

FLEET  
MANAGEMENT



# Safe Vehicle Guide



## 1.0 Vehicle Responsibility

Drivers are responsible for ensuring that the vehicle being driven is safe to use on the road and meets all legal requirements. This is regardless of ownership. Any vehicle that is deemed unfit for purpose should not be used until such time that all necessary inspections and repairs have been completed.

### Pre-drive vehicle checks

A common cause of vehicle breakdowns is due to neglect. Daily pre-drive checks are a simple and effective way to spot potentially dangerous issues before the vehicle is used. As a driver you should consider whether the vehicle is suitable for the work task i.e. if carrying passengers, is there a seatbelt for each occupant? If a problem is found during the check, it should be reported to the fleet manager immediately. Remember, these preventative checks are simple and less time-consuming than the breakdown which may follow if they are not done.

## 2.0 Pre-drive Checks

**Tyres:** undamaged (no cuts or bulges), correct pressure and have enough tread depth all around.

**Vehicle Body:** inspect for signs of damage or loose vehicle body panels. Drivers should ensure that the boot and bonnet are closed properly.

**Fluid Level:** oil, coolant and windscreen wash levels are correct (check when cold).

**Fuel:** ensure that the correct type of fuel is used and that the fuel cap is closed and secure at all times.

**Brakes:** make sure the parking brake is on properly when parked and before exiting the vehicle at any time.

**Lights & Indicators:** clean not damaged and working correctly. Drivers should ensure the vehicle windscreen and windows are clean and not damaged. No items should be attached that impede on driver vision.

**Mirrors:** it is the responsibility of the driver to ensure that mirrors are clean and correctly positioned for your maximum safe vision.

**Documentation:** all the legally required documentation should be displayed on the windscreen of the vehicle at all times (i.e. current WOF, COF, RUC and Valid License).

**Washers & Wipers:** ensure these are working correctly.

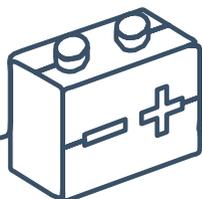
**Dashboard:** look at the dashboard when you start the car and check which warning lights illuminate. If you are unfamiliar with the vehicle, check the handbook to ensure you know what the different lights symbolize.

**Doors:** make sure that all the vehicles doors are closed properly before you commence on your journey.

**Seat Position:** Adjust the driver's seat to a position that is comfortable for you. You should be able to see and reach all vehicle controls comfortably. It is important to ensure that you have a good all-round, unobstructed view at all times.

**Head restraints:** Adjust your head restraint correctly, and check that every passenger has their head restraint correctly adjusted. The top of the head restraint should be level with the top of your head and it should be as close to the back of your head as possible. Doing so protects occupants against whiplash and prevent long term injuries.

**Handbrake:** Ensure the handbrake has been applied when you stop or park the vehicle.



**Gears:** When parked ensure that vehicles are in neutral (parked for automatic vehicles).

**Safety Belt:** Safety belts should always be worn when driving. If you are carrying passengers, make sure that they are wearing theirs and that any children are properly restrained.

\*If in any doubt about how to perform these checks, refer to vehicles handbook for further assistance.

**Vehicles cleanliness:** Both windscreens and windows should be free from clutter to prevent interference with the demisting of windscreens and provide an optimal view of the road. Drivers should ensure that loose items are safely stowed away to prevent them from falling on to the floor or getting lodged under the driver's pedals.

**Tyres:** Driver's should avoid hitting tyres against kerbs as this may weaken the tyre and damage your wheels or wheel tracking. Excessive speed, braking or acceleration can contribute to tyre wear. If tyres are not maintained at the manufacturer's recommended pressures, they can be prone to wear more quickly.

Tyres should be checked regularly and if you have any concerns then you should get these checked by an authorised tyre dealer.

### Safety equipment

The following items should be kept in a place that is easy and quick to access in an emergency or breakdown:

- Warning Triangle
- First aid kit (for driver)
- Torch
- High visibility jacket

### Securing Loads

It is illegal and dangerous to drive a vehicle that is overloaded or has an unsecure load. Drivers are responsible for ensuring that any load being carried is safe and secure. Your employer is responsible for providing and developing clear procedures and systems of work to help assist you with this.

### General considerations

- Do not exceed your vehicles maximum permissible weight. This weight is based on your vehicles tyre capability, suspension etc.
- Drivers should take caution as handling and performance can be impacted by the extra load. Stopping distances are also likely to increase.
- Make sure all items are securely fastened to prevent them from sliding around. Braking and turning can cause items to fall off and roll around which can be both distracting and very dangerous.
- Keep larger/heavier items low down in the vehicle. Bigger items should be placed first with smaller items packed around the larger items to help keep the centre of gravity lower and minimise the impact on overall handling.
- Avoid packing items above the backseat line so that vision out of the back window is not obstructed.

### Towing and trailers

Only use a trailer if you have been trained to drive with one. Make sure you know how to connect the trailer, including the electrical connections. Ensure that the vehicle is not over-loaded, and weight is evenly distributed and securely covered. Cars towing trailers are subject to lower speed limits.

### Vehicle security

There are a few simple steps you can take as a driver to safeguard your vehicle. To prevent your vehicle being stolen or broken into:

- Never leave your vehicle unattended while the engine is running.
- Close all windows fully.
- Lock the vehicle. Even when leaving it for a couple of minutes i.e. paying for fuel.
- Never leave work documents, equipment or personal items on view inside of the vehicle.
- Use attended or secure vehicle parking areas.

### Key Security

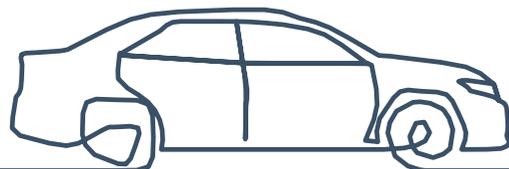
Always keep the keys of your vehicle safe when they are not in use:

- Out of sight
- In a secure place
- Out of reach of children
- Away from windows and doors
- Do not leave them on a desk in an open office area, especially where there is public access.
- Never display the vehicle registration number on the key ring.
- Always take and keep the keys with you when you leave the driver's seat.

### Electric Vehicles

Electric vehicles are quiet and can be hard to hear, even at top speed. This poses a danger to pedestrians as they may not hear the car coming. If you are the driver of an electric vehicle you must be constantly aware of this issue while driving in populated areas.

Electric vehicles have very powerful motors to power them. Drivers should take caution when moving from a stationary position because the vehicle accelerates faster and has more torque than petrol or diesel-powered vehicles.



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