



MINIBUS SAFETY

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE

Presented for approval and adaptation to:

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Personnel Sub Committee
Full Council

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INDEX

SECTION	1.	INTRODUCTION	(Page 3)
SECTION	2.	MINIBUSES	(Pages 4 to 6)
SECTION	3.	INSURANCE	(Pages 7 and 8)
SECTION	4.	ACCIDENT REPORTING PROCEDURES	(Page 9)
SECTION	5.	EMERGENCY DRILL	(Page 10)
SECTION	6.	DRIVERS	(Pages 11 to 14)
SECTION	7.	PASSENGERS	(Page 15)
SECTION	8.	PASSENGER SUPERVISORS AND ESCORTS	(Pages 16 and 17)
SECTION	9.	PLANNING	(Page 18 and 19)
SECTION	10.	MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES	(Pages 20 and 21)
APPENDIX A -		MINIBUS DRIVER ASSESSMENT/ TRAINING PATH	(Page 22)
APPENDIX B -		PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL MINIBUS PREPARATION CHECK	(Pages 23 to 26)
APPENDIX C -		BULLETIN - SEAT BELT REGULATIONS	(Page 27)
APPENDIX D -		ENDORSEMENT CLARIFICATION LETTER	(Page 28)

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Minibuses are a comparatively safe form of road transport. Statistics from the Department of Transport indicate that, when the average number of passengers per vehicle is taken into account, minibuses have been a consistently safer form of passenger transport than cars.
- 1.2. However, following a small number of highly publicised accidents involving minibuses, issues of concern regarding how minibus travel can be made even safer have been raised. This Code of Practice will provide minibus operators with detailed guidance on how to improve minibus safety and how to meet the requirement of the City Council's Health and Safety Policy relating to Minibus Safety.
- 1.3. This Code of Practice is for the consideration of bus operators, governing bodies, management committees, head teachers, and youth centre and social services managers who have charge of, or use, minibuses. It is also recommended for adoption by grant maintained and independent schools and grant aided voluntary organisations within Plymouth City Council.
- 1.4. Plymouth City Council employees should note that they should always have due regard for the contents of this document within the context of the Health and Safety Framework. The document does not set out mandatory minimum standards throughout but minibus users should always actively assess risk in all situations in order to make appropriate decisions about which aspects of the guidance should be followed. Any management decisions about the responsibility for any collision or other accident will take into account whether or not this guidance has been followed.

Note:

This Code of Practice shall apply in addition to any other practices and standards laid down by Heads of Service.

2. MINIBUSES

Design

- 2.1 For the purposes of this guidance a minibus is a vehicle with nine to sixteen passenger seats.
- 2.2 New vehicles, which have been purpose built, or constructed from new by a major supplier, should conform to the requirement of the law.

"Construction and Use" Regulations

- 2.3 All minibuses are required to comply with the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 or any statutory re-enactment or amendment thereto. The main requirements are:
- (i) every minibus must be fitted with one exit door on the nearside and an emergency door at the rear or on the offside. There must be no door, other than the driver's and an emergency door, on the offside. Emergency doors must be clearly marked with "EMERGENCY DOOR" or "FOR EMERGENCY USE ONLY" in letters not less than 25mm high on both the inside and the outside and the means of operation indicated. An exit door must have a grab handle;
 - (ii) all doors, when locked from the outside, must be capable of being opened from the inside when the vehicle is stationary. All handles, other than the driver's door, must be designed so that it is not possible to open the door accidentally;
 - (iii) where a door has two separate latches, the door must be capable of being opened by a single action. All doors must have a slam lock of the two-stage type;
 - (iv) the driver must be provided with mirrors so that, when seated, he/she can see the area inside and outside the normal exit doors;
 - (v) every seated passenger must have unobstructed access to two exits;
 - (vi) every seat or wheelchair anchorage point must be securely fixed to the vehicle. Wheelchair must be fitted so that the occupant does not face to the side. On a crew bus (see also 2.10. 2.11 and 2.12 below) the end seats immediately inside the rear doors must be fitted with arm rests;
 - (vii) any steps or change of level in an exit or gangway must be illuminated;
 - (viii) no portable tank or receptacle containing fuel shall be carried in the compartment provided for the driver or passengers;
 - (ix) where a roof rack is fitted, care must be taken not to overload the minibus and not to exceed the Gross Vehicle Weight. Rack fixings must be checked regularly;

- (x) loose items of equipment, especially heavy items, must not be carried in the front or passenger space of any minibus;
- (xi) responsibility for the condition and driving of the vehicle and for its management remains with the driver.

Servicing and Maintenance

- 2.4 Every minibus will be maintained within the Plymouth City Council Repair and Maintenance Contract. However, it is the responsibility of the driver to notify the Fleet Hire Division within Plymouth City Council's Contract Services Division of all and any perceived or actual known faults or deficiencies with either the vehicle or any accessories contained therein, by completing the defect sheet carried on the vehicle.

Fire Extinguishers

- 2.5 Each minibus must carry at least one suitable fire extinguisher, which is readily available for use and which complies in all respects with the specifications for portable fire extinguishers.

First Aid Kit

- 2.6 Every minibus must carry a first aid kit in a suitable container designed to protect the contents from damp and dust. It should be readily available and marked clearly with a white cross on a green background. Should any item contained within the First Aid Kit be used or removed, upon returning the vehicle, the driver should replace the missing items from the Prince Rock stores of Plymouth City Council's Contract Services Division, at the earliest opportunity.

Seat Belts

- 2.7 Seat belts must be worn by all vehicle occupants no matter how short the journey, unless the occupant has a doctor's letter giving exemption on medical grounds.
- 2.8 Adequate wheelchair passenger restraints should be fitted to all vehicles where appropriate.

Seat Belt Regulations

- 2.9 All minibuses are required to comply with the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations 1996 or any statutory re-enactment and amendment thereof (please refer to Appendix C attached hereto for a copy of a bulletin covering the regulations - a full copy of which is available from the Head of Legal Services).

Crew Buses

- 2.10 The use of crew buses should be phased out as soon as possible.
- 2.11 The use of existing crew buses with side-facing seats should be limited to local journeys. Crew buses should not be driven at speeds over 50 mph.
- 2.12 It is not recommended to fit seat belts to crew buses.
- 2.13 Notwithstanding the above, it should be noted that crew buses cannot be used for any Education or Social Services passenger carrying journey.

3 **INSURANCE**

Motor

- 3.1 The Road Traffic Act 1988 obliges users of all passenger vehicles to be insured with an authorised insurer against legal liability in respect of:
- (i) death or injury to any third party or any passenger in the vehicle, and
 - (ii) damage to any property on, or adjacent to, a road. The policy must also cover the cost of any emergency medical treatment resulting from an accident.
- 3.2 Plymouth City Council has arranged Comprehensive cover on a blanket basis for damage to any self-propelled motor vehicle or wheeled trailer owned by or hired or lent to the Council.
- 3.3 Comprehensive cover includes:
- (i) loss of or damage to the vehicle including accessories and spare parts/components. The Insurer pays for cost of repairs, reinstatement or replacement or cash if a total loss. The first £250 of any claim is excluded;
 - (ii) loss or damage to clothing and personal effects (including personal tools) occurring in or on the vehicle. Limit is £100 for any one occurrence with no excess;
 - (iii) the Insurer indemnifies the City Council against all sums, which the City Council may become legally liable to pay for compensation, claimant's costs and expenses in respect of bodily injury or damage to physical property to a maximum of £5 million for one claim arising from third parties;
 - (iv) the Insurer will pay costs in the event of proceedings being taken against the City Council or driver for manslaughter, dangerous or reckless driving causing death;
- 3.4 The insurance policy permits driving by any person who has been authorised to drive a minibus by Plymouth City Council (See Section 5.1(iv)).
- 3.5 Use of vehicles is solely in connection with (i) Plymouth City Council's business (ii) for authorised social domestic and pleasure purposes and (iii) authorised community use only, subject to adhering to the terms of this code.
- 3.6 A valid Certificate of Insurance is required to tax a minibus and is available from the Hire Fleet Division or the Insurance Section.

- 3.7 A motor insurance policy may be invalidated or partially invalidated by the insurer for a variety of reasons e.g.:
- (i) a driver admitting liability after an accident;
 - (ii) failure to report an accident promptly to the insurer;
 - (iii) failure to operate under the Small Bus Permit Regulations if appropriate;
 - (iv) failure to maintain the minibus properly or using it in an unsafe condition;
 - (v) allowing an uninsured driver to drive the minibus;
 - (vi) failure to wear seat belts, if provided and available.

Personal Accident

- 3.8 Plymouth City Council has arranged Personal Accident insurance cover for drivers and passengers who sustain injury as a result of an accident involving a vehicle which is insured under Plymouth City Council's Commercial Motor Fleet policy.
- 3.9 In the event of an authorised Plymouth City Council driver or passenger being injured following a motor accident, injured parties should contact the Insurance Section for guidance as to how to proceed.

4 **ACCIDENT REPORTING PROCEDURES**

- 4.1 All accidents, however, trivial and irrespective of whether damage is caused to a Plymouth City Council vehicle must be reported within 24 hours or as soon as practicable thereafter to Contract Services Group, Hire Fleet Division.
- 4.2 At no time should any admission of liability, offer or promise to pay compensation be made or given by or on behalf of Plymouth City Council.
- 4.3 A Motor Accident Report form must be accurately completed by the driver and returned to the Hire Fleet Division as soon as possible after the accident. It is important that full details of the circumstances of the accident are stated together with a sketch showing positions of vehicles etc., at the time of the incident.
- 4.4. All incidents involving personal injury to any person, theft, attempted theft or vandalism must also be reported to the Police.
- 4.5 It is essential that full details of other drivers involved in the accident are obtained (name, address, registration number and insurance company details) and included in the Motor Accident Report form.
- 4.6 The name and address of any independent witness should also be obtained as this will assist in dealing with the claim where liability may be in dispute.
- 4.7 Repairs to vehicles will be arranged by the Hire Fleet Division and the claim processed by the Insurance Section. Any policy excess applying in respect of damage caused to Plymouth City Council's vehicles will be borne by the appropriate Cost Centre irrespective of apportionment of blame (but see 4.8 below).
- 4.8 Where damage to a Plymouth City Council vehicle results from the negligent act of a third party, attempts will be made to recover the Council's outlay together with any uninsured losses. If an excess payment is recovered from a third party the amount will be credited to the appropriate Cost Centre.
- 4.9 In the event of an authorised Plymouth City Council driver or passenger being injured following a motor vehicle accident, injured parties should contact the Insurance Section for guidance as to how to proceed.
- 4.10 All and any accidents to Plymouth City Council employees or any passengers must be recorded in the hiring department's accident book where after that department must contact the Health and Safety Executive and complete form F2508 if necessary.
- 4.11 Any doubts or concerns regarding the correct accident reporting procedures and/or health and safety issues can be resolved by contacting Plymouth City Council's Health and Safety Team based in the Personnel Department (Floor 4).

5. **EMERGENCY DRILL**

- 5.1 In the event of an emergency (e.g. breakdown or accident) it is the primary duty of the supervisor to ensure the safety of ALL passengers by taking appropriate action (e.g. removing passengers from the left-hand side of the vehicle to safe area away from road etc.).
- 5.2 In the event of fire
- (i) The vehicle should be stopped immediately, the engine switched off but without opening the engine compartment.
 - (ii) The fuel cut switch should be used to stop the supply of fuel to the engine.
 - (iii) All passengers must be off the vehicle and away from any danger from fire or traffic.
 - (iv) Call the emergency services.
 - (v) If time, remove the ignition key; switch off battery isolator switch.
 - (vi) Tackle the fire only if safe to do so.
- 5.3 Evacuation of wheelchair passengers.
- (i) If the vehicle, following an accident or breakdown, is not in a safe place, or if there is a risk of fire, evacuation may need to be done speedily; and if carrying passengers in wheelchairs, evacuate all able-bodied passengers first, or let others, who are able to do so, do this while you taking those who are disabled out from the rear of the vehicle.
 - (ii) In order to evacuate as speedily as possible, the lift may be positioned halfway between road and floor level and used as a step if time allows, with another person helping to lift wheelchairs down if at all possible, or else carrying the passenger from the wheelchair to safety outside the vehicle.

6. DRIVERS

Authorisation

6.1 The authorisation of drivers to operate the minibus is the responsibility of the head teacher, centre manager, driver's line manager or the organisation for which a person is driving as a volunteer or the paid employee of a contractor. When considering the suitability of persons for driving minibuses insured through Plymouth City Council, operators must ensure that the following criteria are met: -

- (i) drivers should be 21 years of age or over and have held full licence for not less than 2 years;

N.B.: Any driver passing their car test after January 1997 will not be eligible to drive a minibus unless an additional minibus test is taken and passed.

- (ii) the driving licence, which should be inspected annually by the appropriate line manager should be free from any endorsements or change of circumstances;
- (iii) the driver must be able to certify that he/she does not suffer from any physical defects, disabilities or illnesses that might impair his/her driving. (Drivers are required by law to notify DVLA about disabilities that are expected to last for more than 3 months).
- (iv) authorised drivers will have taken and passed the necessary training and/or Plymouth City Council or previous Devon County Minibus Driving Test as evidenced by the issue of a certificate by Plymouth City Council, or previously Devon County with the exception of (v) below.
- (v) those drivers who hold a current PCV Licence acquired by D.E.T.R. test need not undertake training;
- (vi) Any change of circumstances (for example: change of address, endorsements) must be reported immediately to the Line Manager and referred to the Fleet Hire Division, Contract Services Group.
- (vii) where it is intended to use a tail lift of a vehicle so equipped, the driver must have previously received training and received an appropriate certificate from the City Council, or previously from Devon County Council.

Responsibilities

6.2 Under normal road traffic law the driver is responsible for ensuring the safety and legality of the minibus. He/she must ensure that all appropriate safety checks have been carried out on the day of a journey, and prior to the journey. To this end, the Council requires all drivers (unless otherwise notified by a line manager) to complete as fully as possible the Road Safety Checklist an example of which is at Appendix B herein.

6.3 There should be a management system that ensures that these checks have been carried out they need not necessarily be covered by the driver. If somebody else does carry out the checks, however, this does not remove the driver's legal responsibility for the safety and roadworthiness of the vehicle.

6.4 These checks include: -

- (i) level of fuel, oil, coolant and windscreen washer fluid;
- (ii) correct operation of windscreen washers and wipers;
- (iii) correct tyre pressures and inspection for damage;
- (iv) correct operation of lights and indicators;
- (v) emergency warning triangle;
- (vi) correct operation of brakes;
- (vii) emergency exits are unlocked and can be operated from inside and outside;
- (viii) in the event of a trailer being used with the vehicle to ensure that the trailer allows free and efficient access and egress from the rear exit of the vehicle.
- (ix) wheelchair lift and appropriate restraints (if fitted).

Operators may wish to use a vehicle checklist. If drivers do not know how to check the vehicle, they should obtain help. If they are in doubt as to the vehicle's safety, they must not drive it, but report the problem to the responsible person.

6.5 Before setting off, drivers should be satisfied that: -

- (i) all seat belts fitted and available are worn and correctly adjusted;
- (ii) all wheelchairs are restrained.
- (iii) any special needs equipment (e.g. harnesses) is secured.
- (iv) loads carried inside the vehicle are adequately secured in case of the need to brake suddenly or make an emergency stop;
- (v) any load is distributed evenly throughout the vehicle. A loaded minibus handles differently from an empty one. When loaded, driving techniques should be appropriately adjusted (e.g. reduce speed, allow for extra braking distance).

6.6 Cleaning

The vehicle must be kept in reasonable condition of cleanliness inside and out; it should be cleaned inside and out at least once a week, and additional cleaning may be required at other time's e.g. during heavy usage or during adverse weather conditions.

6.7 Parking

At the end of a duty vehicles should only be parked at the designated or agreed place, and must not at any time be parked in such a way as to cause obstruction or annoyance to others.

At any time that the vehicle is left ensure that -

- it is in gear (1st or reverse).
- the keys are removed.
- any anti-theft device fitted is used.
- all doors and windows are securely locked.
- all valuables are removed; Plymouth City Council cannot be responsible for any losses of a driver's own items.

Conduct

6.8 Whilst the vehicle is in motion, the only role of the driver is to operate the vehicle in a safe manner. Regulations prevent the driver from speaking to passengers except where this can be done without distraction to the driver.

6.9 There is to be NO SMOKING in, on or under the Minibus.

6.10 At no time must the driver drive the vehicle under the influence of either alcohol or other drugs, which might impair driving ability. It should be noted that there are many "over-the-counter" medicines, which would fall within this category. Employees taking prescribed drugs should heed any warning given with the prescription. Drivers should also be aware of the time it takes for alcohol levels to reduce in the body and the possible impact this may have on early morning driving.

Planning

6.11 Where a journey is operated as a part of a contract the co-ordinating centre has the ultimate responsibility for planning the journey. On community hire the driver has the ultimate responsibility for planning the journey considering time and distance and ensuring that: -

- (i) there is an adequate number of drivers to service the journey safely (see 9.3);
- (ii) the chosen route provides for adequate stops for comfort breaks at regular intervals as prescribed by this Code.
- (iii) there are sufficient other appropriate adults on board as escorts to ensure the safety and welfare of passengers.

Driver and Escorts

6.12

- (i) drivers and escorts should ensure that emergency exits are not blocked. Care must be taken to ensure that seat arrangements are such that driver/passenger safety is not jeopardised;

6.13

- (ii) drivers and escorts should ensure that all doors are shut before starting off and only opened on arrival once the vehicle has stopped.
- (iii) the driver and escort must all ensure that all passengers are seated and wearing a seat belt and/or appropriate restraint before the vehicle moves off, whilst the vehicle is in motion and that passengers do not leave their seats until the vehicle has come to a stop.
- (iv) where the passengers have a designated pick up/set down point (e.g. Education contract), this must not be altered without prior authority from the line manager.

7. **PASSENGERS**

- 7.1 Passengers on a minibus should not exceed the number of seats provided.
- 7.2 No standing passengers may be carried in a minibus.
- 7.3 No unauthorised passengers may be carried.
- 7.4 Operators carrying wheelchair passengers should obtain a copy of the separate code of Practice on the Safety of Passengers in Wheelchairs in Buses (VSE 87/1) issued by the Department of Transport. This document also offers special guidance on the operation of a minibus fitted with the power operated lift. No driver must operate a tail lift who has not received appropriate training in its use and who has a recognised certificate (See 6.1 (vii)).
- 7.5 When carrying passengers crew buses are not to be used on motorways.
- 7.6 Children under 16 years of age are not to be carried in crew buses.

8. PASSENGER SUPERVISORS AND ESCORTS - DEFINITIONS

Passenger Supervisor

- 8.1 A designated, competent person aged 18 years or over, who is appointed to travel in the back of the vehicle on appropriate journeys to ensure adequate supervision of passengers.

Escorts

- 8.2 Competent persons aged 21 or over, employed (or appointed) to provide specific supervision of, and to assist with, passengers who have been assessed as presenting particular risks (e.g. special needs pupils, adults with physical or learning disabilities, the frail, elderly and wheelchair users).

Risk Assessment

- 8.3 Local managers, head teachers, etc., who are operating minibuses **MUST** assess the risks involved in transporting specific groups of passengers in order to decide whether an additional responsible adult needs to be present in the minibus. Headteachers, centre managers, etc., should also make themselves aware of any local or departmental policies or guidelines that may specify particular circumstances when supervisors or escorts are required (e.g. youth groups, school trips that involve long journeys, etc.). Such risk assessment must be recorded on Plymouth City Council's risk assessment recording system.
- 8.4 If the assessment (or appropriate policy and guidelines) indicates that escorts or supervisors are required the following minimum standards must be met: -

Passenger Supervisors must be aged 18 years or over;

Escorts must be:

- (i) aged 21 years or over;
- (ii) trained in emergency care;

8.5 Codes of Practice

- (i) passenger supervisors should ensure that all passengers are correctly seated and are wearing appropriate seat restraints or seat belts as provided;
- (ii) there should be a record of the name and telephone number (and address if appropriate) of all passengers, and the supervisor (and/or driver) should be furnished with this information.
- (iii) details of any special medical condition or medication regarding individual passengers (e.g. epilepsy, diabetes) should be given to supervisors by the local manager;
- (iv) Supervisors **MUST KEEP** such information as in (i) and (iii) above **CONFIDENTIAL**;

- (v) the appropriate emergency services (999) should be summoned in the event of an accident and in the event of a breakdown within the Plymouth area contact Fleet Hire on (01752) 304696 (between 0730 - 1600 Monday to Friday), or the main switchboard on 668000 outside of these times. Any use outside of the City must be agreed beforehand with Fleet Hire. Details of breakdown arrangements outside of the City will be arranged then.

Escorts: -

8.6 Escorts have very important responsibilities because they act as the link between centre and home and because they are responsible for safety of the clients in their charge. Carers of clients have great demands placed upon them, so they and the clients should be treated with the greatest of respect and consideration. Escorts should adhere to the following guidelines:

- (i) clients and carers should be greeted by name;
 - (ii) clients should not be discussed in their presence;
 - (iii) escorts should ensure that any notes from centre to carers and from carers to centre reach their destination;
 - (iv) clients should not be left on the minibus unattended;
 - (v) escorts should sit where they can prevent any client opening the door and should help them on and off the vehicle. Escorts should sit within the body of the vehicle where they can see all the clients and attend to them quickly if needed;
 - (viii) if there is a serious problem en route, help should be sought by dialling 999. If a client requires hospital treatment as a result of an accident or other incident during the journey, an ambulance should normally be called so that the escort can continue to supervise the other clients. Obviously, the carers must be notified at the earliest opportunity, and this will depend on the circumstances, e.g. whether the incident occurred in office hours, and whether the escort might reasonably delegate the task of informing the carer to another responsible adult, e.g. the police.
 - (ix) if a client is normally returned to the care of a nominated adult and that person is not available, a note should be left at the house and the client taken to a place designated by the centre manager.
- 8.7 More detailed codes of practice for escorting children with special needs and adults with physical and/or learning difficulties are available from the Area Education or Social Services office.

9. **PLANNING**

- 9.1 Planning is essential for all trips. The operator must ensure that the driver/s have assessed the journey both in terms of time and distance and location of destination and that the vehicle carries an appropriate map.
- 9.2 Route planning should ensure that comfort breaks of at least ten minutes every two hours are taken, for the benefit of the driver and the passengers.
- 9.3 Provision must be made for the number of drivers required to service the trip safely, bearing in mind safe driver's hours. Whilst one driver will have primary responsibility for the task, it is recommended that, for round trips of 120 miles or more a second trained driver shares the driving.
- 9.4 The maximum permitted number of hours in the working day, including driving supervising trips and other work e.g. classroom teaching, should not exceed eleven hours. On long trips, consideration must also be given to fatigue caused by consecutive days on duty, and appropriate rest periods provided.
- 9.5 A driver may drive for a total of 4½ hours (either continuous or accumulated) after which a break of at least 45 minutes **MUST** be taken.

Liaison

- 9.6 Consideration should be given to the possible need for liaison and communication between the minibus and the school/centre. On long trips a named contact should be available to receive messages in case of accident, illness or emergency. Provision of a mobile telephone on the minibus should be considered, especially for journeys where a breakdown might make it difficult to contact the home base (e.g. a journey, which uses sparsely populated country roads).

Carriage of Luggage

- 9.7 It is important that luggage and other equipment is stored safely and securely to avoid causing injury to occupants in the event of an accident or sudden braking. Roof racks and luggage boxes should be loaded in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations. It is recommended that equipment on a roof rack is secured under a covering sheet. This is the driver's responsibility.
- 9.8 The vehicle must not exceed its Gross Weight. If substantial amounts of luggage are necessary a trailer should be used in preference to loading it inside the vehicle or on a roof rack. However, a minibus may not draw a trailer unless there is a nearside exit accessible to every passenger. Neither may a trailer be drawn by a minibus fitted with a tail lift.

- 9.9 A car driver's licence allows the holder to drive up to 3.5 tonnes gross plus a 750-kg g.v.w. trailer. However, a tachograph is required if the weight of vehicle plus trailer exceeds 3500 kg.

Access and Egress

- 9.10 Nothing must hamper an emergency evacuation of the vehicle. For this reason there must always be a clear gangway to the exit doors, wide enough to allow a passenger to move freely.

10. MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- 10.1 Plymouth City Council Departments and grant aided organisations should be aware of their responsibilities for passengers carried in minibuses, both in terms of their statutory obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act and its associated regulations, the road Traffic Act Regulations and the general duty of care under law. In particular the civil law concept of acting in loco parentis', taken to be the standard expected of a caring parent, is already well understood by operators and activity leaders. Operators must also take into account the number of hours the driver will have worked before authorising the journey.

Action Required

- 10.2 Head teachers, centre managers, and persons responsible for minibuses need to consider what action they should take in order to comply with these guidelines. Such action might consist of: -

- (i) reviewing existing procedures;
 - (ii) the production of a document, for use within the school, centre or establishment which clearly identifies the members of staff responsible for the minibus and the routines to be observed by all whom are authorised to drive.
- 10.3 It is recommended that written procedures should cover: -
- (i) the recording of details of the person to whom main responsibility for the oversight, maintenance and care of the minibus has been delegated;
 - (ii) the keeping of an up-to-date register of staff trained and authorised to drive the minibus, together with a record of 12 monthly driving licence monitoring;
 - (iii) the keeping of an up-to-date register of trained and authorised escorts and passenger supervisors;
 - (iv) record of training drivers, escorts and passenger supervisors;
 - (v) a record of risk assessment for all uses of the minibus/vehicle but especially in regard to Special Client Groups;
 - (vi) routines for booking the use of the minibus and for ensuring that fuel, oil, tyres, water, etc. are checked regularly;
 - (vii) the circumstances in which, having assessed the potential risk, a second driver would be required;
 - (viii) the depositing of the names of drivers, escorts and passengers, destinations and expected journey times for each journey with an appropriate person (e.g. with the school office);

- (ix) the recording in a log book of details of each journey made by a minibus, to include date, time and mileage out and in, purpose of journey, name of main driver and any accompanying relief driver or escorts;
- x) Arrangements for repair of defects, a subsequent inspection and a decision made by a competent person as to when the minibus is roadworthy;
- (xi) procedure for reporting accidents. After the accident the vehicle must be inspected before further use.

APPENDIX A

NOTES

1. The following are acceptable to Plymouth City Council as a "Recognised Qualification":

EITHER

a) A holder of a PCV Licence obtained by passing the PCV Driving Test (not by "grandfather's rights").

OR

b) Written proof of satisfactory completion of a Plymouth City Council approved Minibus Driver Safety Course incorporating administration, planning, vehicle checks, legal responsibilities of vehicle use, hazard perception, practical instructions plus a written assessment of practical driving skills.

AND

Hold a Devon County Council or Plymouth City Council Minibus Certificate of Competence.

2. An "Approved Experienced Driver" is one who satisfies the criteria in Note 1 above.

3. Plymouth City Council approved "Minibus Driver Safety Course" - such courses are offered by:

a) Devon Driver's Centre, West Point, Clyst St Mary, Exeter (01392 444773).

b) BSM Quality Driver Training, 81-87 Hartfield Road, London, SW19 3TJ (0181 545 1350).

Certificates awarded from other sources should be checked with the Hire Fleet Division to ascertain whether they are acceptable. A PCV Driving Test pass exempts the holder from any such course.

Use the following questions to give you guidance in preparing yourself, other people and the vehicle for the journey.

Much of this preparation needs to be completed well in advance of the journey date.

If you answer **No** to any of the following you should consider taking action prior to journey commencing.

Section 1 - STAFF

	Yes	No
1 Have you and the drivers you have selected, been tested for skills competence?		
2 Have you and your chosen drivers participated in a minibus training course?		
3 Are you and your drivers free from work commitments before the journey? <small>(Note: you should find a balance between the amount of driving time involved, the length and difficulty of the journey, and the duties expected of the individual other than the driving required).</small>		
4 If you are to undertake both outward and homeward journeys, are you free from commitments in between?		
5 Do you (and the other drivers) have experience of the type of driving environment that will be encountered during this journey?		
6 Depending on overall journey time, and times of day travelled, have you selected enough drivers to make this journey?		

Section 2 – THE ROUTE

	Yes	No
7 If the journey time is over two hours (one way), have rest/refreshment stops been planned into the route? PCC recommends a break every two hours.		
8 Whilst taking account of the need for (7), has a route been planned that avoids, as far as possible, driving through demanding areas like city centres?		
9 Especially if using busy travel routes, do you intend to consult sources of travel information (such as the AA) before departure?		

Section 3 – TIME

	Yes	No
10 Have you ensured that the stop times are of reasonable length and are accounted for in the overall estimated journey time (ETD and ETA)?		
11 If the route must incorporate city/town centres, have you ensured that travel times in these areas do not coincide with peak traffic (rush) hours?		
12 Has the estimated journey time taken account of the different types of road on which you may be driving – eg: slow rural, busy urban etc.?		
13 Has the estimated journey time taken account of seasonal factors that may effect speed and increase driver stress and fatigue: foul weather or darkness? <small>(Note: the above factors may affect the number of other drivers you may wish to take with you and rest periods).</small>		

Section 4 – PASSENGERS

	Yes	No
14 If required, have you gained parental/guardian consent for passengers?		
15 Has consideration been given to passengers with special travel needs?		
16 Have you checked for passengers with medical needs that may be affected by your estimated journey time, or would be affected if there were delays?		
17 Are you and your drivers familiar with procedures for the safe loading and unloading of passengers on the carriageway – should it be necessary?		
18 Are you and/or your drivers familiar with First Aid or Immediate Care?		
19 If it is your organisation’s policy to issue reflective vests for use by passengers (as necessary) have these been loaded for the journey?		
20 Are you and your drivers familiar with the location and operation of the emergency exits on the vehicle?		

Section 5 – EQUIPMENT

	Yes	No
21 Has equipment been loaded safely and securely, so as to remove the risk of injuring passengers in a sudden stop or crash?		
22 Has the equipment been stored to help balance the vehicle?		
23 If flammable items are being carried – eg: camping gas – has this been stored away from the passengers?		
24 Has equipment been stored in such a way as to NOT block either emergency exits or gangways?		
25 Have you ensured that the weight of the proposed equipment will not exceed the recommended capacity of the vehicle; it's roof rack, or any vehicle-trailer combination?		

Section 6 – LEGAL FACTORS

	Yes	No
26 Is the necessary insurance in place to cover the driver, passengers, vehicle (and third parties) for this journey and activities?		
27 Have you ensured that there are no restrictions on use, imposed by either your insurers or the vehicle owners, which may be pertinent to this journey?		
28 Are you and your drivers aware of your duties and obligations as regards Road Traffic Law and the Highway Code?		
29 Is your licence, and that of your chosen drivers, valid for this vehicle? Ensure the licences for all drivers are carried during the journey).		

Section 7 – GENERAL PREPARATION

	Yes	No
30 If it is your organisation's policy – and that of your insurers – to allow basic repairs to be made by drivers, have appropriate tools been provided? (For example, wheel brace, jack, torch, foot pump etc).		
31 If you have answered YES to (30), have you and your drivers been instructed in the use of the tools, and under what circumstances repairs should be attempted?		
32 Has the vehicle been maintained, recently, to a standard appropriate for this type of journey?		
33 If you intend to use a trailer with this vehicle – and you are allowed to do so by the vehicle owner – have you ensured that the trailer still allows free and efficient access and egress from the rear exit?		
34 Has the vehicle been prepared for any adverse weather conditions you are likely to experience – eg: freezing weather, snow etc.?		
35 Do you have a suitable First Aid Kit in the minibus?		
36 Do you have a suitable fire extinguisher in the minibus?		
37 Are you and your drivers familiar with the operation of the fire extinguisher, and the circumstances in which it may be used?		
38 Have any defects been reported by the last user that may prevent you from using the minibus until they have been rectified?		
39 Do you have a list of names and telephone numbers for any vehicle recovery, maintenance, windscreen/tyre replacement etc. companies used by the owner of your vehicle?		
40 Has a vehicle maintenance check been undertaken?		
41 Is there a map and marked/described route in the minibus?		
42 Is a third party aware of your journey, route, destination and travel times? (You may wish the information on the front sheet to be copied for the third party).		

MINIBUS SAFETY POLICY

Your organisation is strongly recommended to formulate a policy designed to ensure the safety of drivers and passengers on official journeys. If you have such a policy, please consult it before departure to ensure that you have complied fully with its requirements.

VEHICLE MAINTENANCE CHECK

The following items should always be checked before departure.
If any item requires attention, do so before setting off. Where you are unable to take action, the owner of the vehicle should be notified as soon as possible.

Item	Description	OK for departure
1. Oil		
2. Water		
3. Coolant		
4. Brake fluid		
5. Clutch fluid		
6. Fan belt		
7. Fuel		
8. Fuel cut-off		
9. Tyre condition		
10. Tyre pressure		
11. Lights and indicators		
12. Brake operation		
13. Horn		
14. Mirror alignment and cleanliness		
15. Wipers and washers		
16. Door locks		
17. Emergency exit		
18. Driver seat adjustment		
19. Seat belt condition		
20. First aid kit		
21. Fire extinguisher		
22. Jack and jack points		
23. Tools		
24. Roof rack couplings		
25. Tow hitch		
26. Passenger lift (where fitted)		
27. Vehicle dimensions		
28. Load capacity and distribution		

FIRST AID

1. 10 antiseptic wipes (foil packed)
2. 1 conforming disposable bandage (not less than 7.5cm wide)
3. 2 triangular bandages
4. 1 packet of 21 assorted adhesive dressings
5. 3 large sterile unmedicated ambulance dressings (not less than 15cm x 20cm)
6. 2 sterile eye pads, with attachments
7. 12 assorted safety pins
8. 1 pair of rustless, blunt-ended scissors
9. 1 pair of disposable gloves

Signature of principal driver

Completed	
Date	Time

APPENDIX C

BULLETIN

SEAT BELT REGULATIONS

The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 1996, require that a forward facing seat is fitted with seat belt for each child carried in a minibus or coach, when a group of 3 or more children are carried on a journey wholly or mainly organised for the benefit of children. For the purposes of these Regulations:

- A child is a person, who is between 3 and 15 years of age inclusive,
- A seat belt is a minimum of a lap belt,
- A seat has a minimum width of 400mm.

The Regulations apply to minibuses and coaches, whether or not privately owned or used for hire or reward.

A minibus is a motor vehicle constructed or adapted to carry more than 8, but not more than 16 seated passengers, in addition to the driver.

A coach is defined as a type of large bus (i.e. a vehicle constructed or adapted to carry more than 16 seated passengers in addition to the driver) which has a gross weight of more than 7.5 tonnes and a maximum speed exceeding 60 mph.

For all minibuses, irrespective of age and coaches first used from 1 October 1988, the Establishments unless circumstances arise where either owned or hired minibuses or coaches are used for the carriage of children.

The above is only a summary of the Regulations and if relevant to yourselves, we would suggest that you obtain the document "Minibus and Coach Seat Belts" (VSE1/96) available from the Department of Transport for detailed advice.

PLEASE NOTE: This represents the legal minimum, it is City Council policy to require 3 point seat belts, not lap belts, on all vehicles used for school or social services journeys.



<http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/>

DIRECTORATE OF DEVELOPMENT
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My Ref: Adrian Trim
Your Ref: Art/ab/g/rs/direct/231trtr.1

Approved by D.

as postmarked

Dear Supervisor

Plymouth City Council - Minibus Safety - Code of Good Practice

Following several communications with my office regarding implementation of paragraph 6.1 specifically section:

(ii) "the driving licence, which should be inspected annually by the appropriate line manager should be free from any endorsements or change of circumstances;"

I have consulted with my colleagues and agreed to the following course of action to remove existing anomalies.

1. Where an employee has transferred to the new authority holding a recognised minibus certificate and currently has points on their licence they shall be entitled to continue to drive at the discretion of their line manager or other officer as stated in 6.1 (attached)
2. From April 1st 1999 the Code of Good Practice will be implemented fully in that from that date any new points (endorsements) would remove that person from the register.
3. Obviously any cumulative points amounting to a ban or other single endorsement resulting in a ban would result in immediate removal of that driver driving on behalf of the authority.

Speeding points whether detected through camera technology fixed penalty or other means is deemed as unacceptable by the authority.

It is the responsibility of the driver to inform their line manager of any changes in circumstance of their licence. The line manager should then inform my office on the above number at the earliest opportunity. As a result of this information the driver will be removed from the register until such time that the licence once again meets the requirement in 6.1 (ii). This is normally four years for a fixed penalty and eleven years for a drink drive endorsement. After this period if they should wish to rejoin the register then the approved process for assessment will have to be undertaken.

These measures should clarify the situation and remedy existing problems. Employees should be made fully aware of the requirements, responsibilities and consequences of driving on behalf of the authority, ideally each driver should have access to and read the "Code of Good Practice" (available from this office)

Please contact me if you require further information.

Yours sincerely

ADRIAN TRIM
 Team Leader Road Safety