



MINIBUS DRIVER POLICY

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Scope of the Policy

1. The policy applies to:
 - 1.1 All minibuses and 'welfare buses' (welfare ambulance vehicles) with up to 16 passenger seats used on County Council business whether owned, hired or borrowed.
 - 1.2 All persons who it is intended should drive such a minibus (e.g. employee, parent, voluntary worker), with the exception of Fire and Rescue Service drivers currently trained to the Emergency Fire Appliance Drivers' standard.

Management of Minibuses

2. At all workplaces using minibuses, an individual must be nominated as being responsible for all the arrangements relating to their use, including maintenance and the proper upkeep of the vehicles, the maintenance of drivers records, the checks contained in paragraph 10 and ensuring drivers' assessment and re-assessment in accordance with departmental / establishment arrangements.

Driver Training

3. All drivers must hold a full Category B (car) licence, non-employees must have held this for at least two years. Employees who first obtained a Category B (car) licence after 1 January 1997 must additionally obtain Category D or D1 by passing a medical and the Passenger Carrying Vehicle (PCV) theory and practical driving tests. This also applies to all drivers with pre-1997 licences if they intend to drive a minibus anywhere

outside the UK and carry paying passengers.

4. Prior to driving a minibus on County Council activities, a person must satisfy the council's Road Safety Unit (RSU) of their competence. This can be either by achieving the required standard in an assessment in respect of the criteria agreed by the RSU with one of the Unit's approved assessors, OR by producing their driving licence to show they have passed the PCV tests as in paragraph 3.
5. Prior to driving a 'welfare bus', a person must satisfy a County Transport Services assessor of their competence, including the use of the additional safety equipment. Any establishment using its own minibus with tail-lift equipment must ensure that drivers are trained in its use.

Certificate of Competence and Permit to Drive Minibuses

6. Following the successful completion of the minibus assessment, the assessor will issue the driver a certificate of competence. The Road Safety Unit issues a permit to drive minibuses for 5 years or 'welfare buses' for 3 years (as appropriate) on County Council business. This is issued either when advised by the assessor of the successful assessment OR (for minibuses only) when the driver produces the driving licence showing full Category D or D1 entitlement as in paragraph 4.

Re-assessments

7. The competence of all drivers, including holders of full category D or D1 licences, must be re-assessed every 5 years (for minibuses) or 3 years (for 'welfare buses') against the agreed criteria by an assessor approved by the Road Safety Unit.

Approved Assessors

8. The approved assessor may be *either*
 - 8.1. An internal workplace assessor trained and certificated by the County Council's Road Safety Unit.
 - 8.2. An external driving school/organisation approved by the RSU.

Age of Drivers

9. The minimum legal age for driving minibuses is 21 years.

There is no maximum age limit, but drivers aged 70 and over must renew their Category D1 entitlement by passing the medical examination required by DVLA.

Medical Fitness and Licence Checks

10. Prior to the assessment and annually thereafter the nominated person referred to in paragraph 2 must:
 - 10.1. Be satisfied as to the medical fitness of the driver.
 - 10.2. Inspect the driver's licence to ensure it is current, has the appropriate entitlement (category D1), noting any change in the issue number since the last inspection. If there are more than 3 penalty points currently in force the Insurance Section in Corporate Finance must be consulted.
 - 10.3. Retain a copy of the driving licence on file and require notification of any changes to it (e.g. addition of penalty points).

NOTE:

The official HCC manual containing comprehensive guidance on the purchase and use of minibuses is available on the county council's web site www.hertsdirect.org/drivingadvice