



COMMUNITY MINIBUS ASSOCIATION (WEST SUSSEX) Registered charity 275787

DRIVER POLICY

Introduction

The Association provides vital transport to communities in rural West Sussex. To do this it is entirely dependent on Volunteer Drivers. Without skilled, experienced Drivers, willing to give their own time to others, the charity could not exist. Therefore, it is in the interests of the Association to encourage the maximum number of Volunteer Drivers, provide them with safe, properly equipped and maintained Minibuses and support them in the service they provide. It is essential that the Volunteer Drivers understand their role and what is expected of them. It is also a requirement that each Volunteer has the necessary experience and qualifications to be a Driver for the Association and they receive the appropriate Assessment, Development and Training to maintain the requisite skills. The Association must also ensure that all Volunteer Drivers are aware of their legal, licence and insurance obligations, especially those required to renew their licence at the age of 70 and every 3 years thereafter.

Volunteers

Any volunteer over the age of 25, with the appropriate licence, may be able to drive for the Association. They would normally reside in rural West Sussex and be affiliated to one of the Association's Divisions. They would usually be inducted as a Member of the Association by their respective Divisional Organiser and then put forward as a Volunteer Driver. The Assessment, Development and Training Programme will be explained, the Role and Responsibilities highlighted and the Association's needs discussed, to ensure the Volunteer wishes to proceed. Following confirmation that the Volunteer Driver holds the appropriate licence, they will then be put forward for an Initial Assessment.

Initial Assessment

The Initial Assessment is conducted by one of the Association's Assessors, usually one to one, in an Association Minibus. The Assessment is in three parts:

1. Driving Assessment. To familiarise the Volunteer Driver with the operation, manoeuvring and limitations of a large Minibus.
2. Theory. To explain and discuss; routine and emergency procedures, safety, breakdown and recovery, maintenance and reporting requirements.
3. Registration. Subject to successful completion of the Driving and Theory Assessment, the Volunteer will be given a copy of the Drivers and Escorts Handbook, the licence and insurance requirements will be highlighted and any relevant Association procedures explained. The Volunteer Driver will then be asked to provide specific details and asked to



sign a declaration that they will abide by the Association's Rules, permit the retention of Key Information (in accordance with the Data Protection Act) and inform the Association of any change in their circumstances that could affect their ability to drive for the Association.

The Volunteer Driver is then available to drive within the programme of activities conducted by their Division.

Role and Responsibility

A Volunteer Driver is responsible first for the safe conduct of their passengers on the journey as designated by their Divisional Coordinators. They are responsible for all aspects of the driving, parking and safety of the vehicle in their charge and will be responsible for any incidents while the vehicle is in their charge.

On taking over a vehicle it should be checked in accordance with the vehicle's daily record sheet. Particular attention should be paid to safety aspects – tyres, lights, visibility and any previously un-recorded damage to the vehicle.

While the Volunteer Driver is responsible for the vehicle, the Passenger Escort is responsible for the Passengers. Both Volunteers should act as a team; communicate and assist each other. The Volunteer Driver should confirm all Passengers are safely seated, using correctly adjusted seatbelts, with luggage and other items safely stowed, before moving off. Doors and steps must be properly closed and stowed.

A Volunteer Driver must observe the Highway Code and drive their vehicle in accordance with the prevailing conditions and with the correct observance of the limitations of the vehicle they are driving; weight, height, turning circle, blind-spots and any extensions beyond the body of the vehicle by steps and handles. When parking, national and local parking restrictions must be observed and the Volunteer Driver must be aware of the restrictions and requirements of using any Passenger's Blue Badge. Mobile phones must not be used while driving.

In the event of a Breakdown, the first priority is the safety of the Passengers. If a vehicle warning light is illuminated, a safe parking place is to be sought first before investigating the cause of the warning. Should a Minibus become unserviceable during a journey with Passengers, then the Volunteer Driver is responsible for reporting the incident promptly to the Divisional Organiser and the Association's Fleet Manager. The onward movement of the Passengers can then be arranged and the Repair or Recovery of the Minibus will follow.

Continuity Development and Training

It is a requirement of the Association that all Drivers participate in continuity Development and Training. As a minimum, each Volunteer Driver will be expected to participate in a Continuity Assessment every 3 years. In addition to that, Drivers may be invited to attend special Training events to ensure they have the skills necessary for their role, eg; Fire Extinguisher and Fire Fighting



theory and practice and Minibus Evacuation procedures. Drivers may also be invited to training events where they will train alongside a Passenger Escort and Passengers.

Licence Requirements

Each Volunteer Driver must ensure they are in possession of a valid, in-date licence for the vehicle they are driving. The type and weight of the Minibuses owned by the Association may vary and it is the responsibility of each driver to know the licence requirements of the Minibus they are driving. Further guidance can be sought from respective Divisional Organisers or the Association's Fleet Manager.

Currently, a Driver may drive a Minibus up to and including a Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) of 3500kg with the usual B category licence. Any Minibus over that weight requires a D1 category licence. For those who gained their licence before 1997, the B category and D1 category were gained simultaneously. For those passing their driving test after 1997, a D1 category is not automatic and a separate test is necessary.

At the age of 70, it is necessary for a driver to renew their licence. On renewal, the entitlement to drive a Minibus (both categories B and D1) is not automatic. The Association recognises the additional work required of a Driver in the renewal of their licence and therefore makes a contribution to the cost of the medical assessment. The licence will need to be renewed every 3 years thereafter, ie; at age 73 and 76. The Association does not permit Volunteers to drive vehicles with passengers beyond the age of 79. However, there is a requirement for those Volunteers that manage the vehicles on behalf of the Association to have the requisite licence to drive for administrative and maintenance purposes and therefore any Volunteer for such a position would need to renew their licence before age 79. The Association does not permit any driver to drive a Minibus beyond their 82nd birthday.

A Volunteer Driver is required to inform the Association of any changes to their licence or conditions that may affect their ability to drive an Association Minibus. This may include any changes in their health or endorsements to their licence, which must always be declared. The Association will not allow Drivers to drive with 7 or more Penalty Points in Endorsement Categories SP (Speed Limit) and TS (Traffic Direction and Signs). Any Penalty Points attained for other offences will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Driving Licences will be checked at least once per year.

Accidents and Incidents

The Association is fully covered by a Comprehensive Insurance Policy. In the event of an accident or incident causing damage, the procedures described in the Drivers and Escorts Handbook must be followed carefully. All details of such an event must be passed promptly to the Divisional Organiser and the Association's Fleet Manager. Volunteer Drivers do not have the authority to accept liability or blame on behalf of the Association, nor to negotiate an outcome, however favourable.

Notwithstanding the need to care for Passengers and (when safe and legal to do so) continue with the journey, sufficient detail of the accident or incident must be recorded, including any witnesses. It is the responsibility of all Drivers to record and report any damage to any Association Minibus.



Maintenance and Cleaning

The Association takes great pride in the appearance and serviceability of its Minibuses and each year significant sums are spent on the repair, refurbishment and cleaning of Minibuses. Volunteer Drivers play an essential role in keeping the Minibuses in the best possible state. This includes ensuring that after every journey the vehicle is emptied, left clean and all damage and maintenance requirements are promptly reported. On taking over a vehicle, should that vehicle not meet the required standard, then the Driver should report the details to their Divisional Organiser.



Guidance for Volunteer Drivers Over Age 69

Age Action

- 69** **Licence Renewal Process** – before your existing licence expires at age 70 you will need to renew your licence to drive a Passenger Carrying Vehicle (PCV). Whether you have an existing B or D1 licence, your permission to drive a PCV expires at 70 unless renewed. This is in addition to extending your B category to drive your personal car.
- a. You will be seeking to extend your existing licence, ie; Category B (up to and including vehicles of 3500kg) or Category D1 to drive a PCV.
 - b. You will need a medical and eye test to PCV standard and to complete a **D4 Form**. The Association will assist with any costs to allow Volunteers to continue driving for the Association.
 - c. Apply for your new licence before the existing one expires. The current **Application Form is a D2** and you will be seeking to **retain your B or D1 Category Licence** with the code **79 (NFHR)** annotated to your new licence.
- 70** **New Licence** - valid for 3 years subject to no change in health and medical status
- 72** **Participate in the Association's Continuity Training Programme**
- Repeat the licence renewal sequence before age 73
- 73** **New Licence** - valid for 3 years subject to no change in health and medical status
- 75** **Participate in the Association's Continuity Training Programme**
- Ensure you are registered as a Named Driver with the Association's insurers before your 75th Birthday** (current insurance policy requirement)
- Repeat the licence renewal sequence before age 76
- 76** **New Licence** - valid for 3 years subject to no change in health and medical status
- 78** Discuss with your Divisional Organiser if you wish to continue driving with the Association in an administrative capacity, without passengers. If so, you should renew your licence to drive a Minibus for a further 3 years. The Association will not require you to drive beyond your 82nd birthday

Notes

1. The status of your Driving Licence can be checked at www.gov.uk/view-driving-licence.
2. You may not receive form D2 as part of the DVLA automated renewal; you may have to request it.



3. Any change in your licence must be reported to the Association immediately if you wish to continue as a Volunteer Driver.
4. Any change in health that may affect your ability as a Volunteer Driver must be reported to the Association. You must also inform the DVLA.