

Minibus Policy



Believe, Succeed, Together

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1.0 Introduction

A minibus is a motor vehicle with between 9 and 16 passenger seats. It is described as a [Category D1 Vehicle](#) by the [Driving Vehicle Licencing Authority](#).

A minibus is longer, wider, taller and up to 3 times heavier than the weight of a car, especially when loaded with passengers. As such it: takes further to stop; has slower acceleration and less power for hills or overtaking; is more cumbersome to manoeuvre; and has more body roll, pitch and sway. In addition, the driver takes on the responsibility for the safety of more passengers than normal. Although rare, serious, sometimes fatal accidents have occurred involving minibuses.

Driving a minibus puts extra demands on the driver and requires additional skills in order to be able to handle the vehicle safely, particularly if he/she normally only drives a car, or if driving is not their main occupation.

2.0 Named Vehicle Holder

The named vehicle holder is Mr. S. Sterling.

The named vehicle holder is responsible for:

- Vehicle logbook and tax records.
- Insurance.
- MOT certificate.
- Minibus Section 19 permit. Refer to **Appendix A**.
- Service and maintenance records.
- Register of authorised drivers.

3.0 Minibus Driver

Drivers of minibuses have ultimate responsibility for traffic related matters whilst the vehicle is on the highway. This responsibility covers personal driving standards, road worthiness of the vehicle and the behaviour of persons carried as passengers.

Driving licence requirements are summarised in **Appendix B**.

4.0 Minibus Checklist

Checks must be undertaken each time the vehicle is used and should be undertaken by the driver.

A checklist is summarised in **Appendix C**.

5.0 Journey and Driving Times

It is recommended that the maximum continuous period of driving should not exceed 2 hours and should be followed by a minimum break of 10 minutes every 2 hours.

Unless lower limits are in force, the following maximum speeds must not be exceeded:

- Motorways - 70mph.
- Dual Carriageway - 60mph.
- Other Roads - 50mph.

6.0 Journeys Abroad

The regulations that govern journeys outside the UK depend upon the country or countries being visited (including those which are simply passed through) and the type of trip being undertaken. Section 19 Small Bus Permits are not valid abroad. Therefore, the driver must hold a PCV licence if any payment is made by passengers for the trip i.e. where it constitutes 'Hire and Reward'. This means that a PCV licence is required for any foreign journey where, had the journey been made in the UK alone, a Section 19 Small Bus Permit would be required.

7.0 Emergency Equipment and Procedures

Regulation 42 and Schedule 7 of the **Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986** specify that every minibus must carry a British Standard fire extinguisher of water or foam with a minimum test rating of 8A or 21B. If passengers in wheelchairs are being carried, the minibus should carry two fire extinguishers, one of which is kept in the passenger compartment. Drivers and passenger assistants should be trained in their use.

The regulations also specify that a suitable, clearly marked first aid box is kept readily available and in good condition.

The driver and passenger assistant(s) must know where the emergency equipment is kept in the vehicle and how to use it. The driver should check all the items are present before each trip. Every time an item is used the driver should inform the operator, who should ensure the item is replaced or re-filled.

Before setting off, the driver must make sure all passengers know the procedures for an emergency, such as evacuation if a fire starts, or the vehicle breaks down. This should form part of the risk assessment for the journey.

In case of emergency, as quickly and safely as possible, the driver should:

- Stop the vehicle well over to the side or on the hard shoulder.
- Get everyone out of the vehicle.
- Supervise to keep them in a safe place away from traffic.
- Phone 999.
- Only tackle a fire if it is safe to do so with the extinguisher.

Appendix A – Section 19 Permit Scheme

A section 19 permit is usually issued free of charge and is given to non-profit making bodies that run transport services which benefit the community. Section 19 permits are issued to bodies to enable them to provide transport for their own members or other people whom the organisation exists to help. The vehicle must not be used for carriage of members of the general public. It must also not be used with a view to profit, nor incidentally to an activity which is itself carried out with a view to profit. Category B and category D1 (101) (not for hire or reward) licence holders are entitled drive minibuses that are operated for hire or reward in accordance with a Section 19 permit. Apart from the hire or reward test, the same driving licence requirements as described in paragraph 9 apply.

Permits are available free, or for a small fee, from the [Traffic Commissioners](#) and designated bodies such as local authorities and various church organisations. Once a permit has been obtained, a member of staff can drive a minibus under the conditions outlined above. These permits only apply within the UK.

Appendix B - Driving Licence Requirements

Drivers who hold a full D1 (or D) PCV entitlement can drive minibuses for hire or reward.

There are, however, circumstances when a driver can drive a minibus within the UK when they hold a car (category B) licence. These circumstances vary depending on when the driver passed their car driving test. These arrangements only apply when driving the minibus in the UK not if driving abroad. If you passed your category B:

- a) (Car) driving test before 1st January 1997, you can drive a minibus that is not being used for hire or reward as these licences automatically include category D1 (101) (not for hire or reward) entitlement. This means school staff with such a licence can drive a minibus carrying up to 16 passengers with no maximum weight restriction on the vehicle. Drivers with a D1 + E (101) (not for hire or reward) entitlement can tow a trailer over 750 kg.
- b) Driving test on or after 1st January 1997, you may drive a minibus that is not being used for hire and reward if the following conditions are met:
 - You are over 21 and have held a category B licence for at least 2 years.
 - The minibus is used by a non-commercial body for social purposes.
 - You receive no payment other than the recovery of your out of pocket expenses (e.g. fuel and parking costs).
 - You provide the service on a voluntary basis.
 - The gross vehicle weight of the minibus is not more than 3.5 tonnes (or 4.25 tonnes if including any specialist equipment to carry disabled passengers).
 - You do not tow a trailer.

Appendix C – Vehicle Checklist

Vehicle Check List (TO BE COMPLETED BEFORE USE)	OK	Not OK
1. Oil and water levels are correct (to be completed before starting the vehicle)		
2. Tyre pressures, (visual inspection only) Check tyre treads for depth and walls for cuts.		
3. Mirrors are clean and unobstructed.		
4. Registration number plates and identity discs are legible and securely fixed.		
5. Doors open, close and lock properly.		
6. Wheel brace and jack located in vehicle.		
7. Fire Extinguisher / First Aid Kit.		
8. Windscreen and windows are clean and undamaged.		
9. Function of all dashboard controls.		
10. Lights, including brake lights and indicators working properly.		
11. Seats located correctly and seat belts working properly.		
12. Pressure evident on brake pedal (with engine running)		
13. Tax disc visible and in date		
14. Section 19 permit visible and in date (if applicable)		