

GUIDANCE FOR THE SAFE USE AND HIRE OF VEHICLES

Introduction

This guidance has been compiled so that any Club, Society or NUSU volunteer hiring or driving on behalf of the NUSU has the information they need. All hire vehicles should be booked through the Clubs and Societies Administrator (Transport). Details on how to do this are included in the Transport Guide along with costs. Please note that only members of clubs or societies and organisers for Freshers can book vehicles. A treasurer must sign for a vehicle several days before it is due to be taken out. NUSU hires vehicles from external companies, so there is not an endless supply of vehicles. Please plan ahead and book in advance (at least two weeks' notice is required).

DRIVER'S RESPONSIBILITY

As a driver you are responsible for and have a duty of care for the comfort and safety of your passengers as well as other road users. As such you should be fully aware of your responsibilities and what you are required to do in emergencies.

As a driver you are required to know and follow all laws and regulations as dictated by Highways England, DVSA, DVLA and any other transport authority that is applicable to the journey. You must also follow and abide by all NUSU policies and instructions. Any breach will affect your ability to be a NUSU driver.

When you drive a passenger-carrying vehicle, your job is to get your passengers to their destination safely.

- Manage your driving to give them a comfortable journey.
- Always make sure they're safe.
- Put the safety of your passengers first in all your decisions while on the road.

ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS

In the event of an accident, the driver and/or trip leader must make the accident scene as safe as possible, without putting themselves or others at further risk.

- If possible stop the vehicle in as safe a location as possible.
- Use hazard warning lights and any other safety devices supplied.
- Do not move injured passengers, unless they are in immediate danger of further injury from other vehicles or from fire or explosion.
- Call the emergency services immediately and provide them with as much information about the incident as possible.

- If the emergency services are called, the driver must stay at the scene until they arrive.
- If the accident is damage only and no one is injured, the driver must ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy before continuing the journey. The incident must then be reported to the Club and Society Administrator (Transport) as soon as possible and a motor incident report form completed and handed in on return.
- If there is any injury or the names of people involved are not exchanged the driver must report the accident to the Police or if it is not possible at the time then within 24 hours.
- A motor accident form must be filled in as soon as possible so that the incident can be reported to our Insurance Company. This form can be found on the website under club or society documents. Each driver that registers will be emailed with a motor accident form.

Emergency evacuations

In the event of an accident or other incident such as a fire, an emergency evacuation should be conducted. The best way to evacuate the vehicle will depend upon the nature of the incident, the passenger group and the type of minibus etc. Therefore, the driver and group leaders will need to exercise their judgment at the scene.

Passengers should exit the vehicle as they would normally, if possible, and move to a safe location as far from the scene as possible. If passengers need assistance to exit the vehicle the group leaders should provide what help is necessary. If it is necessary to use the rear exit, care must be taken against any approaching traffic.

Breakdown procedures

In the event of a vehicle breakdown:

The driver should move the vehicle off the carriageway (onto the hard shoulder on a motorway) and switch on the hazard warning lights. If this is not possible it should be moved as far away from moving traffic as possible. If a warning triangle is used, it should be placed on the same side of the road at least 45 metres from the minibus. Great care must be taken when placing and retrieving a warning triangle, and they must never be used on motorways.

All passengers should be moved out of the nearside of the vehicle and as far away from it and other traffic as possible. No one should stand between the vehicle and oncoming traffic. On motorways or other busy roads passengers should be taken onto the embankment or grass margin and as far from the traffic as is practicable. All passengers should be kept together in one group.

In some circumstances it may be safer to leave the passengers in the vehicle. For example, if there is no safe waiting area. In this case you should move all passengers to the front of the bus, in case of rear collision. The driver and group leaders must assess the situation and decide what the best course of action is.

Contact should be made with the police and/or breakdown service, with accurate information given on the vehicles location. If the breakdown occurs on a motorway it is better to use the roadside emergency telephone as this will enable the police to pinpoint the vehicles location. The nearest emergency telephone is indicated by arrows and numbers on small marker posts at the edge of the hard shoulder.

Use the procedures advised by the hire company first (paperwork in vehicle)

AND IF NEEDED

Contact our insurers QBE on their Freephone helpline: (0800) 389 1708

(They can arrange transport to your destination if your vehicle is immobile and the rental company can't. If the vehicle needs to be exchanged for another then please follow the instruction on how to change the insurance details.

Drivers- what to do in the event of an accident:

- Do not admit liability
- Do not apologise
- Do not offer any payment
- Insurance details are:

INSURANCE DETAILS: Endsleigh Insurance (Brokers) Ltd, Hadley House, Shurdington Road, Cheltenham Gloucestershire, GL51 4UE

POLICY NUMBER: M0000293MBPZ

You are obliged by law to give any person affected by the incident **YOUR** details and to also pass on the following name and number: Conor Munro-O'Brien (Club and Societies Administrator) 0191239 3992 as the NUSU contact in regards to Insurance claims.

In the event of an incident including breakdown, accident, break-in or glass claims etc:

Call the **QBE 24 hour freephone helpline (0800) 389 1708**

They can also arrange transport to your destination if your vehicle is immobile.

Remember! Record all details of the accident

Other vehicle involved:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Type of vehicle• Registration Number• Name of driver• Address | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Telephone number• Insurance Details• Brief details of damage• Their Policy Number |
|--|--|

When and Where:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Date• Time• Visibility• Road Conditions | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weather Conditions• Speed Limits• Location/ Place• Did the Police attend? |
|--|--|

Witness:

- Name
- Telephone number

Email the Club and society Administrator for Transport (transportadmin.union@ncl.ac.uk) **immediately** in the event of any incidents, including the details of the vehicle ('s) involved, the driver's name and a brief description of the event.

A **motor incident form** then needs to be completed ASAP and returned to the activities office. There is a copy of the motor incident form on the website under club or society documents in the transport section to be downloaded in the event of an accident. This has also been emailed to all drivers upon registration.

(The Union expects to be informed of all incidents and damage's to vehicles by the STUDENTS involved first and not from the Rental Company or third parties involved. If this doesn't happen then the club/society's privilege of hiring vehicles through NUSU will be reviewed due to lack of trust in the responsibility of the club/society in question.)

HOW TO CHANGE THE INSURANCE DETAILS

If for any reason the you need to change the vehicle on the insurance or you know that you are going to be later then please notify us (or the hire company/insurance company if it is the weekend or an evening) as it is illegal to drive uninsured and we will need to extend the length or amend the vehicle registration on the insurance to cover the vehicle.

To extend the insurance or make a change to the vehicle registration, contact the Clubs and Societies Administrator (Transport) on 01912393992 or at transportadmin.union@ncl.ac.uk.

To contact the insurance company to extend insurance or make a change to the vehicle registration during out of office hours, email studentschemes@endsleigh.co.uk referencing the order reference number and policy number (both located on the Temporary Additional Vehicle cover information sheet), new vehicle registration or new finish time and copy transportadmin.union@ncl.ac.uk into the email. Please only do this if I am unable to extend the insurance for you i.e. after 5pm or at a weekend.

HIRE DETAILS

Our vehicles are hired from the following companies:

Arnold Clark
Portobello Way
Birtley
Chester Le Street
DH3 2SN
Tel: 0191 644 7329

Ashton Garage
The Old Bus Depot
Hadrian Road
Wallsend
NE28 6HH
Tel: 0191 2343309

NORTUMBRIA CARS
Waterside
Longrigg
Swalwell
Newcastle
NE16 3AW
Tel: 0191 4883176

All vehicles are booked in 24 hour blocks. Please see the transport guide for up to date opening times, costs and hire company optional requirements.

FUEL

These hire companies run a fuel to fuel policy. Please check the fuel level and fill the fuel tank back to the original amount before returning the vehicle. (It is more expensive for the companies to fill the tank when you return them and you will be charged).

CHARGES

When a driver registers to drive for the Students' Union we will calculate a total excess amount depending on age, driving experience and licence. If an accident occurs there will be a commitment for the amount of the excess made immediately on your account until the insurance has been sorted.

COLLECTING KEYS AND PERMITS

A weekly email will be sent to the contact email with that week's bookings. The day before your hire your insurance documents will be emailed to the contact for the booking before receiving this document you are not insured to drive. Once you have the insurance, take it to the relevant vehicle hire company and you will be issued with keys.

If hiring a mini bus then a club/society will need to collect a mini bus permit from the activities office, a deposit of £15 will be required for the permit. The disc must be fixed to the inside of the windscreen so that it can be easily seen from the outside, without obstructing the driver's view. Discs should be returned to the Activities Centre after each hire period and the £15 deposit will be returned. If a club regularly hires minibuses then a permit can be held for the duration of the year, but must be returned. It is an offence not to display the disc at all times.

ROAD WORTHINESS OF THE VEHICLE

It is the drivers responsibility to check the hired vehicle ('s) very carefully on pickup.

Before taking over responsibility for any vehicle, all drivers must carry out the pre-journey checks from the following list, or satisfy themselves that such checks have already been carried out by the operator prior to handing over the vehicle. The pre-journey checks must also be carried out at least **daily** whilst the vehicle is in use. As the driver you are wholly responsible for accepting the vehicle so if for any reason you are not happy with any aspect of the vehicle ask the rental company to either fix or replace the vehicle.

- Brakes and steering operate correctly.
- There is an adequate supply of water in the windscreen wash reservoir and that windscreen wash and wipers function correctly.
- There are correct fluid levels in the hydraulic systems, particularly the braking system and the engine oil level is correct.
- There is an adequately stocked first aid kit; any items used from this kit should be replaced without delay.
- There is a vehicle fire extinguisher mounted in an easily accessible position.
- All windows are clean in order to ensure good all round visibility.
- Lights, including brake lights and indicators are clean and working.
- All doors open and close properly.
- Mirrors are correctly adjusted, clean, undamaged and unobstructed.
- Seat belts, where fitted, are undamaged and working properly.
- Tyres are inflated to the correct pressure and are free of dangerous cuts or cracks. Tread depth is at least 1.6mm and all wheel nuts are tight.
- A spare wheel is carried and is also in good condition and correctly inflated.

Make sure to make a note of any scratches, dings, dents or scuffs, no matter how small and make sure these are noted on the rental agreement or you may be blamed for the damage. Don't forget to check the interior as well including, spare wheel and tools.

THE LOADING OF VEHICLES

The number of people and the weight of luggage carried must not exceed the maximum limits specified by the vehicle manufacturer. If a large amount of luggage is to be carried it may be necessary to reduce the number of passengers in order to remain with the maximum loading limits. All luggage that may shift due to movement of the vehicle must be safely secured. Luggage of any kind must never be stored in gangways or in front of doors etc. If roof racks are used they must comply with the guidance given by the manufacturer of the vehicle.

Note: The use of roof racks is not recommended as this not only alters the height of the vehicle but also the centre of gravity. It may also create additional manual handling problems during loading and unloading. The use of a second vehicle is a much safer option.

THE TOWING OF TRAILERS

The towing of trailers etc with any vehicle hired through NUSU is strictly prohibited. Our insurance policy does not cover this activity and officers of Clubs/Societies should never allow towing of any description.

JOURNEY PLANNING AND DRIVING TIMES

A planned journey reduces the risk of driver fatigue and is more efficient, saving time, stress and money. Trip organisers and drivers should ensure that each journey is planned in advance in terms of its time and distance. A suitable route should include places for rest, refreshment, comfort breaks and re-fuelling if necessary. Drivers should check information on road works and weather conditions that may affect their route, before they set out.

Also keep in mind when planning your route the height and weight of your hire vehicle and if you will be travelling on any toll roads or not, if you know you will be, see if you can pay in advance so as to avoid unneeded penalty charges.

Bear in mind that non-professional drivers are likely to find driving more stressful than professionals, especially if they only drive vehicles occasionally.

Do not agree to drive unless you are fit i.e. free from illness, medication that may cause drowsiness and alcohol. If you are in any doubt as to your fitness to drive you should seek the advice of a Doctor or contact Newcastle Occupational Health.

Tiredness of the driver has often been a significant factor in accidents involving minibuses. The presence of a second driver should always be considered both on the account of possible incapacity of the first driver and also because of tiredness.

It is recommend that after 2 hours driving you take at least a 15mini break or after 4 hours 30 minutes of driving you take minimum break of at least 45 minutes for rest and refreshment.

CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL

It is an absolute rule that a driver does not consume any alcohol during or in the period before driving on any journey. Since blood alcohol levels should be zero during all driving activities, care should be exercised if consuming alcohol even on the previous day. Alcohol must never be consumed in the 8 hour period prior to driving.

Alcohol must also never be consumed by any passengers whilst the vehicle is in transit.

SPEED LIMITS

All speed limits must be complied with. The relevant limits are:

	For minibuses
Motorways	60 mph
Dual Carriageways	60 mph
Other roads where a lower limit is not signposted	50 mph

REMINDERS

- Please remember that speed limits do apply and so do not drive at excessive speeds – you will be personally responsible for any subsequent fine.
- Seatbelts must be worn at all times.
- Leave all gangways and doors clear so people can exit the vehicle safely.
- **It is against NUSU Policy to consume alcohol on any vehicle insured by NUSU, regardless of who is driving.**
- Please return the vehicle in the state it was in when you picked it up. This means that any litter must be removed and if the bus is dirty, clean both inside and out. Spare petrol cans are for emergencies only, if used fill them back up or you will lose your deposit.
- Please report any damages to the relevant hire company and the Finance, Club and Societies Administrator (Transport) in the Activities Centre.
- The fuel tank of your vehicle should be full at both point of collection and point of return.

Please remember to register your trip on the Clubs and Societies database at least one week before you leave.

EQUIPMENT AND PERSONAL ITEMS

Any personal equipment left in an unattended vehicle is not covered by insurance. Hence, if it is stolen the person responsible for the equipment will have to pay for its replacement. It should also be pointed out that leaving personal items in an unattended vehicle is also tempting thieves and if the vehicle is damaged as a result of being broken into the Club or Society using the minibus will again have to incur these costs.

DOCUMENTS TO BE CARRIED BY DRIVERS

Drivers should carry the following documents at all times:

- Their own driving licence.
- Details of insurance.
- Section 19 small bus permit (for minibuses)

- A copy of this code should also be kept in a durable folder and placed in a secure position accessible within each vehicle.

USE OF PRIVATE VEHICLES

Many Clubs and Societies will, at some time use private vehicles during their activities.

When using private vehicles the Club/Society must ensure the following:

- The vehicle has all the necessary insurance, tax, mot and service certificates and is road worthy.
- The relevant insurance company has been informed and is happy for the vehicle to be used for your Club or Society activities.
- Only licenced drivers who are insured to use that particular vehicle are allowed to drive.
- Trips forms are still submitted on the club and society database for all trips.
- All relevant advice and procedures given in the vehicle guidance (see above) should be implemented into the use of private vehicles. This includes for example, procedures on accidents, breakdowns, driving hours and driver fitness etc.