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Driving at Work

WEB VERSION

Occupational Health and Safety
Service
HSD151M (rev 3)



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

Driving at Work

What is 'safety competence'?

Health and safety competence is the combination of knowledge, skills and practical experience that a person has to have to be able to do a particular task safely. This includes not only routine tasks but also the unexpected situations and changes. Coping with these competently requires understanding and flexibility.

Duties of employers

At recruitment and selection the University should have effective checks to ensure that everyone (including managers) has the relevant knowledge, skills, experience and fitness to be capable of doing their jobs safely or can acquire these by doing the job under supervision or through training.

Skills and knowledge may need updating periodically in the form of refresher training.

Further training may be required if the job changes or an individual is promoted.

Individuals

A competent person should be aware of their own limitations, including personal fitness, and should not attempt work that is beyond their competence unless they are being supervised.

More specifically for driving a vehicle.

Competence to Drive a Car

The UK driving test has a theory section (knowledge) and a practical section (skills). Both must be passed to gain a licence to drive a car. The third part of competence, experience, is gained post-test. Insurance companies recognise the experience part of competence by a system of no claims discounts on car insurance: generally, the longer the claim free period (driving without incident), the greater the discount.

A licence to drive a car is not a licence to drive all classes of vehicles in the UK.

Other or further training is required to drive motorcycles or a minibus for example.

Driving at work for the University

Competence to drive a car has specific meaning in the context of work.

"Travel at Work" contains the University's Policy Statement and Guidance on managing occupational road risk. It is available on the Safety Office website (HSD031M).

Anyone who drives a vehicle while on University business is driving at work, whether the vehicle is owned by them, by the University or is on hire.

The term "driving at work" covers any journey not considered to be a routine journey to or from the usual place of work; this means that **trips between different University sites 'on business' are classed as driving at work.**

The minimum check on competence to drive University vehicles is an annual review of an individual's driving licence. However since 2015 penalty points (endorsements) are only recorded electronically.

An individual can access their record or create a licence 'check code' to share their driving record via the gov.uk website: <https://www.gov.uk/view-driving-licence>. This would also be required by a car hire company before hiring a car in the UK.

Penalty points for driving offences may show a lack of competence.

Departments may require further assessment of competence if:

- driving is a substantial part of the job;
- there is any change in fitness, such as alteration in eyesight;
- other types of vehicles are driven e.g. minibuses, tractors, quad bikes;
- driving is off-road;
- driving is in another country, particularly in locations where defensive driving is a valuable skill;
- knowledge and skills are being updated; or
- a new vehicle is acquired.

The methods used for assessment of competence will range from asking questions to training by external trainers

The individual

You should only drive vehicles when you are competent to do so, unless you are undergoing training.

Be aware of your own personal fitness to drive, for example

- Are you tired?
- Do you need to wear glasses for driving?
- Have you had your eyes tested recently (within 2-3 years)?
- Are you under the influence of alcohol or drugs that may impair your driving skills?

Avoid distractions while driving

- Switch off your mobile phone
- Do not eat or drink while driving

A full list of the responsibilities of University employees is given in section 5 of Travel at Work.

References

Travel at Work
HSD031M

ROSPA website

www.dvla.gov.uk/welcome.htm

Occupational Road Safety Alliance
www.orsa.org.uk

Competent and Safe
HSD154M

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