



BM Ambulance Service Ltd

Drivers Handbook



Delivering Excellence, Committed to Care



Notes to recipients of the BM Ambulance Service Ltd Drivers' Handbook

The wide range of best practice information contained herein is designed to cover all normal fleet operations of BM Ambulance Service Ltd.

It is intended to provide the recipient with an in-depth account of the areas that require consideration to provide support for the driver in the field and for the alignment of the company policies towards liability that may exist when operating company vehicles.

By applying this process BM Ambulance Service Ltd is effectively conducting a general assessment of the risks of operating company vehicles and ensuring that appropriate advice and guidance is offered to vehicle operators. In turn this process may expose areas where policies or advice require revision or implementation and therefore may consolidate company's stance in many policy areas.

Due to the scope of the information required to offer such a resource it is impossible to make the information apply accurately to specific fleet compositions and driver types, so the recipient is required to read each section and its contents.

Every care has been exercised in the research and production of the best practice advice contained within this document and it is believed to be true at the time of production.

Version Control

Version	Date	Changed by	Comments on Change
Version 1	01/01/2016	Craig Bickers	Document Created – Version 1
1a	19/07/2017	Sarah Gosling	update
1b	27/02/2018	Simon Wilks	Update to bring in line with company structure
2	24/02/2021	Sarah Gosling	Amendments and updates
3	3/07/2024	Andrew Proctor	Amendments and updates



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Introduction

By accepting the responsibility of driving a vehicle on behalf of BM Ambulance Service Ltd, you agree to be bound by high level of driver awareness, skill and responsibility that follows as a result. The company takes very seriously the duty of care placed upon it and its drivers to ensure the safety of all road users, vehicular and pedestrian. To minimise any potential risks and hazards. To always drive with courtesy, foresight and, always, to act with due regard to others.

Craig Bickers
Managing Director

Management, Task, Vehicle and Driver Information

These sections concentrate on the risks that are most likely to be contributed by management, task, vehicle and driver contributions or activities and again can be reallocated or named according to the organisational requirements of the BM Ambulance Service Ltd.

Each section contains detailed and researched best practice advice for the vehicle operator and specific references to the Highway Code where applicable.

1. Vehicle Declaration

The signing of a declaration to state that the handbook has been 'read and understood' is a positive step towards 'ownership' of the whole issue of the safety policies surrounding the company vehicle operators. This action also provides the initial onus for vehicle drivers to 'sign up' to the requirements of compliance.

All those who are employed by or medical services engaged by BM Ambulance Service Ltd will have to sign the declaration on the final page of this document.



2. Vehicle Allocation

Company Vehicles are allocated as a condition of engagement and specific requirements are laid down as to the operation of such vehicles.

Failure to fully comply with these conditions may result in the use of the company vehicle being withdrawn.

3. Vehicle Specification

Company vehicles carry a minimum safety specification as established by the Road Traffic Act.

4. Vehicle Conditions of Use

Company vehicles are subject to the following restrictions on their operation:

Company vehicles must NOT be used by:

Persons under 25 unless specifically authorised by a member of the senior management team.

Clients or customers unless specifically authorised by a member of the senior management team.

Learner Drivers.

Non-employees such as medical providers except where specifically authorised by a member of the senior management team.

Drivers who do not hold a full and valid drivers' licence for the class of vehicle to be driven.

Persons who have been forbidden to utilise company vehicles.

Permission to operate company vehicles may be withdrawn by the company at its discretion.

5. Vehicle Insurance

The Operations Manager will monitor and provide for the insurance requirements of all fleet vehicles.

The company provides *Comprehensive* insurance cover on all its vehicles.

There are no personal effects cover on the company insurance and vehicle operators are advised to ensure that their own insurance provision is adequate for this purpose.

The company insurance requires vehicle drivers to comply with all safety, advice and guidance stipulated in this handbook.

6. Servicing

The Operations Manager will monitor and provide for the routine servicing requirements of all fleet vehicles.

If you feel that your vehicle requires attention outside these requirements, you should contact the duty manager immediately.

The Operations Manager will monitor and provide for the routine MOT requirements of all fleet vehicles where applicable.



7. Road Fund Licence (Road Tax)

The Operations Manager will monitor and provide for the routine road fund licence requirements of all fleet vehicles.

8. Fuel

Vehicle drivers are to ensure that the correct fuel is always used in the vehicle. If an operator is unsure of the required fuel type, they should ask the duty manager or check the vehicle handbook. Ensure that budget fuel grade is selected and dispensed at the pump.

9. Miss- Fuelling

If a situation occurs where you have put the incorrect fuel in your company vehicle, please follow the simple guidelines:

Discovery at refuelling station:

DO NOT attempt to start up or drive the vehicle.
 Inform the forecourt attendant/cashier immediately.
 Inform any drivers waiting to use the fuel dispensing point.
 Arrange to have the vehicle moved away from the fuel dispensing area.
 Contact your emergency service provider.
 Contact the duty manager.

Discovery after exiting the fuel station:

Stop the vehicle in a safe place, as soon as possible.
 Treat the situation as a vehicle breakdown.
 Contact your emergency service provider. Contact the duty manager.

10. Fuel Cards

Fuel is drawn via the use of a fuel card. The date, registration number and driver details are checked weekly. Ensure ONLY fuel is drawn and ONLY for the correct registration number. The card is to be used exclusively for business purposes only and receipts should be obtained for every transaction. Usage will be regularly monitored therefore it is in your interest to keep a personal record of transactions in order that you are able to explain them if necessary.

Personal use of company fuel cards is not permitted under any circumstances. Misuse of the card and/or failure to comply with company procedures will result in disciplinary action, which may result in your dismissal. You will be required to reimburse us the cost of any unauthorised expenditure. In the event of failure to pay, we have the contractual right to deduct such costs from your pay.

Please keep all fuel receipts and hand these to office staff at the earliest opportunity with your name and vehicle registration on them.



11. Licence Checking

There is a requirement for the company to check drivers' licences for all drivers permitted to drive company vehicles on an annual basis. This will include the primary user and any other authorised user.

All authorised vehicle drivers will be contacted to submit their original licence to the operations manager for recording.

If an authorised driver's licence is unavailable when requested due to loss or having been submitted to the DVLA the company will ask you for permission to contact the DVLA to affect the required licence check.

If an authorised vehicle driver is found to be unable to satisfy the driver licensing requirements for driving company vehicles due to the status of their driver's licence, permission to drive a company vehicle will be immediately retracted and an investigation carried out.

12. Convictions & Endorsements Reporting

All authorised vehicle drivers are required to notify the Operations Manager of any Convictions or Endorsements acted or pending that they may incur as soon as possible after the incident and in any case within 48 hours.

Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the authorisation to drive or allocation of the company vehicle being withdrawn and may result in disciplinary action.

13. Post-Crash Interviews

It is the policy of the company to conduct interviews with vehicle drivers who have been involved in a crash of any type or severity.

The purpose of the interview is to review the causes of the crash and provide support for the vehicle driver and review current procedures to ensure that the crash is not repeated.

The post-crash interview is not seen as a punitive process, but crashes will be allocated as Blameworthy/Preventable or Non-blameworthy/Non-Preventable and if the crash is due to negligence or malpractice by the vehicle driver disciplinary and or recovery of loss/damage action may be taken.

14. Passenger Limitations

Vehicle drivers are forbidden to exceed the manufacturers' limitation on the number of passengers that are permitted to travel in the vehicle they are operating. Limitations to the type of passengers allowed carriage in company vehicles are displayed within the vehicle.

Task Information

15. Driving Hours

Vehicle drivers should ensure that they are not driving for excessive hours. If you are feeling tired, stop the vehicle safely, park and take a short break. Please ensure you inform the duty manager of your plans. If you have a patient on board, the duty manager will advise accordingly. Fatigue increases the risk to yourself and other road users.



16. Scheduling

Do not try to be over ambitious with your schedule, build in time for roadworks, weather, rest breaks etc.

17. Weather Conditions

Vehicle drivers should use facilities such as AA Weather watch and local broadcasts to warn them of impending weather conditions that may affect journey times.

Do not try to drive if the Roadside Agencies are advising you not to. Contact the duty manager for advice.

Be aware of your own level of experience and competence in operating a vehicle in adverse weather conditions.

Be aware of the limitations and condition of your vehicle when travelling in adverse weather conditions, any fault can become a serious risk if the weather is or becomes severe.

18. Breakdowns & Punctures

If you are involved in a breakdown use the information and processes in the **Highway Code Rule 274** (and 275 – 278 for breakdowns on the motorway).

The company has breakdown cover for all company vehicles this service, can be contacted on the number displayed on the visor.

Do not put yourself, any passengers or the vehicle at risk and follow the advice given in the **Highway Code Rule 274** (and 275-278) for breakdowns on the motorway).

When calling out the emergency services always ask for the name of the attending person, what the vehicle will look like if a private service has been called and an estimated time of arrival.

If you incur a windscreen breakage, follow the breakdown procedure and use the information in your crash pack. Do not attempt to remove the damaged screen, await the emergency services.

If you incur a puncture follow the procedure below for controlling the vehicle and then adopt normal breakdown procedures, **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO REPLACE THE PUNCTURE AT THE ROADSIDE** and call the emergency services:

- Do not brake hard unless the road configuration or traffic situation demands it
- Move the vehicle gently off the main carriageway if you can.
- Bring the vehicle to a slow stop under control.
- Exit the vehicle to the nearside
- Call the Police if your stopped vehicle constitutes a hazard to road users

If you have broken down, especially on the motorway get out of your vehicle and lock the doors other than the nearside door and wait for the emergency services near your



vehicle. A patient must be evacuated to a safe position and the duty manager informed immediately.

When the services or police arrive get back into your vehicle and lock the door, lower the window 1-2 inches, and ask to see the attending persons identification and check the details you will have asked for when calling them out if a private service. Do not open the door until you are satisfied with the identity of the attending person.

19. Crash Procedure

If you are involved in a crash, you must under no circumstances admit liability or blame at the scene and conduct yourself within the requirements of the **Highway Code Rule 283**.

Where able to do so you should:

- Record the names and addresses of the parties involved, together with the details of the other parties' insurers name and address.
- Record the names and addresses of any witnesses to the incident.

You should give to anyone having reasonable grounds for requiring the information:

- Your own name
- Company *head office* address
- Registration number of the company vehicle

Call the Police to the scene if:

- You or anyone else has been injured.
- Damaged vehicles constitute a road hazard.
- Traffic signs, road markings etc have been damaged.

Record the following information about the crash scene *using your incident forms photos taken using your issued mobile phone*:

- Time and date
- Street names and approximate widths
- Road layout, types of road, directions of vehicles • Vehicles position at impact and relevant road signs.
- Condition of the road surface, weather conditions, street, and vehicle lighting in use at the time.

Do not attempt to drive the company vehicle if there is any doubt as to the roadworthiness or safety of the vehicle.

20. Cleanliness

The vehicle driver and crew mate are responsible for the cleanliness of both the interior and exterior of the company vehicle and the vehicle must be always maintained in a pristine condition.

21. Deep Cleaning Procedure

These will be undertaken by the MRO team.



22. Vandalism

If the company vehicle has suffered vandalism you must contact the duty manager immediately when it is discovered.

Examples of Vandalism are:

- Aerial broken off or bent.
- Mirrors broken off or glass smashed.
- Wheels and or tyres damaged.
- Wheel trims missing
- Intentional scratches (i.e., with a key) to the vehicle • Attempt at entry and resulting window, lock damage.

Establish if there is CCTV coverage of the area you have parked in and if so inform them of the vandalism and ask for contact details for possible reviewing of any video evidence.

23. Theft of Vehicle

Most vehicle thefts are opportunist and can be avoided by simple precautions:

- Do not park in remote or dubious areas.
- Do not leave articles on view in the vehicle that may attract a thief.
- Park in lit areas preferably with CCTV or attendant coverage

If the company vehicle is stolen inform the Police and the duty manager immediately and note the Crime Incident Number for the report.

If you see someone attempting to steal the company vehicle DO NOT ATTEMPT TO STOP THEM, call the police immediately.

24. Smoking & Driving

No one should be smoking or vaping whilst in charge of an ambulance or BM Ambulance Service vehicle.

25. Parking & Manoeuvring

Parking fines will remain the responsibility of the vehicle driver and as such BMAS reserves the right to deduct any such fines directly from salary with written authority.

Parking the vehicle is a risk and vehicle drivers should exercise extreme care when carrying out such manoeuvres:

- Make sure you are capable of the manoeuvre.
- Make sure the space is:
 - Legal for your use
 - Big enough for your vehicle
 - Not obstructing another vehicle or walkway
 - Does not contain debris or glass etc.
 - Secure for you and the vehicle



- Conduct the manoeuvre slowly with full observation, if you require a banks person ask your crew mate to assist.
- Consider reversing in and the access you require to your vehicle.
- Do not be afraid to ask for assistance - do not guess!

Think about when you are going return and the suitability of the space in terms of darkness, other road users etc.

26. Seatbelts & Head Restraints

Drivers of all company vehicles are to always wear seatbelts when operating company vehicles and are responsible for the application of the law regarding the wearing of seatbelts for any authorised passengers.

Passengers who are not exempt and refuse to comply with the driver’s instructions regarding the wearing of seatbelts should not be transported.

Vehicle operators must ensure that the available head restraints are correctly adjusted to afford the maximum protection: **(Highway Code Rule 97)**

FRONT SEAT	REAR SEAT		WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY
DRIVER	Must be worn if fitted	-	Driver
CHILD UNDER 3 YEARS OF AGE	Appropriate child restraint must be worn	Appropriate child restraint must be worn if available	Driver
CHILD AGED 3 to 11 and under 1.5metres (about 5 feet) in height	Appropriate child restraint must be worn if available. If not, an adult seat belt must be worn	Appropriate child restraint must be worn if available. If not, an adult seat belt must be worn if available	Driver
CHILD AGED 12 or 13 or younger child 1.5metres or more in height	Adult seat belt must be worn if available	Adult seat belt must be worn if available	Driver
PASSENGERS over the age of 14	Must be worn if available	Must be worn if available	Passenger

In addition, the revised regulations (18 September 2006) also say that rear facing baby seats **MUST NOT** be used in a seat protected by a frontal airbag unless the airbag has been deactivated manually or automatically.

27. Loading

The company vehicle must not be overloaded at any time. **Rule 247 of the Highway Code** gives guidance as to the loading of vehicles.



If you require further information as to the safe loading specifications or maximum seating capacity for your company vehicle contact the duty manager or look in the Handbook of the vehicle.

Vehicle drivers and their crewmate must consider the potential of stowed items such as patient luggage, walking aids, etc to become projectiles in the event of a collision impact and ensure that such items are adequately stowed and restrained.

Vehicle Information

28. Correct use of Vehicle

Vehicle drivers are forbidden to use the company vehicle for activities, which are unauthorised. For example, off road driving, towing, use as a taxi etc.

29. Cleanliness

The vehicle driver and crew mate are responsible for the cleanliness of both the interior and exterior of the company vehicle and the vehicle must be always maintained in a pristine condition.

The MRO team and Operations Manager of BM Ambulance Service Ltd may inspect company vehicles at any time and where the vehicle is found to be below the required standard vehicle operators will be informed and a report made of the situation.

30. Security & Contents

The vehicle driver is responsible for the security of the company vehicle and its contents.

The selection of parking sites should ensure that the area and situation do not pose an obvious risk to the vehicle or its contents, such as back street parking where the vehicle cannot be generally observed.

All items of value and company equipment must be hidden from view and the vehicle locked whenever the driver leaves the vehicle.

Do not leave the radio, mobile telephones, or other attractive equipment in the vehicle whilst unattended including overnight.

Care must be taken when the vehicle is left at parking sites to ensure that the vehicle is parked correctly and not obstructing others.

31. Defects

Defects to the company vehicle will be remedied as soon as is practicably possible and immediately if the defect renders the vehicle unsafe or un-roadworthy.

Any apparent defects must be reported immediately via the defect reporting sheet.

Regular safety inspections must be carried out to ascertain the general condition of the company vehicle.

The vehicle driver is responsible of informing the duty manager of the defect.



32. Mileage Recording

The vehicle driver is required to submit a record of mileage completed in the company vehicle as required by company policy.

Incomplete or incorrectly filled out forms will be returned to the vehicle operator for resubmission.

Driver Information

33. Highway Code

All drivers of company vehicles are to have a current copy of the Highway Code and are expected to adhere to the provisions of the Code as a condition of operating a company vehicle.

Vehicle drivers should take notice of the information regarding the use of the words **MUST** and **MUST NOT** as these indicators highlight the legal application of the code. Vehicle drivers are advised to make themselves familiar with the code, and to the rules contained in the code.

34. Drivers Licence Requirements

The vehicle driver must have a valid and current licence for the class of vehicle to be driven. Vehicle drivers are to always carry their driver's licence with them unless submitted to the DVLA or the company for routine checking.

Drivers are required to notify the DVLA and the company if they are affected by certain illnesses. A full listing of these conditions can be obtained by reading **DVLA Form V100** available from post offices or online.

You are also required to inform the DVLA of a change of address and / or photograph (photo card licences) on **DVLA Form D750** available from post offices.

35. Eyesight Requirements

Drivers are required to comply with the requirements of the **Highway Code. Rule 92.**

It is recommended to ensure you have an eye test every two years or every year if glasses or contact lenses worn.

36. Vehicle Condition

The vehicle driver is responsible for the cleanliness and condition of both the interior and exterior of the company vehicle and must be maintained in a pristine, safe, and roadworthy condition always.

If a vehicle driver fails to ensure these requirements are met the authorisation to drive or the allocation of a company vehicle may be reviewed.

37. Safety Checks

Vehicle drivers are required to carry out daily safety checks on BM Ambulance Service Ltd vehicles as a condition of operation. These checks should be performed each time you are due to drive a vehicle for the first time on that day.



These checks and their frequency are contained in the vehicle checklist that is available from the Operations Manager.

Vehicle drivers must consider that in adverse weather the condition and cleanliness of all screens both interior and exterior, the vehicle number plate and the lenses of all lights must be maintained to a higher standard and more regular checking and cleaning.

Please see the daily vehicle and equipment check sheets for information on what should be checked daily.

As well as routine checks vehicle operators must conduct visual 'return to vehicle checks' to ensure that there has been no damage or change to the vehicle condition in their absence.

From time to time the Operations Manager/MRO team will conduct spot checks of vehicle condition and roadworthiness.

If vehicle drivers are driving a different vehicle to their normal vehicle, they should ensure that the vehicle is thoroughly checked as per the checklist both before and after the vehicle use.

Vehicle drivers must understand that if a vehicle is operated in an unsafe or unroadworthy condition that the vehicle operator will be held responsible for any subsequent outcome.

38. Courtesy

Vehicle drivers are required to drive company vehicles in a responsible and courteous manner.

As the company operates liveried vehicles, drivers should be aware that contact details for the company are visible on each vehicle.

Where complaints from the public or clients or comments from other medical providers indicate that this is not being applied the vehicle driver concerned may be interviewed and may face disciplinary action.

39. Driver Use of Alcohol

The **Highway Code** gives specific instructions with regards to drinking and driving.

Rule 95 must be always adhered to.

Many people who have taken alcohol the night previously may still be operating a vehicle illegally due to the retention of alcohol in the body.

Vehicle drivers should be aware that in situations where a company vehicle driver is found to be in breach of this advice may have committed an act of gross negligence and be subject to the full provisions of the company disciplinary policy and may be in breach of the Contract of engagement.

40. Driver Use of Drugs or Medicines

The **Highway Code** gives specific instructions in the use of drugs.

Rule 96 must be always adhered to.



Vehicle drivers should also be aware that the purchase and use of 'over the counter' medicines might render them liable to higher risk when operating a vehicle and should always seek the advice of a pharmacist before using the medicines if intending to drive.

Mobile Telephones & Driving - Mobile Phone Policy - Policy Scope

This policy applies to all users of mobile telephones for any use whilst at work, whether the equipment is issued by the company or personal equipment is being used.

Additionally, all operators are strongly advised to adhere to this policy for use of any mobile telephones outside working hours as best practice advice.

Research has demonstrated that drivers who drive and use a mobile phone are four times more likely to have an accident.

The Law

It is illegal to operate a **handheld** mobile telephone whilst driving a vehicle in the UK (27th February 2007). If convicted, you will receive a £100.00 fine (this can be increased to a maximum fine of £1000 on conviction if the matter goes to court) and three penalty points on your driving licence.

If fined for this new offence you are required as a condition of driving company vehicles that you immediately inform your line manager of the situation.

If convicted of the charge of careless driving or driving without due care and a mobile telephone is found to be a contributory factor the penalty for the charge will be escalated and a charge of careless driving or worse may be considered. There have been instances where both company and mobile telephone records have been sequestered for this purpose. **Rule 149 of the Highway Code states:**

"You **MUST** exercise proper control of your vehicle at all times. You **MUST NOT** use a handheld mobile phone, or similar device, when driving or when supervising a learner driver. Never use a handheld microphone when driving. Using hands free equipment is also likely to distract your attention.

The Company

BM Ambulance Service Ltd will not accept any liability for the conduct of its drivers if acting outside the provisions of this policy. If a driver is charged with use of a handheld mobile telephone the Director of Human Resources should be notified.

The company will consider it a breach of the law if a driver is convicted of use of a handheld mobile telephone whilst driving and will interpret this action as misconduct and may invoke the company disciplinary policy as a result.

41. Traffic offences

If we receive a traffic offence summons for any contractor, they will be liable for the cost of this offence. This includes but is not limited to Speeding Fines, Failure to stop at Red



lights and parking tickets. BMAS reserves the right to recover from invoices if fines are not paid.

42. Driver Fault Accidents

The driver will be liable for all damages to the vehicle if caused by driver negligence and or driver error and as such will be required to pay for such damages. The cost will be limited to the repair of our vehicle.

DECLARATION

Please ensure that you read and completely understand the policy, as you will be bound by the policy after signing.

If you have any queries about this policy, please do not hesitate to contact Craig Bickers Company Owner and Director.

43. Driver Code of Conduct

In several places in the handbook there have been references to how vehicle operators should conduct themselves whilst operating a company vehicle.

These references have been consolidated into a Drivers' Code of Conduct as illustrated below.

As a company vehicle driver, I will:

- Always be courteous to any other road users.
- Act in a responsible manner when operating company vehicles.
- Abide by the laws governing the use of the public highway.
- Abide by the laws regarding the use of a vehicle on the public highway.
- Never undertake an activity that will endanger any other road users.
- Ensure that the vehicle I am operating is safe and roadworthy.
- Concentrate on my driving and avoid distractions.
- Not operate the vehicle if I am unfit to operate a vehicle.
- Never compromise my own and others' safety through drink or drugs

It is the expectation of the company that drivers will comply with this code and take a pride in their driving to the benefit of all road users.



If you do not understand any of the requirements or information contained in the handbook you should contact Craig Bickers who will advise you.

I have read and understood the conditions that have been described within this document.

Signed By:

Date: