assessment of the task will identify the need for assistance.
- Equipment must be tied down using suitable straps of the correct rating (these will be supplied by Fleet Services). Straps must be securely attached to the trailer/vehicle via lashing points or eyes. The item being secured must be strapped in such a way that it can withstand lateral and

longitudinal forces, and ideally secured against the bulkhead of the body or trailer. Guidance on correct lashing techniques is available from the Fleet Office.

- Retaining bars and/or other suitable ratchet straps/nets/ tarpaulin should be used to secure heavy items in the rear of vehicles.
- Under no circumstance should heavy items be carried in-cabs unsecured.
- Carrying hazardous goods such as oxygen, compressed gas, fertilisers or spraying equipment, needs special consideration and reference should be made to specific relevant procedures.

2.21 Towing

The category entitlement on your driving licence will determine the type of trailer you can tow. Managers must ensure that drivers hold the correct licence for the vehicle and trailer combination and are competent and confident in doing so. Evidence of all training must be kept.

Before attempting to tow a trailer, you must ensure that both the vehicle and trailer are suitable for the task. You will need to know:

- The Maximum Authorised Mass (M.A.M.) of both the vehicle and trailer when loaded.
- The Train Weight of both the trailer and the towing vehicle, and the Train Weight (maximum allowable weight of the vehicle and trailer combination).
- The towing capacity of the vehicle depending upon the type of trailer being used (braked or un-braked). See vehicle handbook for further information.
- Exceeding weight limits is an offence. If you are unsure, please contact Fleet Services for advice.

- Before taking a trailer out on the road it must be checked for roadworthiness; its servicing and maintenance records need to be up to date. Any faults must be reported to Fleet Services. A full check of tyres, lights, reflectors, tailboard and side security, jockey wheel/stand, and hitch must be carried out and a record of the checks completed.
- Always couple/uncouple a trailer on a flat level surface, ensuring that the trailer handbrake is engaged.
- Ensure the trailer is properly coupled to the towing vehicle. Make sure that the safety catch is deployed on a ball type hitch, or the towing-pin security clip is in place in the case of a ring type hitch.
- Connect the trailer breakaway cable to the designated eye on the towbar. Never wrap the cable around the neck of the tow-ball or the hitch pin. The cable is designed to apply the trailer brakes in the event of the hitch pin or tow-ball becoming detached.
- Before moving off, ensure the trailer jockey wheel is correctly retracted and the hand brake is fully off.
- When un-coupling the trailer, engage the hand brake before deploying the jockey wheel and disconnecting the lighting plug and breakaway cable. Lower the jockey wheel to take the weight off the tow-ball or pin and release the safety catch on a ball type hitch or remove the security clip and withdraw the hitch pin in the case of a ring type hitch.

2.22 Production of documents

If requested by the police or other enforcement agency to produce any documents for a council vehicle, please contact Fleet Services.

2.23 Height and maximum weight of your vehicle

Be aware of the height and weight of your vehicle and observe all road signs and restrictions for driving over or under bridges, or on roads with weight/access restrictions. Plan your journey accordingly. Before raising the vehicle body, eg during tipping, check for overhead obstructions such as power lines and cables, or overhanging branches etc.

2.24 Engine idling/zero mpg

The wasteful use of fuel will not be tolerated. As well as incurring significant extra cost, engine idling contributes to carbon emissions and poor air quality which can impact on people's health and development, particularly children or those with breathing issues.

Switch off the engine when it is safe and practical to do so. Information from vehicle telemetry and fuel use data will be used to develop individual driver profiles with intervention, training and action designed to tackle irresponsible practice.



2.25 Quitting: leaving vehicles unattended with the engine on

The term 'quitting' relates to the offence of leaving a vehicle unattended with the engine running, even for a moment. The offence carries a fine and penalty points on your licence. It does not matter whether there were passengers in the vehicle at the time. Whilst fines and penalty points may not apply for

such actions within council depots, this remains reckless practice and would be regarded as a breach of the Council's legal duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

When a vehicle is to be left 'unattended' the parking brake must be applied, the engine must be switched off, the keys removed from the ignition and all doors and windows locked and secured.

Drivers who may have to leave the cab of their vehicle to operate equipment or machinery attached to the vehicle must always be in attendance with the vehicle. Attendance means that 'the driver can keep the vehicle under observation so would be alert to any attempt to interfere with it and would have a reasonable prospect of preventing unauthorised use. Fleet vehicles may be fitted with 'drive-lock' technology to offer further protection for drivers against quitting offences and to protect Council assets.

Drive-lock features are designed to improve driver and passenger safety. Tampering or mis-use of safety systems will not be tolerated.

2.26 Off-road driving

Some staff may be required to drive off road as part of their role. Additional training and suitable vehicles will be provided. Such activities must be fully risk assessed by competent persons.

2.27 Driving through road works

- Do not exceed the speed limit.
- Get into the correct lane in good time.
- Concentrate on the road ahead, not the road works.
- Be alert for works' traffic leaving or entering road works.
- Keep a safe distance and observe signs.

Part 3: Driving your own vehicle for work



3. Introduction

'Grey fleet' is a term used to describe vehicles that do not belong to the employer (Cumberland Council), but which are used for business travel. This includes private cars as well as any vehicle 'purchased' via an employee ownership scheme or privately rented/leased vehicle. When driven on company business, often in return for an allowance or expenses, such vehicles are deemed to be part of the 'grey fleet' and fall under the responsibility of the employer, including:

- Travelling to different locations/venues/sites for meetings, appointments, training.
- Journeys to different offices or work locations away from your 'normal' place of work.

Anyone using their own car for business needs to be authorised to drive and must meet the standards and requirements set out in this Handbook.

3.1 Protocol for using your own vehicle for business journeys

Anyone using their own vehicle for business journeys must:

- Have a valid driving licence and motor insurance covering travel in connection with business.
- Have access to a safe, roadworthy vehicle, taxed, and tested where applicable.
- Comply with Road Traffic Legislation and the Highway Code.
- Drive responsibly and safely, and plan journeys effectively.
- Pay any fines related to speeding, parking, and road traffic offences and associated fees.

Employees are also required to inform their line manager of any:

- Health concerns, eyesight problems etc.
- Motor incidents which occur whilst at work.
- Traffic offences and prosecutions pending (with the exclusion of parking offences).

Elected members are also required to inform the Council's Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer) of any:

- Motoring incidents.
- Traffic offences and prosecutions pending (with the exclusion of parking offences).

3.2 Volunteers/casual workers/agency staff

The standards outlined in this Handbook apply equally to anyone driving on Council business such as volunteers, casual workers and agency staff.

3.3 Need to travel

Business travel should be kept to a minimum to ensure that the Council is effectively managing/reducing occupational road risk. Plan journeys effectively. Reimbursement of travel expenses will only be made for journeys where there was a genuine business need to travel. Consider:

- If a phone/video call would be an effective alternative.
- If the meeting can be rescheduled/combined with other appointments to reduce travelling.
- Car sharing with colleagues.
- Practical alternative travel options (walking, cycling, public transport, pool or hire car).
- Safety of the journey/weather conditions/known risks.

It is the responsibility of managers to ensure that staff use the most efficient means of travel. In priority order, consideration should be given to assessing the practicalities and full cost of the following options:

- Walking.
 - Cycling.
 - Public Transport.
 - Electric pool car* (shared where practical).
 - Pool or hire car** (recommended for journeys more than 120 miles return)
 - Private car (shared where practical).
- * Availability of pool / hire cars is limited and may not always be available. Pool cars do not always represent the most practical or efficient choice.
- ** In exceptional cases, for example where there is a relevant health condition or disability, a single journey in an employee-owned vehicle may exceed 120 miles. Authorisation will be required in advance of the journey from the line manager. Drivers are responsible for reporting certain health conditions/ disabilities to the DVSA.

3.4 Using a private vehicle

When driving for work you must always ensure that you are doing so in compliance with the standards set out in this Handbook. It does not matter if expenses are claimed for the journey or not. When claiming mileage expenses, you will need to sign a declaration to confirm that:

- You have completed the on-line driving for work assessment.
- You have insurance cover including travel in connection with your business.

- You hold a valid licence to drive the vehicle being used and you are authorised to drive on business (eg been subject to a recent on-line licence and documentation check).
- Your vehicle is roadworthy, with a recent/current service history, and a valid MOT Certificate where applicable.

Completion of an on-line driving assessment is essential to confirm understanding and acceptance of the standards expected.

3.5 Insurance requirements

Anyone driving for work purposes using their own vehicle must have valid motor insurance in place which includes cover for 'business use'. Staff responsible for transporting service users in their own vehicle may need additional cover - check with your insurance provider if you are unsure.

The Council has a system for checking driver business use insurance and all drivers are required to participate in the process as a condition of driving at work.

Drivers using a hire car will be insured on the Council's insurance cover.

Driving without valid insurance is a motoring offence. Penalties for uninsured drivers include:

- A fixed penalty of £300 and six penalty points if you are caught driving a vehicle you are not insured to drive.
- If the case goes to court, you could receive an unlimited fine and be disqualified from driving.
- The police also have the power to seize, and in some cases destroy, the vehicle that is being driven uninsured.

Activity		Do I need motor insurance to include occasional business use?
Driving a privately-owned vehicle to and from your usual place of work - commuting only.	No	Commuting to and from work in a privately-owned vehicle does not constitute a business journey. The vehicle must still be appropriately insured to cover commuting to and from normal place of work.
Driving a fleet vehicle, pool or hire vehicle provided by the Council on authorised journeys.	No	Vehicles provided by Fleet Services are insured by the Council for authorised business journeys. Drivers must be licensed and competent to drive such vehicles. The insurance only extends to authorised driving activities. Use of a council vehicle for non-authorised activity, eg personal travel, carrying family and friends or private goods is not covered.
Driving a privately-owned/leased vehicle on a business journey. • Expenses claimed for travel. • No expenses claimed.	Yes	It is the reason for the journey that determines whether you need business insurance. It does not matter if you claim expenses for the journey or not.

Activity	Do I need motor insurance to include occasional business use?	
Driving a car 'leased' through the Council's salary sacrifice scheme.	Yes	Cars provided under salary sacrifice schemes are typically regarded as 'Company Cars' and as such your 'lease' arrangement with the vehicle supplier may already include 'business insurance' as part of the payment terms. It is the responsibility of the driver to check and ensure they are fully insured.
Driving your own vehicle and carrying service users (children or adults).	Yes See note	Note: Insurance will also need to specify the carrying/transportation of passengers. Advice should be sought from your insurance provider if there is any doubt.
Driving a vehicle without the correct insurance cover is a motoring offence.		

3.6 Additional vehicle standards

Employee-owned vehicles used for business purposes must meet the following standards:

- Vehicle fitted with driver front airbags.
- Vehicle fitted with ABS.
- Seatbelts (three-point minimum) and head restraints correctly adjusted to all seats.

Drivers are also advised to subscribe to a breakdown/recovery service.

To support its carbon reduction targets, staff are encouraged to choose an appropriate vehicle for business journeys.

3.7 Use of private vehicles on business journeys

During journeys that an employee-owned vehicle is being used for business purposes, the driver shall not carry any unauthorised passengers. If the driver chooses to take a break or visit family, for example, this would not be considered business use and therefore additional mileage, and time must not be claimed back. Clearly, any deviation from route would need to be with the consent of the line-manager.

3.8 Use of mobile phone whilst driving on business journeys

Drivers must not use a mobile phone, handsfree or otherwise, whilst driving on business irrespective if they are in their own car or a fleet/hire vehicle. Further information is outlined in Part 01.

3.9 Incident or theft of private vehicle on a business journey

In the event of an incident or theft, the driver should report the incident to their insurance provider. They should also notify their line manager as soon as possible for the incident to be reported/recorded.

3.10 Motorbikes, scooters, cycles, e-bikes and trikes

The Council is committed to reducing carbon emissions from staff travel and business activities. Use of alternative travel using cycles, e-bikes, motorbikes and scooters may be approved subject to satisfying certain standards.

Bikes, e-bikes and scooters must be road legal in the UK and fully roadworthy and must not be modified. The use of bikes, scooters etc introduces additional risks for staff so managers are advised to undertake individual risk assessments before approving such business travel.

As rule, this will exclude the carriage of goods or passengers on business journeys.

Examples of controls include:

- Wearing appropriate protective and hi-visibility clothing, to include for example:
 - Cycle helmet (for cycles and e-bikes).
 - Full face helmet for motorcycle or scooter.
 - Hi-visibility jacket or vest for cycle/e-bike use.
 - Full jacket, with hi-visibility markings, for motorbike/scooter use.
 - Cycle gloves or motorbike gloves.
 - Protective leg wear and boots for motorbike/scooter use.
- Requirements to confirm rider competency/fitness to ride.
 - Assessment to confirm cycle/e-bike proficiency.
 - Motorcycle – licence check (on-line).
 - Evidence of recent rider training/assessment.
 - History of former incidents.
 - Any health concerns - a referral to OH may be needed.
- Evidence of servicing/maintenance of cycles/bikes/scooters.
- Front and rear working lights, bell or equivalent, reflectors.
- Environmental and other factors.
 - Riding in snow/icy conditions.
 - Poor visibility/fog/dark.

- o High winds.
- o Security - approved lock.
- o Pump and puncture repair kit to be carried.
- o Arrangements for check-in on arrival.
- o Maximum distance to travel/roads to avoid (incidents/speed of traffic etc).
- o Signed declarations from staff to confirm understanding and acceptance.
- o Review and monitoring arrangements.

If confidence is low that the risks can be adequately controlled, the use of such alternative forms of business travel must not be authorised. The health, welfare and safety of staff is the main priority.

Part 4: Carrying passengers

Service users/children



4.1 Staff required to transport service users must be trained and competent, aware of:

- Safe working practice for the loading, transportation and unloading of passengers.
- Safe use of passenger tail-lifts, access ramps, seatbelts and other restraints.
- Safe moving and handling of children, young people and adults, including those travelling in wheelchairs or with additional needs.

Individual passenger risk assessments/profiles may be needed to address risks that may present throughout the journey in relation to the passenger's comfort, health, welfare, communication and behaviour.

This risk assessment should also extend to route planning, where consideration must be given to the vehicle to be used, the passengers and/or equipment to be carried, the length of the journey, age, needs, welfare and comfort of the passenger. Additional attention must be paid to safe boarding and alighting locations as well as any action to be taken in an emergency.

4.2 Seatbelts

All passengers must be properly restrained with a three point-seat belt or correctly fitted child seat.

For passengers travelling in wheelchairs, the same standard applies.

- The wheelchair must be secured in the vehicle using the correct multi-point restraints, and fitted by a competent person.
- The passenger must also be secured with the use of a seatbelt - posture belts are not a substitute for vehicle seatbelts.

- Equipment must be suitable for the needs of the passenger and adjusted accordingly.
- Wheelchairs must also be checked for their condition and suitability to support travel in vehicles.
- All equipment must be kept clean, stored appropriately when not in use, and be subject to regular inspection and testing. This will ensure seatbelts are clean so they don't mark people's clothing, but more importantly to protect their integrity as a key safety device.

Professional training must be given to all staff involved in transporting or monitoring transport to ensure they have the necessary knowledge to fulfil their duty of care towards their passengers. Drivers and passenger assistants have a legal duty of care for the health and safety of passengers. Evidence of recent and relevant training should be kept.

Further guidance on operational procedures and policies relating to the transport of passengers is available from the Council's Transport Service, with further advice and guidance from the **Local Authority Passenger Transport Operational Procedure: Code of Practice Guidelines for Education and Social Services**

4.3 Child car seats/booster seats: the law

For the latest requirements for child car seat and seat belt rules, check: **Child car seats: the law: Using a child car seat or booster seat - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)**

Children must **normally use a child car seat** until they're 12 years old or 135 centimetres tall, whichever comes first. Children over 12 or more than 135cm tall **must wear a seat belt**. The choice of child car seat should be appropriate for the child's height or weight.

Height-based seats ('i-Size' seats) must be rear-facing until the child is over 15 months old. Forward-facing car seats can be used for infants over 15 months old. Check the seat to make sure it is suitable for the height of the child.

Only EU-approved height-based child car seats can be used in the UK. These have a label showing a capital 'E' in a circle and 'R129'.

4.4 Weight-based seats

Only EU-approved weight-based child car seats can be used in the UK. These have a label showing a capital 'E' in a circle and 'ECE R44'.

The seat selected, and the way they must be restrained in it, depends on their weight.

Weight	Group	Seats
0kg to 10kg	0	Lie-flat or 'lateral' baby carrier, rear-facing baby carrier, or rear-facing baby seat using a harness.
0kg to 13kg	0+	Rear-facing baby carrier or rear-facing baby seat using a harness.
9kg to 18kg	1	Rear-facing or forward-facing baby seat using a harness or safety shield.
15kg to 25kg	2	Rear-facing or forward-facing child car seat (high-backed booster seat or booster cushion) using a seat belt, harness or safety shield.
22kg to 36kg	3	Rear-facing or forward-facing child car seat (high-backed booster seat or booster cushion) using a seat belt, harness or safety shield.
Manufacturers now only make booster cushions approved as group 3. Existing booster cushions in group 2 can still be used.		

4.5 Fitting a child car seat

The **Child Car Seats website** has information on how to choose a seat and travel safely with children in cars. Training in the correct fitting of child car seats can be arranged.

You must only use a child car seat if the vehicle's seat belt has a diagonal strap, unless the seat is either:

- Specifically designed for use with a lap seat belt.
- Fitted using ISOFIX anchor points.

You must deactivate any front airbags before fitting a rear-facing baby seat in a front seat. Do not fit a child car seat in side-facing seats.

4.6 Children with disabilities or medical conditions

The same rules apply for children with disabilities or medical conditions, but they can use a disabled person's seat belt, or a child restraint designed for their needs. A doctor can issue an exemption certificate if a child is unable to use a restraint or seat belt because of their condition. Exemption certificates must be carried and available for inspection on request.

4.7 When can a child travel without a car seat

The health, safety and welfare of children is top priority. It is therefore a requirement that all children travelling in fleet, hire or personal vehicles always use the appropriate car seat and seatbelt when travelling. In exceptional circumstances there are certain exemptions within the law that may apply, for example for genuine unplanned emergency journeys, or where there is no room for another car seat.

Unexpected journeys: If the correct child car seat isn't available, a child aged 3 or older can use an adult seat belt if the journey meets **all** the following tests:

- It is unexpected.
- It is necessary.
- It is for a short distance only.

Children under 3 cannot be taken on an unexpected journey in a vehicle without the correct child car seat, unless **both** of the following apply:

- The vehicle is a licensed taxi/minicab.
- And, the child travels on a rear seat without a seat belt.

No room for a third child car seat: Children under 3 must travel in a child car seat. If there is no room for a third child car seat in the back of the vehicle, the child must travel in the front seat with the correct child car seat.

For emergency, unplanned journeys, children aged 3 or older can sit in the back using an adult belt.

Part 5: Driving in winter or flood conditions



5. Introduction

Driving in adverse weather requires increased focus, preparation and sensible decision making to avoid a breakdown or incident on the road. If conditions are severe, consider if your journey is essential or if it can be delayed. If you must travel, allow extra time for your journey, and be prepared for delays ahead.

Make sure your vehicle is well prepared and that you are confident in driving in adverse weather. Consider what the conditions may be like en route, at your destination, or later that day for your return journey.

- Check weather forecasts and travel alerts.
- Carry appropriate equipment and clothing (waterproof/warm coat/sensible footwear/blanket/shovel/food/drink etc).
- Ensure you have a fully charged mobile phone (or means to charge it) for use in emergency.
- Clear ice/snow from windows before starting the journey. Clear snow from the roof of the vehicle.
- Ensure your windscreen washer fluid is topped up, wipers and washer jets are working - it is a legal requirement for vehicles with windscreens to have working wipers and washers.
- Try to stick to main roads, where possible, as these are more likely to have been treated.
- Ensure that someone is aware of your route, destination, and estimated time of arrival.
- Be mindful of the risks of black ice.
- Recognise your own limitations and vehicle capabilities - adjust your driving style/speed to reflect road, traffic and weather conditions and do not be intimidated to speed up by other motorists.
- Ensure you have plenty fuel for your journey; you may need to follow a long diversion or may get stuck in traffic for a lengthy period.

5.1 Driving in snow and ice

- If the sun dazzles, reduce speed and use your visor/sunglasses.
- If your tyres won't grip, there may be a salt heap or grit-bin nearby. Spread salt/grit in front of your driving wheels and set off in the highest gear you can.
- If you are stuck in heavy snow, wrap up warm and stay inside your vehicle if safe to do so.
- Keep your lights and windscreens clean. Turn on your lights to increase your visibility to other motorists.
- Using low gears will help you keep traction, especially going down hills.
- Higher gears and low speeds can be used for better overall control.
- Do not use cruise control on icy roads.
- Decrease your speed and leave yourself plenty of room to stop.
- Avoid harsh braking, unless in an emergency and take extra care when cornering.
- If your tyres are making virtually no noise, this could be a sign that you are driving on ice.
- Be especially careful on bridges and infrequently used roads. Even at temperatures above freezing, if the conditions are wet, you might encounter ice in shady areas or exposed roadways like bridges.

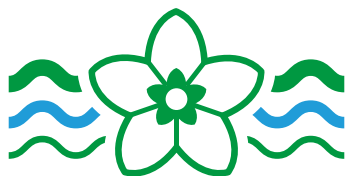
5.2 Driving in fog/reduced visibility

- Use dipped headlights (Highway Code: must be used when visibility is less than 100m).
- Keep your windscreen clear.
- Drive so that you can stop in the distance you can see.

- Use fog lights if visibility is reduced.
- Remember to turn off front and rear fog lights when visibility improves.

5.3 Driving in heavy rain/flood/standing water

- If your area is at risk of flooding, move your vehicle to higher ground when there is a risk of a flood.
- When driving, use dipped headlights. (Highway Code: must be used when visibility is less than 100m).
- Keep your speed down and keep well back from the vehicle in front. Leave at least twice as much space between you and the car ahead.
- Try to avoid driving through standing water.
- Do not drive through fast-moving flood water or through flooding that may be more than 10cm/4inches in depth. If you are unsure of the depth, do not drive through.
- Drive slowly and avoid making a bow-wave. Air-intakes on vehicles, including on some taller 4x4 vehicles, may be located lower down in the vehicle and you can very quickly incur very expensive damage to your vehicle.
- Always apply the brakes after driving through water to dry them off.
- Gently ease off the accelerator and slow down gradually if you feel that your vehicle is aquaplaning.
- If you break down in heavy rain, do not prop the bonnet open while you wait - this can do more damage to your vehicle's electrics, delaying your recovery and incurring further costs.



**Cumberland
Council**

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