



**Scottish  
Ambulance  
Service**

Working in Partnership with Universities



# **HS 039A Safe Driver and Driving Standards**

## **Version 1**

*Should be read in conjunction with HS 039 Management of Occupational Road Risk Policy, HS 039B Safe Vehicle Standard and HS 039C Safe Journey*

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## 1.0 Standards

This document should be read in conjunction with the Management of Occupational Road Risk Policy and associated documents. It will be made available on the Scottish Ambulance Service Intranet @SAS and should be read by any member of staff who drives on work-related activities.

Staff members should use this document to ensure compliance with Service policies and guidance.

Driving for work is one of the most dangerous things workers will do. Health and Safety law applies to work activities on the road in the same way as it does with working on a fixed site. The law applies to both company and grey fleet vehicles. A grey fleet vehicle is owned and driven by a worker for business purposes. Vehicles used under cash allowance schemes are grey fleet too.

Commuting to work is not generally classified as driving for work, except where someone's journey starts from their home, and they are travelling to a work location that is not their normal place of work. Health and safety law does not apply to commuting.

As part of our health and safety arrangements, we consider the main areas of risk including the driver or rider of the vehicle and the journey.

This section of the Management of Occupational Road Risk Policy focusses on the Safe Driver and Driving standards expected.

## 2.0 Driving Licence Check

The employee (any Service employee who drives on Service business including those driving own vehicles) is required to present their driving licence and licence check code for inspection every 12 months. If it is identified that the licence holder has accumulated 9 penalty points or more between validation checks, then this will activate a 6 monthly check process for these individuals. With the removal of the driving licence paper counterpart, employees MUST agree to comply with any mandate, as required by the Service, which provides the authority for the Service to check individual licence validity with the DVLA.

As per Road Traffic Legislation, it is the drivers' responsibility to ensure their licence details are accurate and the licence itself can be produced upon request. It is the drivers' responsibility to ensure they inform their Line Manager immediately of any endorsements to their licence.

The requirement for licence checking is the responsibility of the employee's Line Manager, who MUST ensure that accurate recordings of checks are documented on GRS, particularly in instances when 9 penalty points have been accumulated. Continued delay and failure to produce within a 30-day period, unless mitigation has been agreed with their manager, should then be considered a breach of employment contract and referral to the Service's Disciplinary Policy.

Photo card licences have a 10-year validity period (because of the photographic facial image of the driver) and it is the driver's responsibility to ensure their licence does not lapse past this period. Section 4b on the photo card licence states the date of expiry. Failure to notify the DVLA of up-to-date information is an offence under Section 99.5 of the Road Traffic Act.

Further information and guidance on how to generate a licence check code can be found in the [Driving Licence Check](#) on the DLVA Website. (process explained in Appendix 2 (Annual Driver declaration))

## 2.1 Authorisation to Drive Service Vehicles

Staff are responsible for ensuring that they have a valid driving licence for the category of vehicle that they are required to drive. Staff should keep their Driving Licence and National Insurance number available for inspection at all times to conduct an online licence check via the DVLA and, where required by a manager, should produce this on request within 24 hours.

Staff should refer to Occupational Health Standards for Driving for further details for licence category requirements.

Non-operational drivers such as, but not limited to, logistics, fleet and non- operational lease car users and pool car users must adhere to the above requirements and must drive with full compliance to the Highway Code and Safe Driver eLearning module requirements as determined by the Service.

## 2.2 Enforcement Offences Categories Acceptable for Employment

The Service will only consider employment of drivers whose licences have been endorsed with up to 4 penalty points for one of the offences listed in the table below.

Code	Offence title	Point Range
<b>1</b>	<b>Careless Driving</b>	<b>3 - 6</b>
CD 10	Driving without due care and attention	
CD 20	Driving without reasonable consideration for other road users	
CD30	Driving without due care and attention or without reasonable consideration for other road users	
<b>2</b>	<b>Construction and use offences</b>	<b>3</b>
CU10	Using a vehicle with defective brakes	
CU20	Causing or likely to cause danger by reason of use of unsuitable vehicle or using a vehicle with parts or accessories (excluding brakes, steering or tyres) in a dangerous condition	
CU30	Using a vehicle with defective tyre(s)	
CU40	Using a vehicle with defective steering	
CU50	Causing likely to cause danger by reason of load or passengers	
CU80	Using a mobile phone while driving a motor vehicle	
<b>3</b>	<b>Licence Offences</b>	<b>3 - 6</b>
LC20	Driving otherwise than in accordance with a licence	
LC30	Driving after making a false declaration about fitness when applying for a licence	
LC40	Driving a vehicle having failed to notify a disability	
LC50	Driving after a licence has been revoked or refused on medical grounds	
<b>4</b>	<b>Miscellaneous Offences</b>	
MS10	Leaving a vehicle in a dangerous position	3
MS20	Unlawful pillion riding	3
MS30	Play street offences	2
MS50	Motor racing on the highway	3 - 11
MS60	Offences not covered by other codes	As Appropriate
MS70	Driving with uncorrected defective eyesight	3
MS80	Refusing to submit to an eyesight test	3

<b>5</b>	<b>Motorway Offences</b>	<b>3</b>
MW10	Contravention of special roads regulations (excluding speed limits)	
<b>6</b>	<b>Pedestrian Crossings</b>	<b>3</b>
PC10	Undefined contravention of pedestrian crossing regulations	
PC20	Contravention of pedestrian crossing regulations with moving vehicle	
PC30	Contravention of pedestrian crossing regulations with stationary vehicle	
<b>7</b>	<b>Speed Limits</b>	<b>3 - 6</b>
SP10	Exceeding goods vehicle speed limits	
SP20	Exceeding speed limit for type of vehicle (excluding goods or passenger vehicle)	
SP30	Exceeding statutory speed limit on public road	
SP40	Exceeding passenger vehicle speed limit	
SP50	Exceeding speed limit on a motorway	
<b>8</b>	<b>Traffic Direction and Signs</b>	<b>3</b>
TS10	Failing to comply with traffic light signal	
TS20	Failing to comply with double white lines	
TS30	Failing to comply with "STOP" sign	
TS40	Failing to comply direction of a constable/warden	
TS50	Failing to comply with a traffic sign (excluding stop signs, traffic lights or double white lines)	
TS60	Failing to comply with a school crossing patrol sign	
TS70	Undefined failure to comply with a traffic direction or sign	
<b>9</b>	<b>Aiding, Abetting, Counselling or Procuring</b> Offences as coded, but with 0 changed to 2, i.e. LC10 becomes LC12	
<b>10</b>	<b>Causing or Permitting</b> Offences as coded, but with the end 0 changed to 4, i.e. CU10 becomes CU14	
<b>11</b>	<b>Inciting</b> Offences as coded, but with the end 0 changed to 6 , i.e. TS10 becomes TS16	

Reference: [www.direct.gov.uk/en/Motoring/DriverLicencing/EndorsementsAndDisqualifications](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Motoring/DriverLicencing/EndorsementsAndDisqualifications)

### 2.3 Drivers Rejoining or Transferring to Service

Employees who re-join the Service, or transfer from another NHS Ambulance Service or Trust, can be re-assessed providing they meet the Service standards and requirements appropriate to their role.

### 2.4 Training by Outside Agencies

Service drivers who receive training from outside agencies, including other Ambulance Services or NHS Trusts, will be required to meet the service's driving standards appropriate to the authorisation required.

## **2.5 Administrative Records**

A driver's authorisation to drive Service vehicles should be kept on their training record. Each staff member will have their Driving Licence/driving licence summary checked at the start of their specific driving course or driving assessment. Once the staff member has commenced in their full-time department, a line manager will check and upload a valid driving licence photocard and driving licence summary onto the Global Rostering System (GRS) on an annual basis or if changes affecting a driving licence have occurred. It is the responsibility of the staff member to report any changes, driving offences and/or photo card expiry.

## **2.6 Non-service Employees Driving Service Vehicles**

In exceptional circumstances, for example major incident or pandemic, and with authorisation of the Service, anyone external to the Service e.g. a Police Officer or Fire and Rescue Service colleague, who has the relevant licence category and approved training in the relevant sized vehicle, can be permitted to drive a Service vehicle under normal road conditions where deemed necessary by a uniformed officer or operational manager.

[Regulation 51 \(Motor Vehicle Driving Licence Regs 1999\)](#) allows a constable to drive SAS vehicles on a category B car licence for the purpose of protecting life or property or similar purposes.

## **2.7 Suspension from Driving Service Vehicles**

Managers are responsible for the suspension and reinstatement of driver authorities for their staff should the situation arise.

Suspension should take place where there has been an incident involving a Service vehicle resulting in a fatality or serious injury has been sustained by any person.

These examples are not exhaustive and there may be other reasons why a manager may consider suspending an individual from driving duties.

Managers have the responsibility to ensure an adequate investigation is commenced and all Road Traffic Collision (RTC) documentation is completed accurately and within the specified time. Clarification required around what RTC documentation is and what is required from the staff member. What outcome and follow up.

Suspension should also be considered if a prosecution is being considered for an offence against the driver of the Service vehicle, this will be dependent upon the offence committed.

Following suspension of a driver, for driving concerns or issues, the matter **MUST** be referred to EPDD for a driver assessment before the authority to drive is reinstated.

Drivers employed by the Service or driving on Service business should not routinely be suspended from driving, but in all cases a reasoned judgment will be made based on the available facts, which **MUST** consider public safety.

## **3.0 Individual Driving Standards**

### **3.1 Individual Risk Assessment**

Individual risk assessments should be carried out for all those who are required to drive for business purposes and have 2 or more RTC incidents in any given 12-month period. This form can be found in HS039A Appendix 3 – Individual Risk Assessment.

The risk assessment will involve identifying all potential hazards and the risks associated with specific work-related driving activities. It will identify who may be affected and how, and the control measures which are needed to eliminate or reduce the risk to the lowest level reasonably practicable.

Line Managers must ensure that risk assessments are carried out and that they are recorded and shared with all relevant risk groups.

The following details will be recorded:

- the extent and nature of the risks
- the factors that contribute to the risk including job content and specific tasks and activities
- The safe systems of work to be followed to eliminate or reduce the risk.

These details will be communicated to the individual; the risk assessment(s) will be reviewed and updated as and when required.

### **3.2 Substance Misuse**

Driving on Service business while under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs is not permitted and is also a criminal offence., more details can be found in the [Substance Misuse Policy](#)

The Service's [Management of Employee Conduct Policy](#) will be used to inform appropriate actions which may be required to manage such a situation and formal action may be taken.

Individuals should advise their Line Manager if, at any time, they are required to take prescribed drugs that may affect their ability to drive.

### **3.3 Driver Fatigue and Concentration**

Driver fatigue is a serious but under-recognised road safety issue, resulting in many thousands of road accidents each year.

It is not possible to calculate the exact number of sleep related accidents, but research shows that driver fatigue may be a contributory factor in up to 20% of road accidents, and up to one quarter of fatal and serious accidents.

Feeling tired at the wheel can affect the driver's ability to concentrate, to correctly perceive, assess and respond to road hazards and to make safe driving decisions. It can increase reaction times as well as levels of stress and irritability.

Research confirms that drivers who fall asleep at the wheel are conscious of feeling sleepy and continue to 'fight' sleep for some time before crashes occur.

They may however have fallen asleep for a short period, say 30 seconds (in which time, at 70 mph, they will have travelled over 0.5 miles) but have no recollection of this.

Refer to the below section on drivers' hours and rest to reduce the risk of driver fatigue.

If investigating an incident where it is suspected that Fatigue has played a role, please use the [Fatigue Considerations Aid Memoire](#).

### **3.4 Drivers Hours and Rest**

Any specific legislation referring to drivers' hours applies.

Tiredness, fatigue and stress (be it from work, domestic or social circumstances) can affect safe driving.

Drivers should take account of this and not drive if they believe that they are unfit to do so.



No individual should drive for more than 2½ hours without taking a break for at least 15 minutes, where possible individuals should plan their journeys to allow for a break at or before the 2 hours point.

Consideration should be given to splitting journeys with 2 drivers or consideration of overnight accommodation for longer journeys if single crewed.

### **3.5 Consumption of Food & Drink in Service Vehicles**

The consumption of food and drink within a Service vehicle is strictly prohibited whilst that vehicle is in motion (with the exception of a cold drink from a suitable self-contained vessel by the attendant).

Food and drink must not be consumed in any patient bearing area of a Service vehicle at any time.

The consumption of food and drink in non-patient bearing areas whilst stationary is permitted, although the vehicle should be discretely parked away from public view as far as is reasonably possible. Strong smelling food should be routinely avoided for the comfort of patients and colleagues.

### **3.6 Smoking & Vaping**

Smoking or vaping is not allowed in any vehicle owned, leased or hired by the Service. In addition, vehicle owners who utilise their private vehicles for business, transport of patients or equipment will not be permitted to smoke or allow passengers to smoke in the vehicle.

Employees will also not be permitted to smoke whilst in their own vehicle on Service premises.

See Service [No Smoking Policy](#).

### **3.7 Using Mobile Phones, Handheld Devices & Removable Satellite Navigations Systems**

Regulation 110 of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) (Amendment) Regulation 2024 contains some changes with regards to “press to talk mode”.

The change to the regulation allows drivers of Emergency Service vehicles who are responding to an Emergency situation to operate “press to talk mode” on a device to communicate through existing Airwave Tetra and Emergency Service Network (ESN) devices. This must only be used where it is essential to receive or give information about a developing situation. This exemption will only apply to use in press to talk mode, any other use of the devices ie changing channels or using other devices without the press to talk functionality while driving would contravene the prohibition and be subject to prosecution.

The use of a hand-held mobile phones or other devices (except detailed as above) whilst driving is illegal and should not be attempted. There is compelling evidence to show that the use of a hands-free mobile phone or device can significantly distract a driver.

The Service strongly recommends that individuals do not use hands-free mobile phones or devices whilst driving and that they make use of a voicemail message that indicates that they cannot answer the phone as they may be driving.

Drivers should then stop their vehicle in a safe position, switch the engine off and ring back the caller when safe to do so, or use the hands free ‘push to talk’ button for the vehicle mounted radio.

When the operational or emergency precludes this action, drivers should use a hands-free phone with extreme caution and keep the conversation to a minimum.

Hands-free mobile phone devices / kits will only be provided in Service vehicles if it is justifiable for operational / Service needs. This equipment may be provided with the approval of the relevant Regional / Deputy Regional Director / Head of Department.

## 4.0 Driving

### 4.1 Wearing of Seatbelts

- Drivers and all passengers in Service vehicles are required by law to wear front seat belts if fitted and suitable. In cars and ambulances, rear seat belts must be worn if fitted.
- The law for wearing seatbelts for ambulance purposes has been amended (March 2015) to permit removal of a seat belt for ambulance personnel, travelling in the rear of the ambulance, to administer a medical or health intervention if the nature of such treatment or the medical situation of the patient dictates that it cannot be delayed.
- This seat belt exemption is not extended to passengers in PRU.
- Frontline staff who make the decision to remove their seat belt during a journey must be able to justify their decision if required.
- The decision to remove a seatbelt to facilitate clinical management or to deal with some other matter that poses a serious and imminent danger, is the responsibility of the individual following a dynamic risk assessment.
- The decision to remove the seatbelt in a moving vehicle will be made after considering the appropriateness of asking the driver to stop first.
- If the decision is made to remove a seatbelt, your lack of restraint must be communicated to the driver who must consider this fact when creating and delivering their driving plans.
- On being made aware of the clinician (or other) being unrestrained in the rear of the ambulance, the driver must adapt their driving to accommodate an unrestrained passenger, until they are informed that all passengers are once more restrained. This will often require adjustment to vehicle positioning and a reduction in speed, but any anticipated significant changes in acceleration, braking or direction must be communicated to the unrestrained passenger in plenty of time. This communication to the unrestrained passenger does not absolve the driver from having to make the necessary adjustments to their driving.
- Whilst unrestrained and where appropriate, staff must make full use of available handrails or consider lowering their centre of gravity to increase personal stability.
- When active clinical or other patient related management necessitating the removal of a seatbelt is complete, the seatbelt **MUST** be reapplied to reduce the risk of injury as soon as possible.
- Additional circumstances where a seatbelt is not legally required to be worn are very rare and would only be from the following list:
  - If you are driving a vehicle and are carrying out a manoeuvre which includes reversing
  - If you have a valid medical exemption certificate verified by the Service.
  - If your seat belt has become defective on your journey and you are on route to have it repaired.
- The responsibility for wearing a seat belt rests with each individual if over the age of 14

- It is the driver's legal responsibility to ensure that any child between the age of 12 and 13 or over 1.35 metres tall wears a seat belt, and any child under that age or height wears the appropriate child restraint. Failure to do so could result in a prosecution of the driver. Care should be taken when alighting from a vehicle that the seat belt has returned and it is not causing obstruction, or tripping hazard.
- When engaged on an emergency call that involves transportation of a child, appropriate child restraints must be used, however, front line vehicles are exempt from the child restraint legislation due to the journey being over 'a short distance for reason of unexpected necessity'. This exemption should be considered as a 'last resort' due to the obvious increased risk placed upon the patient / passenger. The Ambulance Child Restrain (ACR) must be used for infants or small children where available.
- Infant restraint - If the vehicle is fitted with an Infant Restraint device this equipment MUST be used to secure the infant whilst on route to hospital. However, an exemption MUST only be claimed when dealing with life threatening or serious injury/illness situations and not as a routine event.
- Attendant seat booster – if this is deployed and being used for the purpose of transporting a child fitted seat belt restraint must be used.
- Crews must ensure that all patients/relatives are appropriately secured. Patients who are being transported on the trolley cot must be secured using the 5-point harness/seatbelts which are attached to the trolley cot unless their condition/illness does not allow.

## 5.0 Emergency Driving Procedures

The overarching principle is the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, section 87 which permits the use of exemptions by the driver whereby the vehicle may otherwise be hindered for the purpose for which it is being used on that occasion.

The over-riding priority in all driving situations is the safety of staff, patients, passenger's and other road users.

It is essential that ambulance vehicles are driven at a speed where the vehicle can be stopped within the driver's range of vision.

Speed must be conducive to the prevailing road, weather and traffic conditions existing at the time.

The speed must be compatible with the patient's condition and that allows the attendant to safely provide the appropriate level of care.

The service cannot prescribe for all situations or circumstances that a driver may face. Therefore, it is as important for the driver to decide on the use or non- use of exemptions on a case-by-case basis.

On receipt of a call requiring an emergency driving response, the crew will immediately progress to the given location by the quickest route available using appropriate visual warnings devices, together with audible warning devices as considered necessary.

The route will normally be pre-selected by the satellite navigation system, although staff can apply local knowledge and judgement in avoiding matters such as roadworks and known traffic delays.

In cases where a preselected route is not available through an electronic system the driver will establish the most direct route using a map book. Where appropriate the attendant should provide the navigation guidance.

Except when on emergency calls, drivers are bound by the restrictions on waiting, sounding of audible warning devices and positioning on the road when stationary.

An ambulance is only exempt from such regulations if conformity would hinder its use for its intended purpose.

Where no exemption applies and the driver incurs parking fines, a fixed penalty notice and/or a summons, it will be their responsibility to address these and resolve the matter with their line manager.

All staff are reminded that they must declare all such matters.

The Service will not cover the cost of any financial penalties that are incurred in this regard.

In the interests of both safety and legal requirements, drivers should not normally use a handheld device, which is not docked in a suitable carrier mounted in the vehicle.

This includes the use of mobile phones, mobile data terminal (MDT) and navigation systems whilst driving or manoeuvring a vehicle.

The wearing of headphones or earpieces, other than those connected to an airwave radio, is not permitted when driving Service vehicles.

The domestic radio must be switched off when responding to emergency calls.

### **5.1 Emergency Warning Equipment (EWE)**

Drivers of emergency vehicles have a duty to warn other road users of their presence and intentions by exposing to those who would benefit any warning equipment – visual or audible – that is fitted to the vehicle. The public have the right to receive the warning the equipment is designed to give.

Drivers are reminded that if a safe drive is to take place, a professional judgment (risk assessment) MUST take place equally balancing safety with skill.

The use of EWE gives no right of way whatsoever and can render the driver more vulnerable. When driving an emergency vehicle in any situation, and particularly when operating EWE, you should remember that you have NO legal exemption under law to drive in any way other than safely.

Drivers of emergency vehicles have no exemption in law for driving inconsiderately, carelessly or dangerously. Full application of care and attention, with due consideration to all other road users, including pedestrians is necessary on all occasions. At all times you are obliged and have the duty of care to provide the maximum protection to other road users. When claiming legal exemptions all Emergency Warning Equipment should be activated unless there is a just cause for them not to be.

Emergency Warning Equipment should be used throughout the duration of the journey. The exception to this is on the approach to a vehicular obstruction where progress is temporarily hindered, i.e. road junction temporarily blocked by stationary vehicles, or in the presence of animals e.g. horses whereby the use of the equipment is not proportionate to the potential danger it may cause in disturbing the animals.

This is further justified by the need to significantly reduce road speeds in this situation. In these instances, audible equipment will be turned off with emergency lighting equipment remaining active. Once passage can be resumed or the hazard has passed, the audible warnings will be reactivated.

The nature of loud sirens may be intimidating, so they must be used intelligently in stationary traffic when there is a risk of threatening or forcing other vehicles to commit a potentially dangerous manoeuvre that they may not have attempted otherwise. In this case deactivation of the EWE must be considered. Intelligent use of sirens may also be considered when emergency warning lights activated following dynamic risk assessment for the situation being encountered and where sirens would not have helped to warn or inform others.

However, if there is any 'reasonable expectation' of the presence of others, who would benefit from the exposure to the warning given by sirens, then audible equipment should be utilised. For example, a busy city centre where pedestrian and road activity is present 24hrs a day.

In considering the hours of darkness element, drivers must give due consideration to the presence of fatigue in both them and any other road user and the subsequent lack of concentration this may render. Never assume that your warning will be, or has been, seen or heard by other road users.

Drivers are reminded that EWE must only be activated when being used for ambulance purposes, or for the purpose of providing a response to an emergency at the request of an NHS ambulance service, and in addition to at the scene of an emergency or to warn persons of the presence of the vehicle or a hazard on the road.

Deliberate misuse of EWE is a criminal offence and against Service policy; this could leave offenders open to prosecution or internal investigation.

The use of Emergency Warning Equipment (EWE) should be used when attending an emergency call. When considering a decision **not** to use EWE the driver should consider the following:

- Are they able to justify not using the EWE?
- Is it proportionate to the situation?
- Is it reasonable not to use EWE in the circumstances?

All drivers are reminded that they are obliged under:

- The Culpable Homicide Act 2007
- The Road Traffic Act 1988
- Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984
- The Road Safety Act 2006
- The Road Traffic Regulations 2023 (When enacted)

To afford, at all times, the maximum protection to other road users and to drive with care and consideration for other road users.

At no time must the vehicle be driven recklessly, or in a manner, or at a speed likely to cause danger to another road user (including those near to but not on the road).

The only circumstances in which these exemptions can be considered are during the initial response to an emergency call, or when the patient's condition warrants the emergency transfer to a treatment facility – ACC MUST be informed of any call that may require to be upgraded due to patients condition warranting an emergency transfer.

**The Driver must always be able to justify the need for claiming of any exemptions and the manner in which it was claimed, possibly in a court of law.**

Exemptions afforded to drivers engaged in an emergency response are:

- Stopping on clearways
- Parking within the zigzags of a pedestrian crossing
- Parking in areas controlled by double white/yellow lines/red lines
- Leaving the engine running while the vehicle is unattended
- Parking on the offside of the road during hours of darkness
- Parking on a central reservation
- Parking or driving on a cycle track
- Parking at a designated bus stop
- Double parking or parking across a dropped kerb

- Exceeding statutory speed limit.
- Treating red light as a Give Way, including light controlled crossing and temporary lights.
- Using audible warning instruments on a restricted road between 23:30 and 07:00 hrs.
- Travelling on the incorrect side of a keep left or keep right sign.
- Motorway regulations (where you need to do so to avoid or prevent an accident, or to obtain or give the help required at an accident or emergency).
- Stopping within a yellow box junction
- Entering a pedestrian precinct.
- Entering a bus lane/street may be permitted under local bylaws.

## **5.2 Audible & Visual Warnings**

The claiming of legal exemptions whilst using audible and visual warnings is always the responsibility of the driver.

Visual warnings (blue lights) and flashing headlights (wig-wags) should be used when responding to all calls requiring an emergency driving response.

Such a call can be defined as a call originating from a 999 call; a call from another health care professional or a call appropriately authorised and made in connection with ambulance purposes.

Audible and visual warnings may also be used when conveying a patient to hospital where the patient's condition justifies their application.

The use of audible warnings is permitted throughout the 24-hour period and may be used at the driver's discretion. Wig-wags must NOT be used when lighting conditions require the use of headlights.

Drivers should ensure that audible warning devices are activated in good time to help warn or inform other road users and give them adequate time to react.

In situations where it is evident that passage cannot be safely gained through, sirens should be turned off to avoid causing other road users to feel intimidated or panicked.

Be aware that use of audible warning devices, especially at night can cause disturbance to the public. However, the most overriding decision when using them is to achieve progress and arrive safely at an incident.

Use of audible warning devices whilst en-route to hospitals may not ease the feelings or condition of a conscious patient and it will be particularly important to reassure the patient when they need to be used.

Audible and visual warnings are not to be used when routinely returning to the base station

It is always the responsibility of the driver to claim legal exemptions and be capable of justifying them in law, should the need arise.

It is normal that as a call develops, the category may change. ACC must be informed if an individual is required to drive under emergency conditions due to the deterioration of the patient. This will enable ACC to log it onto the system for any future enquiries.

Drivers are expected to drive in accordance with the information available at the time and to dynamically assess and re-assess the situation

Unless the vehicle is likely to be kept at an incident for an extended time, the blue lights, hazard warning lamps and rear red flashing lights should be kept on as a scene protection whilst stationary where deemed necessary.

Where parking and displaying hazard warning lights may be obstructed by another stationary vehicle and confusion created to other road users by the signal they can see, consideration should be given as to their ongoing use.

Service cars, and particularly Cycle Response Unit (CRU) vehicles are far less visible than ambulances, and generally do not provide the driver/rider with the same level of vision as from an ambulance cab.

Equally, such vehicles may not always be as visible to other road users, so staff must constantly bear these factors in mind when responding to emergency calls.

Further advice and guidance relating to emergency warning equipment use can be found on the Service Driver Training SharePoint page on @SAS.

### **5.3 Use of Audible Warnings at Night**

Intelligent use of sirens – if you chose not to use them this must be justified, you must use them if they would help or warn other road users including those near but not on the road.

Activation and use of the emergency audible devices - when engaged on emergency drives these must be seen as a 'request' to other road users to assist with your progress.

Should another driver not respond to this request, either intentionally or unintentionally; you must hold back and re-assess your driving plan.

At the commencement of each shift (duty) the audible warning devices MUST be checked in conjunction with the safer ambulance check.

It is the driver who holds full responsibility for the use of the emergency warning devices.

The use of audible warnings at night (23:30-07:00) is only permitted in built up areas, if the driver deems it to be beneficial or essential to the safety of the vehicle and surrounding road users.

Remember: Siren off = speed off

### **5.4 Use of Statutory Exemptions – General Principles**

Qualified drivers employed by the Service are afforded exemptions from specific sections of the road traffic legislation when their vehicle is being used for ambulance purposes.

Drivers should not, under any circumstances, take any action which may endanger other road users.

Drivers should continually carry out a dynamic risk assessment based on the Information available whilst ensuring accurate assessments are made regarding developing hazards and the formulation of driving plans.

The Road Traffic Act 1988 authorises the use of any vehicle that is being used for the purpose of providing a response to an emergency at the request of an NHS ambulance service so long as the conditions of use are met;

- (a) That the vehicle MUST primarily be used for the purpose of providing medical response to emergencies; and
- (b) When the vehicle is being driven, the driver of the vehicle has been authorised to drive the vehicle by an organisation specified in the schedule.

### **5.5 Emergency Driving Procedures**

The Service acknowledges the inherent risks associated to both general driving, but more specifically to emergency response driving. It is also recognised that technical mastery in itself is insufficient to enable the

driver to be safe and progressive; this has to be in conjunction with a sound knowledge of the Highway Code and that of road traffic law relating to the exemptions applied to emergency driving.

### 5.6 Speed Limits (ERD)

Emergency Response Drivers may claim the exemption of speed where it is safe to do so, however the standard rules of driving must still be obeyed.

- The driver must always be able to stop in the distance they can see to be clear.
- The driver must drive at a speed and in a manner that is appropriate to the prevailing road traffic and weather conditions.

Emergency Response Drivers are not entitled to drive dangerously when on duty or responding to an emergency. Members of the emergency services when responding to emergency calls owe the same duty of care to other road users as ordinary members of the public.

The Service’s guidance is that staff engaged on an emergency response, where hazards allow, may exceed a speed limit up to 20 MPH above the posted speed limit. These standards apply to all vehicles when responding on behalf of the Service when activated by ACC.

Reference <https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/road-traffic-charging>

#### Speed limits for specific vehicles

SPEED LIMITS APPLICABLE TO SAS VEHICLES WHILST UNDER NORMAL DRIVING CONDITIONS				
Vehicle	Built up area MPH	Single Carriageways MPH	Dual Carriageways MPH	Motorway MPH
Cars/motorcycles Car derived vans up to 2t (B category)	30	60	70	70
AEU / DTU (C1 category)	30	<b>50</b>	<b>60</b>	70
SORT / CBRN trucks under 7.5t (C1 category)	30	<b>50</b>	<b>60</b>	70
Mobile Control Vehicles (C1 category)	30	<b>50</b>	<b>60</b>	70
PTV	30	<b>50</b>	<b>60</b>	70
Any B or C1 vehicle towing a trailer	30	<b>50</b>	<b>60</b>	60



The above table details the maximum speed limit for Service vehicles. They apply to all roads unless signs show otherwise and the lower speed limit will always apply. See also 'Speed limited vehicles' within Section 5.

Service vehicles **MUST**, at all times, be driven at a speed compatible with safety, passenger comfort and with reasonable consideration for other road users. Service drivers are governed by the same regulations as other drivers using the road and it is only when engaged on emergency calls allocated by ACC that the legal exemption from statutory speed limits can be claimed when and where safe to do so.

**Safety must always be the over-riding priority of the driver and the safest speed for the existing circumstances must be applied at all times. The vehicle must be driven at a speed whereby the driver can accurately assess, plan and deal with all existing and developing hazards safely. It must also be used to allow others time to react to your approach and presence in a calm and considered manner.**

**Road traffic law exemptions that apply only while engaged on emergencies:**

1. Exceeding the statutory speed limit: Scottish Ambulance Service staff should comply with the following advisory limits whilst driving. These standards apply to all vehicles including A-E, PTS, PRU, and responding Managers cars.

<b>Posted statutory speed limit</b>	<b>SAS advisory maximum speed</b>
20 mph	40 mph
30 mph	50 mph
40 mph	60 mph
50 mph	70 mph
60 mph	80 mph
70 mph	90 mph

**THE SERVICE DOES NOT REQUIRE OR ENCOURAGE STAFF TO USE SPEEDS ABOVE THIS GUIDANCE AND THE DRIVER TAKES ON A MASSIVELY INCREASED PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY IF CHOOSING TO DISREGARD THIS ADVICE**

Driving at these speeds is dependent on all other road, traffic, weather and visibility conditions having been fully assessed and being in the drivers favour. It is the responsibility of the driver to dynamically risk assess and claim of the exemption to the posted speed limit and be able to justify the claiming of such exemption.

**Safety must always be the over-riding priority of the driver and the safest speed for the existing circumstances must be applied at all times. The vehicle must be driven at a speed whereby the driver can accurately assess, plan and deal with all existing and developing hazards safely. It must also be used to allow others time to react to your approach and presence in a calm and considered manner.**

Whilst an exemption from adhering to speed limits exists when engaged on emergency driving, there still remains a statutory requirement to maintain safety margins at all times, under no circumstances can an Ambulance Service vehicle be driven at a speed or in a manner which would amount to driving dangerously or carelessly.

Where instances are highlighted that indicate a vehicle has been driven at speeds over the Service's guidance regarding maximum speeds, these incidences may be investigated by the Service.

**You must be able to stop your vehicle, at any given time, in the distance you can see to be clear. No emergency is so great that it justifies an accident. It is far better to arrive late than not at all.**

## **5.7 Speed**

A vehicle being used for ambulance purposes may exceed any statutory speed limit (those governing roads and vehicles) if observance of the limit would hinder the use of the vehicle for its official purpose on that occasion.

The exemption may be claimed when travelling to an emergency or on the journey to hospital providing the patient's condition can justify use of the exemption.

The Service has issued guidance for a speed cap of a maximum of 20mph over the posted road speed limit. Further details can be found on the Driver Training SharePoint page on @SAS.

CRU cyclists may claim exception from the Highway Code mandatory 'Must Not' rules when cycling on a pavement or pedestrian area in response to an emergency call. More details can be found in the CRU handbook.

## **5.8 High Speed Driver Regulations (HSDR) (Section 19)**

The Road Traffic Regulations 2023 [when enacted] makes statutory requirements regarding the training and re-training of Emergency Service staff and managers who are equipped and trained to perform 'high speed' driving duties.

Eligible employees utilising this exemption in law will have a responsibility to ensure they comply with the provision of the Act.

High Speed driving can be defined as - any circumstance where an ambulance vehicle of any type, or covert vehicle equipped with emergency warning equipment (EWE) authorised by the Service, exceeds the speed limit and the driver utilises the statutory exemption to do so as part of their operational duties.

It might also be interpreted as a speed which is below the posted speed limit, but in excess of a speed which would normally be appropriate to the prevailing road conditions.

In order to comply with the Act, only staff who have undertaken and successfully completed the full recognised ERD programme, or equivalent, will be eligible to become a high-speed registered driver and subsequently be authorised to claim this exemption.

As from 1st January 2012 any new employee who attends the Service's ERD programme will be trained and assessed against the High-Speed Driving Regulations Codes of Practice [COP] and subject to successful completion, will be registered as a high-speed driver.

The monitoring of the individual's driving standards will be recorded during their 5 yearly driving competency review, which will be evaluated against the Codes of Practice contained within the High-Speed Driving Regulations.

Any Service driver who has been absent from a driving role for a period in excess of 6 months will be required to undertake a driving standard review relevant to their role as part of their Return To Work (RTW) process.

This includes those staff who have moved to a non-operational role but who undertake ad-hoc operational duties.

Where it is identified and evidenced that the standard of driving compromises safety for the Service driver or public, then the driving review may be terminated whilst corrective action takes place.

## **5.9 Road Traffic Act 2006 Section 19 – High Speed Driving (aka The Road Traffic Regulations**

**2023)**

NB: Emergency Services nationally are still awaiting a date of enactment of Section 19 of the Road Traffic Act. Policy Statement also known as The Road Traffic regulations 2023.

Under pending Road Traffic Law, all staff that drive on emergencies and who may claim the exemption to speed limits will have to be on a register held by the SAS.

This register will confirm that they have received the relevant training and assessment in line with the national competencies accredited by the Department for Transport.

This register will be held by the EPDD, but the responsibility for ensuring staff meet the competencies to enter or remain on the register lies with the Service Regional Directors, assisted by the EPDD.

Once section 19 is enacted in full, all staff driving on emergencies and able to claim the exemption to speed limits, must have a five yearly re-assessment of their ability against the national competencies.

Any staff who breach the 5-year assessment mark should contact the Driver Training Department. They will be 'red flagged' on the EPDD Driving Register until the assessment is carried out.

If competence is not demonstrated during Section 19 assessment, then the member of staff will be referred for update training prior to reassessment of their skills, and temporarily removed from emergency driving duties.

An assessment report will be generated and shared with the relevant operational manager. If the staff member on re-assessment still cannot demonstrate competency, they will not return to emergency driving duties and be referred to their operational manager.

Further options will be discussed by the operational manager with advice from the NDLE on a case-by-case basis. (Action plan to support staff member) Once for Scotland

### **5.10 Paramedic Response Unit (PRU) Trained Drivers**

In order to operate the PRU individuals MUST have successfully completed the full Service prescribed Emergency Response Driving (ERD) training programme in addition to the Service PRU training module.

Newly Qualified Paramedic staff MUST NOT be rostered SOLO onto a PRU until they have completed 12 months post registration preceptorship period.

For staff who are rostered on a PRU on a regular basis as part of their substantive role and have gained a minimum of 12 months emergency driving and clinical skills experience in an AEU. They will be required to be nominated to attend the SAS PRU training course by their Area Service Manager.

If a staff member is absent from a PRU role for 6 months or more they will be required to undertake a period of retraining in an PRU; this will be in addition to a general driving assessment, before being permitted to undertake PRU duties.

### **6.0 Escorting Under Emergency Response Conditions**

Emergency escorting by Service staff is not permitted under any circumstances.

No Service driver is equipped with the training and/or competencies required to provide emergency escorts.

There are no occasions that would give any Service driver authority to provide an escort, or offer mitigation as defence when challenged legally, and therefore the Service would not support any member of staff who undertakes this activity.

### **7.0 Non-emergency Driving Procedures**

In addition to Licence Checks, before a driver can be authorised for non-emergency driving, PTS Staff must:

- Successfully complete a service approved non-emergency driving course, including both practical and theoretical elements.
- Be aware that after authorisation, the driver will be subject to periodic re- authorisation as deemed necessary by legislation or the Service.
- Complete online safe driving module via TURAS Learn.

All other staff including support staff should complete the online safe driving module on TURAS Learn.

Lease Car Users, eligibility to scheme and further details of vehicle usage can be found within the Service's Business Travel Policy.

Patient Transport Staff (PTS) and other non-emergency staff are not permitted to claim any exemption afforded to emergency vehicles, other than those relating to 'stopping' and 'parking' as defined in other relevant documentation.

The circumstances must dictate that no other legal stopping/parking alternative was available, and that the exemption can be claimed safely with all due consideration to other road users. Exemptions listed below:

- Stopping on clearways
- Parking within the zigzags of a pedestrian crossing
- Parking in areas controlled by double white/yellow lines/red lines
- Leaving the engine running while the vehicle is unattended
- Parking on the offside of the road during the hours of darkness
- Parking on a central reservation
- Parking or driving on a cycle track
- Parking at a designated bus stop
- Double parking or parking across a dropped kerb

Whilst undertaking emergency response driver training there must be an emphasis on the provisions set out in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, Section 87. This section states that "no statutory provision imposing a speed limit on motor vehicles shall apply to any vehicle on an occasion when it is being used for fire and rescue authority, ambulance, or police purposes if the observance of that provision would be likely to hinder the use of the vehicle for the purpose for which it is being used on that occasion." Therefore, the training must ensure that drivers understand the conditions under which speed limits can be legally exceeded, emphasising the importance of exercising judgment and prioritising public safety while responding to emergencies. This training should also reinforce the critical balance between the necessity of rapid response and the responsibility to minimise risk to the public, ensuring that all actions are within the legal framework provided by Section 87.

## **8.0 Electric Vehicles**

With the integration of electric vehicles (EVs) into our fleet, guidance and familiarisation documents are available on @SAS [Electric Vehicles](#). It is the drivers responsibility to ensure they are familiar with the safe operation of any vehicles prior to use.

## **9.0 Education & Training Support**

The provision of such training will be determined on an individual basis. In the event of repeated minor incidents occurring (i.e. slow speed reversing incidents, mirrors being knocked off etc.), support should be provided at local level in the first instance. This should take the form of supportive counselling to ascertain the driving history of the staff member and any ongoing issues, which may be affecting them.

Where incidents occur unexpectedly or frequently in a short period of time this is often associated to changes in the driver's life or mind-set, this may include personal situations that may be distracting them whilst driving i.e. personal stress and worry over money or home life, arguments that are not settled, minor illness or injury affecting concentration or performance, or changes to the staff members eyesight etc.

Health and wellbeing support should be provided as appropriate through the normal channels. In some cases where practical ability is considered a factor it may be prudent to provide local level assistance with slow speed manoeuvres and or reversing practice etc. Where it is identified and evidenced that a Service driver or any other person utilising the Service insurance policy requires an assessment of competency to drive Service vehicles due to:

- A vehicle collision
- Supervisory intervention to raise standards
- A return to operational driving following a period of absence (>6 months)
- A transfer from another ambulance service or Trust
- Self-identification by the driver
- All drivers have a responsibility to maintain driving standards post training course
- Further guidance will be issued once Section 19 is enacted re CPD requirements (Code of Practice)

This should be documented by the operational manager and the appropriate assessment arrangements made through the driver training department, on the driver training request form. All entitlements to drive Service vehicles and attendance on driver training courses and assessments will be recorded and maintained electronically on the employees training file.

## **10.0 Negotiating Red Traffic Lights**

Drivers have discretion to regard a red traffic light as a 'Give Way' sign rather than a 'Stop' sign when 'observance would hinder the use of the vehicle for its official purpose on that occasion'.

A 'Give Way' sign has specific legal meaning and failure to comply with that meaning is in itself an offence. The sign means do not enter the major road in such a manner as to be likely to cause danger to another road user or to cause it to change speed or course.

In negotiating a red traffic signal:

- Drivers **MUST** be in a position to **GIVE WAY** to **ANY** vehicle that still has right of way in or entering the junction.
- In order to do this, **SPEED** must be significantly reduced to a slow walking pace prior to arriving at the hazard. (Max 10mph)
- No **DECISION** is to be made to enter the junction before full **VISION** has been acquired and it can be seen that it is safe to proceed.
- Drivers must **WAIT** until all other drivers and road users have stopped or slowed to allow the ambulance vehicle precedence. Service drivers must **NOT** force their way through and cause other road users to alter direction or speed.
- Particular care must be taken where the junction has multiple lanes to cross and vision is obscured by large vehicles.
- Always '**PLAN FOR THE WORST- DON'T HOPE FOR THE BEST**'. If in doubt hold back.

If a collision occurs whilst crossing a red traffic signal, responsibility may rest with the Service driver.

The degree of additional care and caution required to safely negotiate a red traffic signal cannot be overemphasised.

Drivers must remain mindful that the use of audible and visual warnings does not give an ambulance vehicle 'the right of way' — they merely seek to alert the public to its presence. Equally, having the right to claim an exemption does not mean it is safe to use it.

Drivers of emergency vehicles should be particularly mindful that despite the use of audible warning devices, drivers of other vehicles may not hear sirens etc. due to other distractions in their vehicles, such as loud noise, headphones or health problems.

### **11.0 Temporary Traffic Signals**

These have exactly the same legal standing as fixed traffic signals. You must be absolutely certain that you are able to negotiate the hazard without causing danger to any other road user, ensuring that all controlled exits are clear (eg 3-way control). Whilst operatives at roadworks may be signalling you through, it is you the driver who must be satisfied it is safe to proceed.

### **12.0 Pedestrian Crossings (All types)**

The very nature of pedestrian crossings dictates that extreme caution **MUST** be exercised at all times on the approach and during the negotiation of crossings.

Drivers **MUST** approach crossings at a slow walking pace (under 5mph), and **NOT** proceed until they are completely satisfied that any pedestrians present have observed the approaching vehicle and adopted a safe position.

Drivers must then remain vigilant to any sudden or unexpected actions by pedestrians and/or other road users as the crossing is safely negotiated.

Due consideration should also be given to the potential of disability in pedestrians and/or other road users, particularly those affecting sight and hearing.

Legally, the driver must allow precedence to any pedestrian who is on any part of the crossing, and equally must not cause danger to any other vehicle approaching or waiting at the crossing.

Service vehicles are permitted to park within the controlled area and on the crossing subject to the vehicle not remaining longer than is necessary, and/or it could not be parked effectively elsewhere.

This exemption is to allow ambulance personnel to deal with the incident when no alternative parking is available. Drivers are reminded that there is no exemption for dangerous parking.

### **13.0 Parking**

Keys must never be left in the ignition or in the vehicle when it is left unattended. The only exception is when there is a need for vehicle equipment to be powered by a running engine.

Where the incident permits, the driver must remain within sight of the vehicle whilst the keys are in it.

Vehicles should be locked when parked and unattended.

Personal issue radios, IT equipment, personal safety equipment and confidential correspondence should not be left on view in parked or unattended vehicles reducing the risk of theft.

Wherever possible, vehicles used by Service employees should be parked legally, complying with parking regulations.

However, Service vehicles may need to be parked in contravention of parking restrictions where there is an Parking on the offside of the road at night

Service drivers claiming this exemption should remember the following:

- Switch headlights off and engage sidelights
- Use hazard warnings lights if causing an obstruction

## **14.0 Use of Bus Lanes**

Service Drivers must comply with bus lanes regulations during their times of operation, although emergency vehicles responding to an emergency call and or when conveying a patient to hospital are exempt under emergency conditions under local bylaw.

Staff should check with their line manager to see if there are any local agreements or amended traffic orders allowing Service vehicles under non-emergency conditions to utilise bus lanes applicable to emergency and PTS vehicles.

Drivers should avoid using Contra-Flow Bus Lanes unless it provides the only means of access to a call. In such cases, all due care and consideration must be given to ensuring that a clear passage exists for the vehicle to reach the call without becoming 'boxed in' or a hazard to other road users.

## **15.0 Clearways**

Service vehicles on ambulance purposes are permitted to stop and park on clearways, subject to it being necessary to carry out essential duties that could not be done if the vehicle were parked elsewhere.

## **16.0 Entering a Pedestrian Precinct**

Emergency vehicles on ambulance purposes may enter a pedestrian precinct when essential to provide patient care. Always consider if alternate access or parking would be appropriate to reduce risk to other road users.

## **17.0 Motorway Regulations**

Where you need to do so in order to avoid or prevent an accident, or to obtain or give the help required at an accident scene. Full guidance can be found on appendix HS 039A Appendix 4 - Fast Roads and Multi Lane Procedure.

## **18.0 Progress through Road Works**

Roadwork areas are created to protect the safety of the workforce, their engineering equipment and to segregate the travelling public.

Although the road surface at the entry may be secure and safe, hazards may be encountered in the road further on (e.g. holes, loose surfaces, dips etc).

Ambulance vehicles will not enter or pass through coned off roadworks, even when responding to emergency calls, unless invited by contractors.

On such occasions the speed limit for the site must be adhered to and warning equipment operated.

Before entering, look for signage on the method of contacting the site safety manager/contractors before proceeding where applicable.

There is no legal definition of what would or would not constitute justification for 'claiming ambulance exemptions'. However, the following guidance is given as to what the Service would not normally consider justification:

- Attending meetings.
- Attending court or any other official engagement.
- Booking off at the end of a shift.
- Taking refreshments.
- Familiarising yourself with a new make or model of vehicle. If this is felt necessary, then the staff member should consult the Education lead for Driver Training.

- Attending a briefing unless it relates to an immediate, on-going incident such as, major or critical incidents etc and authorised by ACC.
- When 'on call' unless the staff member is driving a Service vehicle and is called out to attend an incident, such as the above, as a matter of urgency and authorised by ACC with an associated CAD reference.
- Using an ambulance vehicle for work to home or home to work journeys.
- Using your own vehicle whilst on duty or on call, for example responding to an incident.

At NO time must staff use exemptions to travel anywhere other than the scene of an emergency, other than to pick up and transport personnel/equipment to the scene. Travel to e.g. Ambulance or other agency Control Rooms is NOT a valid exemption for Ambulance vehicles.

Please note that Exemptions can only legally be claimed when ACC have allocated the incident.

## **19.0 Reversing & Manoeuvring**

### Double Resourced Vehicles

Prior to a low-speed manoeuvre, the driver must agree with a responsible assisting person (for example other ambulance staff, police officer, firefighter) a safe path for the vehicle to take.

Verbal communication of intended action should be clearly communicated to the reversing assistant before attempting manoeuvre and that they should not position themselves directly behind the reversing vehicle or in between the vehicle and an inanimate object.

They will then act as a guide and the driver must not reverse until they have checked that the area into which the vehicle is to travel is clear.

The assistant must then stand in the position outside of the vehicle from which they can best be seen and heard by the driver with the windows in the down position throughout the manoeuvre.

Verbal instructions alone are inadequate as they may be drowned out by the vehicle engine or other noise.

For added safety, assistants should wear their Hi Vis jacket/tabard whilst assisting the reversing or manoeuvring of the vehicle into position.

When the assistant's view is restricted from the front or side of the vehicle, they should take up a position towards the rear of the vehicle.

Eye contact must be maintained between the driver and assistant. Where the attendant is working with the patient and other assistance cannot be achieved.

Extreme care and cautions should be taken to complete the manoeuvring task and must be carried out no faster than walking pace.

A driver who does not obtain assistance when they could reasonably do so may be held responsible for any collision that occurs.

Where it is not possible to gain assistance, the principles shown under the single resourced vehicles section should be applied.

### Single Resourced vehicles

The vehicle must not be reversed until the driver is satisfied that the way is clear and sufficient space exists for the manoeuvre to be completed safely.

Even then particular care must be taken in case a person approaches unseen behind the vehicle.



There should be no hesitation by the Service driver in calling on other persons to assist with reversing manoeuvres.

Where necessary, the Service driver should get out of the vehicle and carry out an adequate assessment prior to the manoeuvre.

A driver who does not obtain assistance when they could reasonably do so may be held responsible for any collision that occurs.

#### Reversing during the hours of darkness

Additional caution must be exercised when reversing during the hours of darkness, and when visibility is reduced by weather and environmental factors.

All reversing manoeuvres must be carried out at low speed and where fitted the reversing alarm and/or cameras should be used.

Staff must remain mindful that reversing aides have limitations and are not a substitute for the attendant / passenger alighting from the vehicle to assist.

Discretion should be used during night periods with regard to the use of audible reversing and tail lift alarms.

### **20.0 Driving Across Soft Ground, Through Floods, Standing Water and Fords.**

Every effort must be made to avoid driving a Service vehicle across soft ground. This may well cause damage to property (playing fields etc.) and could result in the vehicle being bogged down.

When property is entered all reasonable instructions of the owner / inhabitant should be accepted and steps taken to avoid damage to premises or property consistent with the assistance to, or recovery of, the patient.

If it is necessary to negotiate prepared turf to reach a casualty, and driving over the area is likely to cause damage, staff should approach the patient on foot.

When attending public sites such as playing fields etc. you may be offered advice from bystanders as to the state of the surface.

YOU the driver are solely responsible for the safe entry and exit of the vehicle and as a result you **MUST** be entirely sure that this can be achieved before you commit

If you are unsure about the surface do not commit the vehicle until a survey has been completed. Always search for an alternative to taking / parking your vehicle on anything other than hard standing

The following information and advice is provided for all Service staff who may encounter standing water whilst driving, it includes travelling through fords and during periods of flooding.

The over-riding advice regarding driving through standing water and fords is 'do not do it if it can be avoided'.

If the driver deems the manoeuvre necessary as no other route is available, then they **MUST** complete a dynamic risk assessment prior to embarking on the manoeuvre. This **MUST** include a visual inspection of the hazard, taking into account any visible marker posts. If the driver is unsure as to the safety of the manoeuvre they should not attempt to carry it out.

Driving at speed into standing water that is more than a few centimetres deep can have dramatic effects - it could initially almost feel like driving into a brick wall with a dramatic reduction in speed and possibly loss of control. This is why it's especially important to watch your speed on roads where there might be standing water.

The mixture of speed and standing water can cause the tyres to become lifted from the road surface (aquaplaning). This feels exactly like skidding across sheet ice, with total loss of steering control. If this occurs, lift off the accelerator and keep your steering straight, when grip is resumed reduce speed with deceleration and gentle braking. Extra consideration to the possibility of aquaplaning occurring should be applied when travelling on motorways, dual carriageways or on roads around inclines or declines.

If you intend to drive through a flooded section of road or ford, your first task is to check the depth of the water. In normal vehicles you should not attempt to drive through water that is more than around 30 centimetres deep (roughly around the centre of a car wheel). Before entering the flood water, the driver should have an awareness of the potential for unsighted debris or hazards below the water surface, which may include displaced drain covers.

Take special care if the water is fast-moving - even 30 centimetres depth of fastmoving water could lift your vehicle from the road surface.

After driving through a flooded section of road or a ford, as soon as safe to do so, test your brakes (whilst still driving slowly) and be prepared to dry them off by touching the brake pedal very lightly with your left foot whilst gently accelerating.

For further guidance see [EPDD Bulletin - Driving on soft ground and through flood water and fords.](#)

## **21.0 Emission Zones**

A Low Emission Zone (LEZ) is a defined area where access by some polluting vehicles is restricted or deterred with the aim of improving air quality. Vehicles that don't meet emissions standards may face charges or restrictions within the LEZ.

The majority of all front-line emergency response and patient conveyance vehicles are LEZ compliant, however, there are a very small number of vehicles that are not compliant with LEZ emission standards, primarily remote & rural island-based vehicles that low use and subject to extended replacement cycles, with replacement scheduled in the near future.

Please note, Scottish Ambulance Service vehicles are named within the National LEZ Exemptions. This is detailed as those providing a response to an emergency at the request of the Scottish Ambulance Service Board and exercising the functions of the Scottish Ambulance Service Board.

For drivers of lease and pool vehicles, it is their responsibility to ensure their vehicle meet emissions standards for the areas where they are being driven and used.

## **22.0 Prosecutions**

Responding vehicles may be photographed exceeding the speed limit or when crossing red traffic signals.

Under such circumstances a conditional Fixed Penalty Offer or a Notice of Intended Prosecution will be sent to the vehicle's registered keeper.

- All Staff responding on emergency calls who become aware that they may have been photographed must contact ACC and request that the fact be recorded on the relevant incident log as soon as is practicable.
- Leased vehicles are registered to the Leasing Company. Subsequently, the Leasing Company will receive any Fixed Penalty Offers/Prosecution Notices. The Leasing Company will notify the Police to whom the vehicle is leased. The Police, in turn, will then re-issue the notice/offer, allowing a further 28 days to respond.
- Notices of Intended prosecution are routinely received from the Police, generally as a result of services vehicles actuating speed or red light cameras whilst en-route to emergency incidents, ACC Managers examine all Notices of Intended Prosecution and after thorough investigation will determine if an exemption from prosecution will be requested.

Exemptions will only be given if:

- The vehicle is responding to an emergency as a response vehicle, and that all the conditions within this policy have been adhered to and can be proved by the Incident log where necessary, Or
- The vehicle is being used to train staff, on an approved emergency response driver training/assessment programme, in compliance with Section 19 of the Road Safety Act 2006.

Any parking fines that are incurred during routine business, must be paid by the driver of the vehicle. No exemption is given for parking fines.

### **23.0 Incident Reporting**

All incidents involving staff driving on Service business should be reported to Line Managers and to the Service Insurance provider in accordance with Service procedures. The insurance company will then record on the service Incident Reporting system in accordance with accident reporting procedures including if staff or others involved in the accident receive injuries.

If you are injured whilst driving your own vehicle on service business, you should record on the service incident reporting system as per the accident reporting policy.

It is the responsibility of Service Drivers to advise Line Managers of any incidents involving their Service vehicle whilst being driven by third parties.

It is the responsibility of Line Managers to monitor third party incidents to assess their suitability to continue driving Service vehicles.

The Employee Assistance Programme should be promoted to staff following incidents where Line Managers consider that counselling may be beneficial.

Motor vehicle incidents will be investigated by Line Managers, Fleet Department and Health and Safety Department where injuries at work have been sustained and regular analysis of data will be undertaken by those teams to identify appropriate risk management activities required

If you are involved in an incident

- You must STOP at the scene:
- To comply with the terms of the Service's motor insurance policy, the driver should not at any time admit liability or discuss the cause of the accident.
- If someone is injured, telephone for an ambulance and the police, giving an accurate location
- If no-one is injured but the road is blocked, or you need assistance, telephone the police
- Obtain the name and address of any witnesses to the collision – this will assist you later
- Give your own, and the vehicle owner's name and address. If possible, you should also provide your insurance details at the scene of the accident. Be prepared to provide this information to anyone who has reasonable grounds for asking.
- Keep a note of registration numbers and details of other people involved, including witnesses, and bring them to the attention of your insurance company and the police, if they attend
- Make sure that you or anyone else at the scene are not creating an unnecessary hazard
- Make and keep notes about how the accident happened while the events are still fresh in your mind
- If you are asked by a police officer to produce any driving documents at a police station, please do so within the timeframe advised
- If you have been asked to leave the scene without obtaining full details of the other parties involved, further information will be made available from the police as soon as the initial enquiries are completed. If you do not give your name and address at the time to any person who has reasonable grounds to ask, you must report the accident to the police as soon as practicable, and in any case within 24 hours. Remember to take your driving documents with you.