

Freedom of Information request reference number: 8401.1

Date of response: 29/02/2024

Request:

Please can you assist with the following information please?

In respect of LFB authorised drivers.

How many points on a LFB drivers DVLA license would affect their ability to drive LFB vehicles on,

A. Blue Light Duties?

B. Driving LFB vehicles on a non blue light?

In essence would that driver be suspended as a result of DVLA Points from driving LFB vehicles.

Response:

The number of points (below 11) on a valid licence does not impact what vehicles LFB authorised drivers can drive either on blue lights or not.

Any points accrued whilst driving be that privately or brigade vehicles would only lead to suspension if they accrued 12 points or more and were disqualified from driving or were convicted of a motoring offence and disqualified from driving. So, LFB authorised drivers could have their licence suspended if they accrue points whilst driving brigade vehicles.

Before being authorised to drive a Brigade vehicle the licence details must be checked and added to the licence database. It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that they hold a valid licence covering the classes relevant for the vehicles they are authorised to drive and notify their line manager of any changes that affect their licence(s).

Any LFB employee who is, or will be, driving on Brigade business is required to submit their licence details. This includes staff within the light duty pool and departments where an employee will be driving a brigade vehicle.

The number of points on a driver's licence are monitored via the LFB and DVLA databases. Normally this is a yearly review however this is dependent on the number of points on the licence and the more points on a licence will require more regular monitoring as detailed in Policy Number 813 - Driving Brigade vehicles (see below).

We have dealt with your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. For more information about this process please see the guidance we publish about making a request on our website: <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/about-us/transparency/request-information-from-us/>

Driving Brigade vehicles

NEW POLICY POSITION



This policy should be read with:
All policies referenced in this document.

Official

Policy summary

This policy provides information on administration and management required to be authorised to drive Brigade vehicles.

Contents

1. Management/administration of the driving function	3
Introduction.....	3
Roles and responsibilities.....	4
Relevant staff groups.....	6
Management and processing for Penalty Charge Notices (PCN) and Notices of Intended Prosecution (NIP)	8
2. Safety and welfare of crew (on and off of appliances)	9
Actions at stations.....	11
3. Car schemes (and use of pool cars)	12
Introduction.....	12
Essential car users scheme	12
Use of pool cars.....	19
4. Training	22
Introduction.....	22
5. General driving.....	24
Introduction.....	24
6. Emergency response driving	28
Introduction.....	28
7. Operating on a road	32
Introduction.....	32
8. Reporting of accidents.....	37
Appendix 1: Appliance positioning.....	39
Appendix 2: Cones	45
Appendix 3:	46
Appendix 4: Driver responsibilities.....	47
Document information	48

1. Management/administration of the driving function

Introduction

- 1.1 This section of the policy provides information on administration and management required to be authorised to drive Brigade vehicles. The following abbreviations are used throughout the document and associated training documents:
- ERD – Emergency Response Driving
 - ERDA – Emergency Response Driver Assessment
 - LGV – Large Goods Vehicle
 - SAI – Senior Accident Investigator
 - Appliance Commander – The most senior manager on a fire appliance
 - Emergency Response – Any response to an emergency incident requiring the use of vehicular mounted blue light and audible warnings
 - Emergency Response Speed – Any speed above the posted speed limit for a particular stretch of roadway
 - Driver Assessment – Some staff that are not ERD qualified and are required to drive Brigade vehicles may have to undertake a driving assessment and have the appropriate valid licence for the vehicle type
 - Driver Assessment Board - This is a virtual board that is chaired by a deputy assistant commissioner (DAC) or the equivalent who is supported by representatives from Babcock Transport Training, the SAI team, Health and Safety Services and others as deemed appropriate by the Chair. The purpose of the board is to review the performance of a driver and take appropriate action to support the individual and meet the needs of the Brigade.
 - Brigade Business - Any work or activity undertaken in the course of employment and on behalf of the Brigade.
 - Driver Licence Database - A computer database populated and updated by the driver's line manager for all authorised drivers.
 - Specialist Vehicle - Any vehicle used for emergency response which requires additional training.
 - Eco-driving - Fuel efficient driving method which also contributes to road safety through more careful, considerate and planned driving. Includes, where relevant; regular servicing; correctly inflated tyres; planning – knowing your route; sensitive acceleration and braking; using higher gears; rolling; reduced vehicle idling; and reduced vehicle loads.
 - ERDIAA - Emergency Response Driving Initial Acquisition (Appliance)
 - ERDIAC - Emergency Response Driving Initial Acquisition (Car)
 - ERDRVA - Emergency Response Driving Revalidation (Appliance)
 - ERDRVC - Emergency Response Driving Revalidation Car
 - DTLGBR - Driving assessment course for ERD qualified transferees

Roles and responsibilities

Line manager

- 1.2 The line manager is responsible for ensuring that any member of staff required to drive a vehicle including those driven under emergency response conditions, is authorised and qualified to do so, having received an appropriate level of training and assessment. Refer to the section on training for information on what is required.
- 1.3 Line managers are responsible for monitoring the competence of their drivers and for ensuring that driving standards and safety are maintained. Whether by direct observation or in response to an official report of poor driving. This may be achieved through the use of personal development plans, and/or referral to Babcock Transport Training for assessment and additional training.
- 1.4 Line managers must give sufficient opportunity for drivers to develop and maintain their skills on all vehicles they are authorised and qualified to drive. This will be particularly pertinent to new drivers leading up to and following the ERDIAA course, staff required to drive specialist vehicles, or those who may drive infrequently.

Authorisation to drive

- 1.5 Before being authorised to drive a Brigade vehicle the licence details must be checked and added to the licence database. It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that they hold a valid licence covering the classes relevant for the vehicles they are authorised to drive and notify their line manager of any changes that affect their licence(s). Staff are authorised to drive the following vehicles if they hold the relevant licence category:
 - (a) Category B – Pool Cars and apply to join the casual car user scheme (CCUS) where applicable and drive their own vehicle for business purposes.
 - (b) Category C – Pumping appliances to maintain their skills prior to completing an Emergency Response Driving Course.
- 1.6 In exceptional circumstances a driving assessment can be requested if the individual feels that the time away from driving is so significant that they would benefit from some trainer led training. This however would be the exception and if the appropriate category of licence is held then subject to providing licence details the staff member would be authorised to drive Brigade vehicles.
- 1.7 This also applies to ERD qualified staff who transfer in from other fire services. Once 1.5 above is complied with they are authorised to drive pumping appliances within the confines of the highway code pending a blue light driving assessment.
- 1.8 To be authorised to drive a specialist vehicle refer to the training section for guidance on what additional training is required.
- 1.9 It is the individual's responsibility to report to their line manager, as soon as practicable, any notice of intended prosecution for a traffic offence. The line manager must inform HRM if the offence occurred whilst driving on Brigade business. The line manager must consider referring the matter to the driver assessment board; this will be dependent upon the seriousness of the offence.
- 1.10 If disqualified from driving by a Court of Law, the individual must notify their line manager as soon as is reasonably practicable and provide them with information regarding the circumstances leading to the disqualification. The line manager must immediately remove the authorisation to drive from the individual and inform their head of service or OOD if the relevant head of service is unavailable or if out of office hours or at weekends. Further information on licence management can be found on hotwire http://hotwire-live/HR_pay_employment/your%20details/Pages/Driving-licence-management.aspx

Licence management

- 1.11 Line managers or a nominated administrator must check the licences of all authorised drivers at least annually. For drivers that have penalty points on their licence, these checks are to be on a more regular basis. The more points a member of staff has will require more regular checks. When driver/licence details are revised or amended, the driver licence database must be updated.
- 1.12 An individual's licence details will be checked on the following occasions:
- (a) At induction stage for trainee firefighters and other new joiners (responsibility of HRM).
 - (b) When an employee is required to drive on Brigade business or drive a Brigade vehicle or makes an application to join the Casual Car Users Scheme (CCUS) (responsibility of line manager or nominated administrator).
 - (c) Prior to commencement of an LGV or specialist driving course or assessment (responsibility Babcock Transport Training).
- 1.13 Once an employee has had their licence details added to the database it should be checked and updated if required on the following occasions:
- (a) After formal notification of licence endorsement or disqualification (responsibility of the driver to inform the line manager or nominated administrator).
 - (b) After change of personal details or renewal of licence (responsibility of the driver to inform the line manager or nominated administrator).
 - (c) Annual or periodic licence examination depending on any endorsements (responsibility of the line manager or nominated administrator to check the license and update the database if necessary).
- 1.14 Not holding a valid licence will result in the automatic suspension of a driver's authorisation to drive a vehicle on Brigade business. (Expired photocard does not invalidate a licence).
- 1.15 Further information on licence management can be found on hotwire - <http://hotwire/people/stars/DrivingLicenceManagement.asp>

Fitness to drive

- 1.16 All drivers must be fit to drive when they report for duty to ensure that they do not endanger themselves, colleagues or members of the public, whilst driving.
- 1.17 It is a criminal offence for any driver to drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs (refer to Policy number 550 - Alcohol and drugs policy).
- 1.18 If a driver has been prescribed medication by a doctor, it is the responsibility of the individual to confirm with their GP or prescribing doctor, whether they are safe to drive while taking the medication and to inform their line manager of the doctor's guidance.
- 1.19 If a driver's medical condition changes in a manner that may affect their ability to drive safely, such as worsening eyesight, the onset of dizziness or blackouts; it must be reported immediately to their line manager. They should not drive whilst at work until they have been assessed as fit to drive by their own GP and/or Occupational Health Service (OHS) involving People Services.
- 1.20 It is the responsibility of the individual to ensure that they comply with all extant road traffic legislation in respect of their fitness to drive; further guidance is available from the Driving and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA).
- 1.21 LGV medical expenses - LGV medicals are now performed by the Brigade's Occupational Health Service (OHS). Claims should only be made in exceptional circumstances. Where it is necessary to pass a medical prior to obtaining a provisional LGV licence, the cost may be reclaimed provided a receipt from the doctor or practice is attached. An advance payment for LGV medical examination fees

can also be claimed by completing an FN/PC8 form. Authorisation must be by the borough commander.

- 1.22 If there is any doubt regarding an individual's fitness to drive, the line manager should remove the individual from driving duties and inform their station manager or FRSD. If not available, the officer of the day (OOD) should be informed via the Resource Management Centre (RMC). The line manager must also seek guidance from the OHS.

Vehicle maintenance

- 1.23 Any vehicle used for Brigade business must be maintained to ensure that it is roadworthy, complies with current legislation (including MOT, tax and insurance) and any extant car scheme rules (if appropriate).
- 1.24 When taking over responsibility for a vehicle the driver must carry out a daily check/inspection of the vehicle. Non-completion should not prevent or delay the vehicle if it is required to respond to an emergency incident. Following the incident, the daily check/inspection must then be completed at the earliest opportunity, however, a driver must not knowingly drive a vehicle that is un-roadworthy.
- 1.25 All vehicles carrying a Brigade fleet number are subject to regular servicing and maintenance by Babcock Critical Services.
- 1.26 The driver must report any defects to Brigade fleet vehicles immediately.
- 1.27 The appropriate level of maintenance for lease cars and privately owned vehicles is the responsibility of the authorised driver, who must ensure that the vehicle meets the Brigade standard which may be above the legal minimum requirement. An example would be changing tyres at 3mm.
- 1.28 All persons driving a private vehicle on Brigade business under an approved LFC scheme must be able to provide a written record that the vehicle meets the requirements stated.

Security of Brigade vehicles

- 1.29 There have been a number of thefts from Brigade vehicles while left unattended, both in public places as well as on Brigade premises.
- 1.30 With the exception of operational vehicles engaged at incidents, or when secured in a fire station appliance bay, vehicles that are left unattended are to have their ignition key removed, windows shut, doors locked, alarm on (if fitted).
- 1.31 Where appliances are fitted with central locking systems, for equipment lockers, these should be activated.
- 1.32 Other vehicles should have any items of uniform, clothing etc., locked in the vehicle's luggage compartment. Personal items should not be left in any vehicle.

Relevant staff groups

Trainee firefighter/firefighter on development

- 1.33 Part of the selection process for a trainee firefighter requires individuals to possess a full UK manual driving licence. During the selection process the applicant's licence will be checked for validity, and a record will be made by People Services.
- 1.34 Following completion of basic training and posting to a fire station, firefighters on development that do not hold a Category C licence will complete 12 months before being required to complete an LGV driving course. They must be eligible to attend a driving course at that point and must hold:
- (a) A provisional category C licence (a LGV medical is required).
 - (b) Theory test.

(c) Hazard perception test.

- 1.35 On arrival at the Driver Training Centre the licence will be checked again by Babcock Transport Training.
- 1.36 On successful completion of an LGV course a Driver Development Module (DDM) will be opened for the firefighter and this will allow for the recording of development drives to build confidence on driving pumping appliances prior to attending an Emergency Response Driving Course. The minimum time period before completing an EFAD courses is six months.
- 1.37 On arrival at the Driver Training Centre when completing an ERD course the LGV driving licence will be checked again by Babcock Transport Training. On successful completion of the EFAD course the driver will be appointed as a qualified emergency response driver and awarded the skill MD on Stars. All NFCC paperwork completed in accordance with the FSB driving standard will be retained by BTL. (Refer to the training section of this policy for guidance on staff that fail an ERD course).

Firefighters on development who already hold a category C licence

- 1.38 There is no requirement to complete a DDM if staff hold a Category C licence from a previous employment. They should have their licence details added to the database and should be encouraged to drive the appliance to maintain their skills. After 18 months service they should be nominated to attend an ERD course.

Unit 9 of the firefighter role map (FF9)

- 1.39 FF9 of the firefighter role map covers the following:

'Drive, manoeuvre and re-deploy fire service vehicles', comprising:

- 9.1: Drive vehicles to incidents.
- 9.2: Manoeuvre, site and re-deploy vehicles.

- 1.40 The Grey Book, section 3, paragraph 7 states:

"As with all other units in a role map, a fire and rescue authority can require an employee to carry out driving duties. Where the fire and rescue authority does not require an employee to drive or, for genuine reasons, the employee is unable to drive he or she shall be regarded as competent in the role subject to having demonstrated competence in all other applicable functions in the role map."

- 1.41 The Brigade requires its firefighters to carry out driving duties (FF9). Firefighters employed by the Brigade since 19 December 2003 are required to complete FF9, in order to be paid competent pay, unless the Brigade agrees that they are not required to complete FF9 as set out within this policy.

Firefighters and officer's transferring into the Brigade

- 1.42 Firefighters transferring from another fire and rescue service are expected to complete the appropriate training to become an emergency response driver. During the selection process the applicant's licence will be checked for validity, and a record will be made on the applicants file by People Services.
- 1.43 Firefighter transferees who already hold a Category C licence but have not completed an ERD course will be given a short period to familiarise themselves with LFB policies and procedures and will then be nominated for an ERD course. They should have their licence details added to the driver licence database and should be encouraged to drive to maintain their skills. There is no requirement for a DDM while they are awaiting an ERD course.
- 1.44 Transferees or competent firefighters who are not drivers, will be required to undertake driver training when establishment levels require it to be maintained.
- 1.45 Transferees who are already ERD qualified (and, are able to provide evidence of this via NFCC approved paperwork) will be required to attend a two-day blue light driving assessment course. This

course will determine if further training is required to demonstrate competence or if the individual can be placed on the run. If Babcock training deem the individual as competent, they will be awarded the MD or ER skill on Stars with immediate effect.

Flexible duty officers

- 1.46 All uniformed senior managers are required to hold a valid manual Category B driving licence and must successfully complete an ERD driving course (ERDIAC) to be confirmed in role. If an employee has been a motor driver previously then they may be able to access a two-week step up course. Staff that do not hold any historical blue driving qualifications must complete a three-week course to meet the legal minimum standards.
- 1.47 Following two unsuccessful attempts a case conference will be held to determine the most appropriate course of action. Any conditional promotion may be revoked if it is deemed that the member of staff is unable to pass the course or still does not demonstrate competence if additional training is provided

USAR medium personnel carriers (MPC)

- 1.48 These vehicles are only to be driven by Brigade drivers who are EFAD qualified, and who have received specific MPC driver training (UPC attribute).
- 1.49 Equipment is to be stowed in the designated rear compartment. The passenger compartment cannot be used to carry equipment.
- 1.50 No flammable liquids are to be carried within the MPCs, other than that contained in operational equipment being transported.
- 1.51 The maximum number of people that the vehicle is authorised to carry is nine and the maximum capacity for the rear load compartment is 160kgs.
- 1.52 Any defects identified that will impact on immediate operational response of a USAR minibus must be reported to RML and the duty RSO.
- 1.53 MPCs may be made available to other trained employees in support of LFB core business at the discretion of the GC Rescue and ISAR team and when not being used for recall. Vehicles allocated to Rescue Centres can only be used for other LFB business when driven by personnel with the UPC attribute and must remain within a half hour travel distance from their base location to ensure their availability for recall purposes. The configuration of the MPCs seating arrangements is not to be changed under any circumstance without prior consent from the GC Rescue and ISAR team within the Operational Policy and Assurance Department.
- 1.54 Under normal circumstances, only Brigade personnel or authorised individuals can be carried in MPCs.

Management and processing for Penalty Charge Notices (PCN) and Notices of Intended Prosecution (NIP)

- 1.55 There are occasions when brigade vehicles, responding to an incident activate traffic speed enforcement cameras (administered by the Police) enforcement cameras (administered by the Local Authority).
- 1.56 On all occasions when a traffic speed/parking/traffic enforcement camera is activated photograph(s) of the incident will be placed in one of three categories: acceptable driving/parking, exemption applies. In these cases, the Brigade will make representation on behalf of the driver. Once this process commences, the Brigade takes full responsibility for the case. However, representation is not always accepted by the issuing authorities. There are occasions when it is necessary to attend a parking and traffic appeals serving hearing in relation to a NIP. This body has the powers and authority of a court and the driver of the vehicle may be required to attend.

- (a) Acceptable driving/parking, exemption applies. In these cases, the Brigade will make representation on behalf of the driver. Once this process commences, the Brigade takes full responsibility for the case. However, representation is not always accepted by the issuing authorities. There are occasions when it is necessary to attend a parking and traffic appeals serving hearing in relation to a NIP.
 - (b) Unacceptable, in spite of potential exemption. If, after investigation, it is considered that the driving standard was not in accordance with Brigade training/guidelines. The driver of the vehicle will be responsible for representation/payment. In such cases Fire Brigade purpose cannot be put forward as a defence, and the Brigade will notify the appropriate authority accordingly.
 - (c) Driving appears dangerous or no obvious exemption.
- 1.57 If the driving falls into this category, then a notice of intended prosecution will be sent to the Brigade. The matter will be dealt with as a formal prosecution (see below).
- 1.58 Notifications received in accordance with above will, in the case of vehicles registered to the Brigade, be sent to Operational Directorate Support Services. The person responsible for the vehicle will then (if necessary), be requested to provide a statement which will be aligned with the three categories above.

Decision to prosecute (potential criminal/civil case)

- 1.59 When a decision has been taken by the police or other persons to prosecute, the LFC's General Counsel to the Commissioner is authorised to act for the driver, provided that it is considered a suitable and proper case. The Commissioner may reimburse fines and/or costs incurred by members of the Brigade in cases where they are satisfied that the employee concerned acted reasonably in the course of duty. This is outside of the process described above.

Vehicles not registered/leased to the Brigade

- 1.60 The recipient of a Notice of Intended Prosecution/Penalty Charge Notice who consider that they fall with Category 1 above are to notify Operational Directorate Support Services. The report is to contain all relevant information (call number, nature of incident etc.). The information requested on the notice of intended prosecution is also to be given. In addition, they are required to provide documentation authorising the Fire Brigade to act on their behalf.
- 1.61 No driver is to submit a defence of Fire Brigade purpose if the circumstances are not deemed to fall into Category 1 above.
- 1.62 Prosecutions for speeding offences that result in penalty points are to be reported.
- 1.63 All personnel are reminded that the time limits indicated on notices of intended prosecution must be strictly observed.

2. Safety and welfare of crew (on and off of appliances)

Seat belts

- 2.1 It is policy to wear seatbelts, at all times, when travelling in a moving vehicle. Seat belts must be worn by all personnel travelling in Brigade vehicles when attending or returning from operational incidents and using the vehicle for non-operational purposes, such as community safety visits. In addition, all locks and security fittings on doors should be fully engaged by the person nearest the door(s), and the door(s) security tested before the vehicle moves off.

- 2.2 Seat belt defects are to be reported to Babcock International Group, they should be treated as a Code 1 defect if the number of available belts in the rear cab drops below the number of riders. The appliance is to be taken off the run. This also applies to any defect to either seat belt in the front cab. All other instances are a Code 2 defect.

Donning of PPE

- 2.3 It is expected that PPE will be donned in most circumstances prior to the appliance leaving the station. This must however be balanced against delaying the turn out. When a call is received whilst status six every effort must be made to don the PPE before the appliance is driven in response mode. It is to be the exception that PPE is donned whilst on route not the norm and never when responding from a fire station.
- 2.4 The instruction given in Policy number 466 – respiratory protective equipment - breathing apparatus – operational procedures prohibiting the donning of BA on route is to be strictly observed.

Footwear

- 2.5 In addition, drivers of fire appliances and other vehicles must use footwear that will not hinder or obstruct the safe and effective operation of the foot pedals when driving.

Control of exhaust fumes

- 2.6 The Brigade has taken a number of steps to reduce the amount of exhaust emissions produced by Fire Brigade vehicles. These include:
- Looking at providing fuel which produces as few emissions, or the harmful constituents of emissions, as possible. As technology with respect to fuel emissions improves the Brigade anticipates providing increasingly safe and environmentally friendly fuels in future.
 - The introduction of European standards, with regard to exhaust emissions, has driven the production of better performing vehicle engines in this respect. Also, the regular servicing and maintenance of all vehicles, along with mandatory inspections, will ensure continued reduced emission levels.

Control measures

- 2.7 There are a number of controls that local management should put in place, and/or ensure are maintained in order to reduce the exposure of personnel. These include:
- Ensuring appropriate and timely vehicle maintenance takes place.
 - Where appropriate consider recommending the replacement of older engines with more modern engines that meet more exacting emission legislation.
 - Ensuring drivers switch off engines as soon as possible rather than leave them idling.
 - Open the appliance doors (front and rear) before starting the engine when the appliance is in the appliance bay.
 - Minimise the number of occasions vehicles need to be started.
 - That vehicles move out of the appliance bay promptly.
 - That engines are run outside whenever possible.
 - Reporting excess emissions.
 - Ensuring routine inspections are conducted to ensure there are adequate door seals on doors leading from the appliance room to accommodation areas, and that these doors are self-closing.

- That personnel spend as little time as possible in the vicinity of exhaust emissions when in confined spaces and stand clear of the exhaust area when outside.
- Taking exhaust emissions into account when parking vehicles (e.g. not parking with the exhaust in line with a door, pole house etc).
- Ensure that no activity likely to expose personnel to exhaust emissions takes place in the appliance bay when vehicles are likely to be running.

Actions at stations

Accommodation

- 2.8 As part of the regular health and safety and station accommodation checks, sub/station officers should include monitoring of the actions necessary to reduce generation of and exposure to exhaust emissions. This should include inspection of all door seals and automatic door-closers, especially on doors leading to the appliance bay to ensure they are working and effective in controlling the ingress of exhaust emissions. This is particularly necessary, with regard to muster bays and gear/equipment areas where particulates (mostly soot) from diesel emissions can settle. Only what is essential should be stored within the appliance bay.
- 2.9 Cleaning of appliance bays should include periodic washing of the doors, walls, and bay floor to ensure particulate matter is removed. Gulley's and open drains within or on the periphery of the appliance bay should be free running, in order to remove any debris that has been washed off.
- 2.10 Appliance wall cleaning will be by request only. Station commanders should request appliance bay walls are washed when there is a visible build up. This can then be included in any annual cleaning programme. It is not envisaged that cleaning will be required more frequently than annually, and many out-of-London stations may require cleaning less frequently.

Vehicles

- 2.11 Starting up and running vehicles while in the appliance bay should be kept to a minimum. Sub/station officers and drivers must consider the build-up of exhaust emissions that will occur should appliances be run inside the appliance bay with doors closed, and therefore should ensure that doors at both the front and rear of the appliance bay are fully opened and/or that the appliance is driven outside as soon as possible, when vehicle checks or testing is taking place.
- 2.12 There are few occasions, and these are very specific, when there is a need to 'rev' the vehicle engine while the vehicle is stationary. On all occasions when the vehicle has to be started indoors the driver and the officer in charge (OIC) should ensure that there are no people in the immediate vicinity and connecting doors/openings to the bay from station accommodation are all closed. This will prevent anyone from breathing in concentrated emissions.
- 2.13 The majority of the drivers' daily checks can be done without starting the appliance. Unless the appliance has not been used during the preceding shift there is no need for a "routine" start at the beginning of each watch. For those checks which require the engine to be started the appliance bay doors should be opened and the vehicle driven outside immediately, where these checks should take place.
- 2.14 Vehicles should never be run for any length of time when inside a building, and in no circumstances should they be run without the appliance bay doors being open.

Employer/employee responsibility

- 2.15 In the same way that an employer has a responsibility to its employees with regard to health and safety issues, every employee has a responsibility for their own health and safety and the health and safety of those around them. Exhaust emissions are a hazard that can be easily mitigated by common sense

actions and appropriate management. The steps outlined above if conscientiously applied will ensure that the risk from this source remains minimal.

3. Car schemes (and use of pool cars)

Introduction

- 3.1 This section of the policy provides information on the terms and conditions of the Brigade's three car schemes, the essential car users scheme, the leased car scheme and the casual car users scheme. Details of conditions common to all schemes are also set out in this policy.

Essential car users scheme

- 3.2 The essential car users scheme (ECUS) is applicable to officers in the role of station commander to deputy commissioner, who have been authorised by the Commissioner to use their private car in the performance of their duties. It is an alternative to the leased car scheme. Staff in other roles (and occupational groups) may be allowed to join the scheme; this must be authorised at deputy commissioner level.
- 3.3 Essential users are those whose duties are of such a nature that it is essential for them to have a car at their disposal whenever required, and the Brigade considers it to be essential in the interests of the efficient conduct of its business that the officer shall be permitted to use their private car in carrying out their official duties.
- 3.4 Where a temporary promotion to station commander is expected to last for 6 months or more participation in the scheme on a voluntary basis will be permitted.
- 3.5 The National Joint Council for Local Authorities' Fire Brigades sets lump sum and mileage rates for the Essential car user scheme (ECUS). The Brigade supplements the lump sum rate.
- 3.6 All cars added to the scheme must comply with the following criteria (effective from 1 April 2020):
- Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) compliant.
 - 135 g/km CO₂ or less (150g/km CO₂ for cars with vehicle registrations on or after 1 April 2020 under the Worldwide Harmonised Light Vehicle Test Procedure (WLTP)).
 - Diesel cars added to the scheme must have a 'moderate' or better NO_x rating from the GLA Cleaner Vehicle Checker.
- 3.7 By 25 October 2021 all cars on the ECUS must be ULEZ compliant (with an extension to 25 October 2022 considered on a case-by-case basis for officers due to retire). ULEZ vehicle compliance can be checked here: <https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/check-your-vehicle/>
- 3.8 From 25 October 2021 all cars added to the scheme will also need to meet the following emission requirements:
- 120g/km of CO₂ or less.
- 3.9 From January 2025, all cars added to the scheme will need to be non-diesel and zero emissions capable, in line with the Mayor's London Environment Strategy.
- 3.10 Further details of the scheme are available on the car-schemes hotwire page.

Lump sum payment

- 3.11 The lump sum applicable to vehicles on the scheme (inclusive of the LFB supplement) is £1,459 per year (£121.58 per month).
- 3.12 This lump sum is increased by £1000 p.a. provided that the scheme vehicle:
- Is ULEZ compliant;
 - emits 135 g/km CO₂ or less (150g/km CO₂ for cars with vehicle registrations on or after 1 April 2020 under WLTP); and
 - has a 'moderate' or better NO_x rating from the GLA Cleaner Vehicle Checker if diesel powered and added to the scheme after 5 November 2018.

Leased car scheme

- 3.13 The leased car scheme is an optional alternative to the essential car users scheme which is available to staff who are deemed by the Brigade to be essential users whose duties are of such a nature that it is essential for them to have a car at their disposal whenever required, and staff chose the option to lease a vehicle rather than use a privately owned vehicle.
- 3.14 Further details of the scheme and joining pack are available by emailing Procurement's Vehicle Administration and Monitoring Section – '>VAMS2' in the Outlook address book ('vams2@london-fire.gov.uk').
- 3.15 This is a single tier scheme with the Brigade subsidy set at £5120 with effect from 1 April 2019.
- 3.16 From 1 April 2020 all new cars on the scheme will need to meet the following emission requirements:
- 150 g/km CO₂ or less (under WLTP).
 - Diesel cars must have a 'moderate' or better NO_x rating from the GLA cleaner vehicle checker.
 - New cars will already be ULEZ compliant by definition.
- 3.17 From 1 April 2021 all new cars on the scheme will need to meet the following emission requirements:
- (a) 120g/km of CO₂ or less.
 - (b) New diesel cars must have a 'Low' NO_x rating from the GLA cleaner vehicle checker.
- 3.18 From January 2025, all new cars on the scheme must be non-diesel and zero emissions capable, in line with the Mayor's London Environment Strategy. Officers bringing new cars on to the scheme from this date will need to factor in the required lead-in time (up to 8 months).
- 3.19 Where a specific model's cost exceeds the Brigade subsidy the employee will bear that additional cost.
- 3.20 The subsidy will normally be uplifted annually on 1 April each year in line with movements in the car costs index section of the Index of retail prices.

Casual car user scheme

- 3.21 The casual car users scheme (CCUS) provides arrangements for staff where the use of a private vehicle is not deemed to be essential by the Brigade, but which is viewed as beneficial to the efficient conduct in carrying out their official duties.
- 3.22 The decision to allow participation in this scheme will normally be supported by a business case relating to one or more of the following:
- (a) Number and dispersion of venues attended.
 - (b) Requirement for carriage of materials or equipment not safely portable on public transport.

(c) A short, or long term reasonable adjustment for medical reasons under the Equality Act.

- 3.23 Vehicles must be rated at 150g/km or less. New joiners to the scheme must comply from the date they join the scheme. Existing users must comply upon their next change of vehicle.
- 3.24 Mileage rates for the casual car users scheme are the HMRC rates of 45p per mile up to 10,000 miles and 25p per mile thereafter.
- 3.25 Further details of the scheme are available on the car-schemes hotwire page.

Assisted car purchase schemes

- 3.26 Loans are available to staff that qualify to access either the ECUS or CCUS.
- 3.27 Loans may be made to authorised car users to help them purchase vehicles for use for official purposes or to redeem loans granted for such purposes by a previous employer. All vehicles purchased via this scheme, whether for essential or casual car users, must be ULEZ-compliant.
- 3.28 The interest rate for loans granted under both the essential and casual car user schemes (ECUS and CCUS), is 2.5% per annum.
- 3.29 Further details of the scheme and application form are available on the car-schemes hotwire page.

Journeys over 50 miles (not applicable to operational officers available for mobilising)

- 3.30 All journeys of over 50 miles round trip to be on public transport. Approvals in advance required for any exceptions to this approach. Agreed guidance on exceptions which will include the following:
- 3.31 Car sharing.
- (a) Requirement to transport bulky/expensive equipment or materials.
- (b) Where travelling by car will take significantly less time or the time/location of the meeting would make it unreasonable to undertake the journey by public transport.

Home to office mileage

- 3.32 For all staff, other than protected TMG staff, home to office (normal workplace) mileage is not claimable.
- 3.33 The position of HMRC is that an officer's stand-by base, other than when specifically responding to emergencies (or incidents), is not a 'place of work'. Therefore, journeys between normal office and the stand-by base, whether or not the officer is on a 24, cannot be claimed as business mileage.

Specific for cars entering the lease and essential car users scheme

- 3.34 All new lease cars must comply with the latest EU emissions standards at the time of ordering. In line with the Brigade's environmental and sustainability policies. Users are encouraged to choose economical and low emission engine cars with adequate performance, and in any event new vehicles coming on to the schemes must comply with the emissions criteria set out in the main body of this policy.
- 3.35 **Blue beacon usage - applicable to leased and ECUS cars** – The roof of the vehicle must be able to support one of the Brigade's standard issue blue beacons, i.e. either a magnetic or tethered suction mounted, both of which will allow the beacon to remain secure on the vehicle at speeds up to 70mph.
- 3.36 **Minimum height applicable to both leased and ECUS cars** – The overall height must be at least 1200mm above the ground at the blue beacon mounting point at the centre of the roof. This is a legal requirement for the emergency services blue beacon to be mounted in compliance with the Road Traffic Acts.

- 3.37 **Seating capacity: applicable to both lease and ECUS cars entering the schemes** – In addition to the driver, the car must be able to carry three adult passengers plus driver in reasonable comfort and be able to house one standby kit bag in the boot space at the same time as the four occupants.
- 3.38 **Front bumper arrangements: applicable for both lease and ECUS cars entering the schemes** - Bull bars, hard mounted winches or other arrangements that may detract from the standard car specification front end collision/impact safety for third parties are not permitted. In addition, from 1 April 2018 all vehicles on both schemes will be fitted with a front number plate holder with side-facing blue repeaters.
- 3.39 **Standards and public image: applicable to lease and ECUS cars entering the schemes** – Any car must be of a design and appearance and be maintained to be commensurate with the Brigade's high standards and public image.

Ultra low emission vehicle criteria

- 3.40 The following are accepted as conditions of any low emission vehicle being permitted to be placed on any of the LFB car schemes and such users agree to actively manage their vehicle to maintain maximum levels of availability:
- (a) The selected car can undertake any foreseeable work journey within normally expected time frames, including but not limited to emergency response journeys and such journeys should be possible without the need to recharge at work.
 - (b) An individual's base location may change from time to time and with that the normal work journeys and the location and availability of vehicle charging and refuelling facilities may also change.
 - (c) The availability of vehicle charging facilities cannot be guaranteed, where available operational response vehicles of on-duty officers will have priority over the use of the LFB provided EV charging points.
 - (d) Users must manage the need to charge/refuel their car to ensure the maximum range/charge is available whilst on-duty.
 - (e) Users must make appropriate arrangements locally to ensure that whilst not on-duty, they do not 'block' the use of any LFB provided charge point.
 - (f) Costs are reimbursed as per the requirements set out in Policy number 770, all charging and refuelling related costs are the responsibility of the user.
 - (g) Only dedicated vehicle charging points are to be used for the purposes of charging vehicles at any LFB premise.
- 3.41 Low emission vehicles compliant with the standard requirements regarding vehicle size and performance as set out in this document will be considered for acceptance onto the LFB schemes if they meet one of the following criteria:
- (a) The vehicle has a hybrid electric engine.
 - (b) The vehicle is electric and range extended with appropriate battery range.
 - (c) The vehicle is zero emission (e.g. 100% Electric or hydrogen) and all of the following criteria are met:
 - (i) Minimum manufacturer advertised battery range of 200 miles.
 - (ii) The user has the capacity to recharge at home via a dedicated 7kw home charge point, or near to home via a publicly accessible rapid charger, Tesla supercharger or hydrogen refuelling station (see www.zap-map.com). This is to ensure that the vehicle is charged when the user comes on duty, and that this is maintained when on a 24 hour duty so that attendance times can be met.

- (iii) Any cables, adaptors or other means required to enable 'fast' or 'rapid' charging at LFB premises or public charging facilities will be supplied by the user and carried within the vehicle at all times whilst on-duty. The Brigade will not reimburse/refund any costs for the equipment purchased.

- 3.42 Vehicles meeting the criteria above will not automatically be accepted on to the LFB schemes. Any proposed vehicle will be subject to reasonable consideration of an individual's circumstances including, but not limited to, home to work distance and proximity of charging or refuelling facilities and the inclusion of such vehicles is subject to review. Pending the Brigade's contractor being able to fit the audible and visual warning systems on either 100% electric vehicles, or an electric vehicle with a fuel range extender, the Brigade will arrange for the emergency equipment to be installed by the vehicle manufacturer and will meet all the associated costs (both fitting and removal). Where the vehicle manufacturer does not support this service, if the vehicle has an isolated battery that is able to support an external 12v auxiliary option, a portable combined two-tone blue light unit will be provided by the Brigade. If the vehicle does not have an isolated battery, then the matter will be referred to Tech Fleet for their opinion on the vehicle's suitability.
- 3.43 Inclusion of the vehicle on the LFB user schemes will be subject to review if the user fails to manage the vehicle charging to ensure sufficient range for operational response.

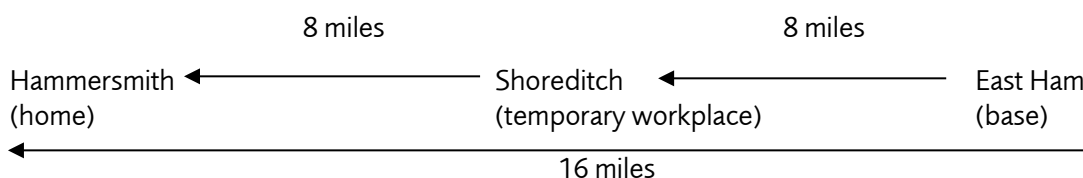
Guidance

- 3.44 Foreseeable work journeys should also consider the potential for journeys made outside of London for mutual assistance or other operational requirements.
- 3.45 Advice on the different types of low emission vehicles on the market, costs, range and other useful details can be found at www.goultralow.com.
- 3.46 It is important to consider the main driving style (e.g. urban, motorway) you will undertake as this will affect the range achieved.
- 3.47 More robust measures of a vehicle's real world performance are considered to be:
- (a) **Range:** a vehicle's stated EPA range as measured by the USA Environment Protection Agency.
 - (b) **MPG:** The EQUA Index provides real world test results.
- 3.48 The contact point for enquiries on ultra low emission vehicles within the Brigade is the Vehicle Administration and Monitoring Section – '>VAMS2' in the Outlook address book ('vams2@london-fire.gov.uk').

Indirect journeys

Example 1

Jane lives in East Ham and is based at Shoreditch. She is interviewing at Hammersmith and travels straight there.



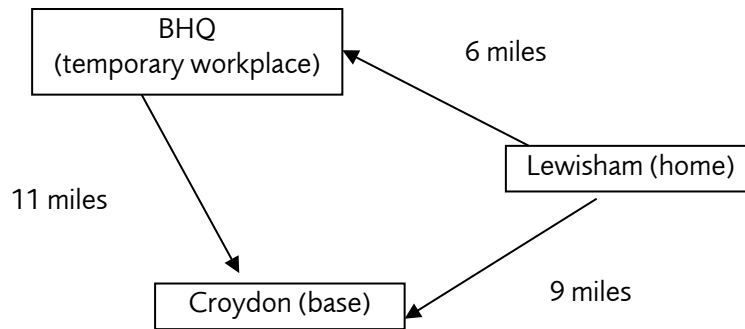
Journey from home to Hammersmith cannot be claimed as home to office mileage is not claimable. Hammersmith is less than 10 miles from normal workplace and, is considered to be substantially the same as ordinary commuting.

However, if journey is broken to attend a meeting at normal workplace, then journey from Shoreditch to Hammersmith is treated as a business journey.

But, if journey is broken at Shoreditch just to pick up papers, then the journey remains substantially the same as ordinary commuting and is not claimable.

Example 2

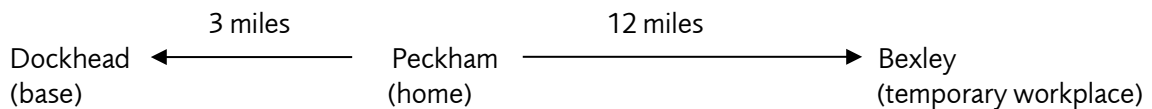
Keith lives in Lewisham and is based in Croydon. He attends a meeting in BHQ and travels direct from home.



Journey from Lewisham to BHQ is a business journey as it is in a different direction to normal workplace and it is also more than 10 miles normal workplace. Journey from BHQ to Croydon is a business journey. Journey from Croydon back to home is a home to office journey and so is not claimable.

Example 3

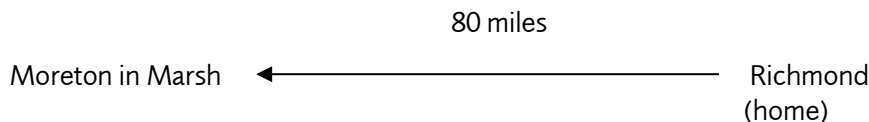
Alex lives in Peckham and is based at Dockhead. He travels to Bexley Fire Station for the whole day.



Full journey from Peckham (home) to Bexley (temporary workplace) and return can be claimed as business miles.

Example 4

John lives in Richmond and has to go to the Fire Service College at Moreton in Marsh for a 5 day course.



Note: this journey should be taken by public transport unless there are reasons for needing to use a car, for example needing to bring full fire kit in addition to a normal suitcase for a residential course.

The whole journey can be claimed as business miles.

Mileage rates

Essential car users' scheme

- As of 1 April 2014 HMRC rates apply as per circular NJC/08/13.
- Up to 10,000 miles 45p per mile
- Over 10,000 miles 25p per mile
- Claims for the purpose of obtaining a meal are not permitted.

Leased car scheme

The leased car scheme mileage rate has been revised with effect from 1 March 2019 as set out below in accordance with the HMRC non-taxable rates. These rates will vary in line with HMRC changes.

Diesel:	1600cc or less	10p per mile
	1601cc to 2000cc	11p per mile
	2000cc+	13p per mile
Petrol:	1400cc or less	11p per mile
	1401cc to 2000cc	14p per mile
	2000cc+	21p per mile
LPG:	1400cc or less	7p per mile
	1401cc to 2000cc	8p per mile
	2000cc+	13p per mile

Hybrid cars are treated as petrol or diesel cars for this purpose.

The **Advisory Electricity Rate** for fully electric cars is 4p per mile.

- Casual car users scheme

Rates for official mileage by vehicle category

Motor cars and tricar exceeding 500cc

- First 10,000 miles per year 45p
- Thereafter 25p

Motorcycles, autcycles and motor assisted cycles of the following engine capacities:

- All mileage 24p
- Passenger allowance - Per mile per passenger 5p

Cycle mileage rate

3.49 Staff using a bicycle for official business journeys can claim 20p per mile for such journeys.

Use of pool cars

Guidance

3.50 For senior officer's this guidance should be read in conjunction with Policy number 327 - Guidance for senior officers in relation to mobilising and rota management.

3.51 Pool cars are retained as part of the fleet for the following reasons:

- Primarily for senior officers to fulfil their operational role if acting in a temporary capacity, when newly promoted awaiting permission to join the ECUS scheme or when they are awaiting a lease delivery date. This would also include occasions when they do not have access to their ECUS or lease car for any reason which may include when their vehicle is away for a service.
- Subject to availability pool cars can be utilised by CFS teams and light duties personnel to assist with work routines.

3.52 Staff that do not have access to a car and who are not on the casual car users scheme may in exceptional circumstances request a pool car if required to attend meetings outside of the LFB area. Staff should always be encouraged to take public transport, but it is accepted that on some occasions this is not always practical or possible.

- 3.53 It must be remembered that pool cars are a shared resource within the Brigade and are not allocated for exclusive use by any officer. Any other use of the vehicles is subservient to operational requirements and the use of a vehicle must be cleared with Establishment and Performance Team (EPT) on telephone extension 88200 or out of hours to the RMC on telephone extension 88111.
- 3.54 Each Area Support Team has three vehicles permanently allocated to them. The Area Support Team manage the use and allocation of them. These vehicles must be returned to an agreed Brigade location at the end of each working day. These are not dealt with as pool vehicles but are subject to conditions set out in the Degradation Policy below.

Degradation policy

- 3.55 A pool car degradation policy is required to ensure that the allocation of pool vehicles is managed in the most effective and responsible way and to allow senior officers to carry out their primary function in relation to their operational role. It will also allow senior officers to monitor their staff in the operations arena.
- 3.56 The degradation policy outlined by Central Operations states that when a short fall in vehicles is identified, the vehicles are then allocated in accordance with the policy. The following list gives examples of who, in order, has primacy for the use of pool vehicles.
- Senior officers on 24 duties.
 - Station commanders that are twinned (two stations), single use if available.
 - Station commanders, single use if available. Remaining senior officers, taking into consideration the congestion charge zone and availability.
 - Other use subject to availability and requirements of the Brigade. (There may be occasions where the cars allocated to the area support teams will be required to be released back to EPT to provide senior officer's with a vehicle whilst on 24's).

HMRC compliance/determining who the driver of the vehicle was

- 3.57 To ensure an efficient and effective use of the pool vehicle fleet and satisfy HMRC requirements, details of the location of the vehicles and who they are allocated to needs to be kept on an online database managed by EPT. Individuals allocated a pool car must update the TLG4, on a daily basis, and forward at the end of every month to Contracts Management Group. Vehicles can then be reallocated to meet any emergency operational requirement. The database of location, allocation and use of these vehicles can then be used to meet any internal or external audit requirements.

Pool car database

- 3.58 A pool vehicle database is currently maintained by the Establishment and Performance Team (EPT) and Resource Management Centre (RMC) (out of hours) which provides management information relating to all pool vehicles. Within that database is the station ground identifying where the users agreed call out base is located whilst performing 24 duties. Furthermore, there is an address identifying the agreed LFB premises where the vehicle is securely parked when that officer is off duty, including security arrangements for the keys.
- 3.59 The EPT/RMC database will include all Brigade pool vehicles. Where other Brigade departments have Brigade vehicles allocated, they will be responsible for maintaining individual vehicle records to satisfy periodic internal and external audits. Line managers must ensure any staff using pool vehicles have their details recorded on the database.

Staff responsibility

- 3.60 Pool vehicles are a limited shared resource, and when not being utilised for legitimate use, must be left at the agreed LFB premises, and the keys made available at all times.

- 3.61 Vehicles must not be taken without EPT being informed. When a vehicle becomes available permission to use it must be granted by EPT/RMC. Individual arrangements must not be made between senior officers without consulting EPT/RMC. This will ensure that the database that is held at EPT/RMC is kept updated and accurate.
- 3.62 Staff will be allocated the nearest available vehicle and must return it to the agreed location once the agreed allocated period for using the vehicle is finished. The agreed location will be decided by EPT and communicated to the user on allocation.
- 3.63 Once the officer no longer has the use of the car, they must inform EPT/RMC and record this in an email to EPT with details of where the vehicle and keys has been left. Until EPT/RMC have been informed that the vehicle has been returned to its agreed location, the officer remains responsible for the car.
- 3.64 All officers are responsible for their own personal items, personal protective equipment and ancillary items and it is important that these items are not left in a pool vehicle when not being used by the officer.
- 3.65 All officers returning vehicles are responsible for ensuring the condition of the vehicle is satisfactory and that it is clean, charged/fully fuelled, to ensure that it is ready for operational use.
- 3.66 All pool cars are issued with a fuel card for purchasing fuel. At the beginning of each calendar month the officer allocated the pool vehicle will forward the monthly TLG4 log sheets for the previous month to Contracts Management Group, as per the form's footer.

Senior officer's that are required to share a car on a regular basis

- 3.67 Senior commanders working at the same location may need to share the pool vehicles. However, it should be noted that officers performing a 24-hour duty have primacy so they must secure the sole use of a 'pool car' to ensure their operational availability.
- 3.68 Officers will be responsible for the daily and weekly inspection and maintenance of the vehicles in accordance with the driver's checklist which is contained in the vehicle handbook. It is important that all officers complete all sections of the TLG4 forms including the closing mileage section upon completion of their shift.
- 3.69 As soon as an officer becomes aware that the vehicle they are currently using/sharing will not be available for whatever reason, they are to inform their respective line manager and EPT, who will then identify a suitable replacement vehicle where available and appropriate.
- 3.70 Senior officers may be required to travel anywhere in the Brigade operating area to collect a pool car. Arrangements to ensure that vehicles are available within each area will be made by EPT.

Financial implications of use of a pool car

- 3.71 It important that all staff are aware of the potential tax liability of use of pool vehicles
- 3.72 The HMRC tax guide (Booklet 480 - Expenses and Benefits) on pool vehicles and vans states 'A vehicle is not considered to be available for private use if it is a pooled car. No assessable benefit arises from its use.'
- 3.73 A vehicle only qualifies as a pool vehicle if all the following conditions are satisfied:
 - (a) It is available to, and actually used by more than one employee.
 - (b) It is made available, in the case of each of those employees, by reason of their employment.
 - (c) It is not usually used by one of them to the exclusion of the others.
 - (d) Any private use by an employee is merely incidental to their business use.
 - (e) It is not normally kept overnight on or near the residence of any of the employees unless it is kept on premises occupied by the provider of the car.

- 3.74 **Meaning of merely incidental** - The expression merely incidental to imposes a qualitative rather than a quantitative test. The use of a vehicle for what is primarily a business journey but embracing some limited private use would be within the terms of (b) in the above. An example might be where an employee who is required to undertake a long business journey, is allowed to take a pool vehicle home the previous night in readiness for an early morning start. The office to home journey although private is, in the particular context subordinate to the lengthy business trip the following day and is undertaken to further the business trip. In short, it is merely incidental to the business use of the vehicle on the occasion. A reservation is necessary in the type of case: if it happened too often, condition (e) above would not be met.
- 3.75 To ensure no tax liability falls on individual officers or the Brigade the above conditions must be met. Any officer who fails to follow these conditions thereby causing a tax liability to arise will be required to meet any income tax assessment issued on the pooled vehicle.

Maintaining correct information/audit process

- 3.76 The database will enable full details to be maintained on the availability and use of pool vehicles. It will also ensure a robust audit process can be applied at regular intervals.
- 3.77 It is imperative that information collated is accurate and entered onto the database as this will assist in providing the Inland Revenue with full details of the use of pooled vehicles and ensure that no financial penalties are imposed on the Brigade.
- 3.78 Random audit inspections will be carried out to ensure that the policy is being adhered to. Internal audit section will expect management to carry out inspections to satisfy that the policy is being adhered to.
- 3.79 **Physical check** – Regular audits will be carried out by RMC after 17.00 hours and at weekends to ensure that pool vehicles are parked in the correct location when not used on 24s.

4. Training

Introduction

- 4.1 This section provides information and guidance on the relevant driving courses and what is required to drive vehicles within the fleet.
- 4.2 Driver training is provided by Babcock Training Ltd (BTL) for all staff that require acquisition for Category C vehicles and for emergency response driving courses for both Category B and C vehicles. In addition, there are familiarisation courses for specialist appliances delivered via Babcock Transport Training. Staff are trained and revalidated in accordance with best practice, NFCC codes of practice and the standards set by the Fire Standards Board (FSB). Revalidation is by means of a 4-yearly assessment.

Competence to drive

- 4.3 This section of the policy provides information on the relevant training required for various roles within LFB.
- 4.4 Drivers must always drive within their own level of experience and skill, taking into account the driving task being undertaken and the vehicle being driven.
- 4.5 Line managers and drivers are both responsible for ensuring driving and behavioural standards are maintained. When under performance is identified and further training or an assessment is deemed the best course of action, an email stating what is required should be sent to TrainingProgramming@london-fire.gov.uk

- 4.6 Failure to maintain the standards of driving and behaviour that the Brigade requires may result in the authorisation to drive a vehicle on Brigade business being withdrawn. Any concerns regarding the best course of action required should be referred to the Brigade's driving SME within Operational Policy and Assurance for advice.

Attending a driver training course

- 4.7 A licence check will be completed on all driving courses. Staff should attend with a copy of their paper licence which can be obtained online for the Instructor to check. Failure to provide a valid licence for the category of vehicle required to be driven may result in exclusion from the course and management action may be taken.

Failure of a driving course

- 4.8 Firefighters will be given two attempts at passing an ERD course. If unsuccessful on the second attempt a case conference will be held with BTL, LFB SME and representatives from LFB Training to determine if the member of staff should be recommended for further training.

Promotion to station commander

- 4.9 Staff who pass an assessment centre must successfully complete a driving course (ERDIAC) before being promoted to Station Commander Development. If the staff member fails to pass after two attempts a case conference will be held to determine what action must be taken.

Continuation training

- 4.10 Drivers should be encouraged via their line managers to periodically remind themselves of the system of vehicle control, their exemptions, the highway code and most importantly what they are not exempt from when driving to an incident. There are CBT packages on big learning to assist with pre-learning before attending a driving course.
- 4.11 Every four years all staff that are required to undertake Emergency Response Driving must attend a revalidation course.

Familiarisation

- 4.12 Drivers must familiarise themselves with the vehicle they are using if they have not driven the particular model before; for example, if a hire vehicle of the class they are qualified to drive is provided. Refer to the driver's handbook where necessary.

Specialist appliances

- 4.13 All specialist appliances require additional training. Depending on the type of vehicle some of this will be familiarisation by means of computer based training and some will require trainer led training. See appendix to this policy for further information.
- 4.14 Drivers of specialist vehicles must maintain their driving skills, and familiarity for all the vehicles they are qualified to drive. If appliances are double jumped then time should be allocated to staff to take them for a drive to ensure skills are maintained.

Driving courses

- 4.15 Below provides a list of courses that are required to be completed to drive vehicles within the LFB fleet.

Category C vehicles				
Vehicle type	Pre-requisite courses	Course code	Stars skill	Periodic revalidation
Pumping Appliances	Cat C licence	DTLGEF	MD	Yes - ERDRVA
32m TL Blue light driving	DTLGEF	ERDTA3	D32	NA
64m TL Manoeuvring (South)	ERDTA3	ERCRM6		NA
64m TL Manoeuvring (North)	ERDTA3	ERNWM6		NA
64m TL Blue light driving	ERCRM6/ERNWM6	ERDTA6	D64	NA
Hose Laying Lorry	DTLGEF	DTHLDR	HLD	NA
Bulk Foam Unit	DTLGEF	DTBFDR	BF	NA
Prime Mover	DTLGEF	DTHVDR	PM	NA
Aerial Ladder Platform	DTLGEF	DTAPMD	ALP	NA
Command Unit	DTLGEF			
Operational Support	DTLGEF			
Fire Rescue Unit	DTLGEF			
Category C1/D1 vehicles				
Vehicle type	Pre-requisite courses	Course code	Stars skill	Periodic revalidation
DIM	DTLGEF	DTDIDR		Yes - ERDRVA
Land Rover	DTLGEF	DTAWDF	AWD	Yes - DTAWDM
Mini Bus	DTLGEF			
Category B vehicles				
Vehicle type	Pre-requisite courses	Course code	Stars skill	Periodic revalidation
BMW i3	NA	ERDIAC	ER	Yes - ERDRVC
Fire Investigation	NA	ERDIAC	ER	Yes - ERDRVC
SAWD	NA	ERDIAC	ER	Yes - ERDRVC
Radio Workshops Van	NA	ERDIAC	ER	Yes - ERDRVC
PEG Van	NA	ERDIAC	ER	Yes - ERDRVC

Use of headlights for ERD driving

- 4.16 If driving a vehicle that does not have fitted head-light flashers, the driver can under the correct circumstances use a long 4 second flash of the head lights to aide progress when using emergency warning equipment. Any shorter than 4 seconds can often be considered aggressive and is highly likely to be counterproductive to making progress, as you may get an adverse affect from other road users.

5. General driving

Introduction

- 5.1 This section of the policy provides information for all driving matters that are not Emergency Response Driving (ERD). Included within this section is information on car schemes available to employees.

Maintaining professionalism

- 5.2 Drivers are reminded that when driving they are representing the London Fire Brigade. Members of the public will judge them and the London Fire Brigade on the manner in which they are driving.

Therefore, drivers should take utmost consideration for other road users in line with the Brigade values. When driving to an emergency you require the assistance of other road users to aide your progress so for this reason, when you are not driving to an emergency you should be even more courteous than what may be considered the norm.

Looking after yourself

- 5.3 Where possible, journeys are to be pre-planned to ensure that adequate time is given to travel. When travelling long distances out of the Brigade area, consideration must be given to allowing suitable and sufficient rest periods, or alternative means of travel should be considered.
- 5.4 The driver must not be distracted by any mobile communications equipment in accordance with Policy number 336 – mobile communication devices.
- 5.5 Driving under response conditions can be a high-risk activity requiring high levels of concentration. Therefore, the driver should be allowed to focus on the drive and non-essential dialogue with the driver avoided.

Fire appliance commander

- 5.6 On a fire appliance the appliance commander is responsible for the supervision of the vehicle and in addition to the driver, has a responsibility:
 - (a) For the safety of the vehicle and its passengers;
 - (b) to ensure that the appliance proceeds to the required destination and is driven in such a manner and speed so as not to endanger themselves, their crew or passengers, other road users and pedestrians.
- 5.7 In addition to the driver, the appliance commander must ensure that all occupants are wearing seat belts when the vehicle is moving.
- 5.8 The appliance commander is responsible for monitoring the standard of driving. They should provide a steadying and calming influence on the driver. Where the appliance commander observes a standard of driving below that expected, the appliance commander needs to discuss the performance issues and decide if the matter needs to be referred for a determination on whether further training is required.

Use of mobile communications devices whilst driving

- 5.9 Responsibility for the safe control of a vehicle always rests with the driver. Making or receiving a call, even with a hands-free kit, will distract your attention from driving and could lead to an accident.
- 5.10 Drivers are four times as likely to have an accident if they are using a mobile telephone. (Department for Transport (DTRL) 'Think! Road Safety' document).
- 5.11 One of the recommendations made by the DTLR in their 'Think! Road Safety' document is that a voicemail service should be used to help drivers avoid answering a mobile communications device while driving.
- 5.12 Since the 1 December 2003 it has been an offence to use a handheld mobile telephone or other handheld electronic device whilst driving.
- 5.13 The Brigade instruction is that you must not make or receive calls or text messages from a mobile telephone or other communications device whilst driving, regardless of whether a handsfree kit, fixed or otherwise, is fitted to the vehicle.
- 5.14 If you need to use the communications device to make or receive a call or text message whilst driving, you must pull over in a safe and legal area, make sure the car is stationary with the handbrake on and engine switched off before using the equipment.

Legislation

- 5.15 Regulation 110 of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 was inserted as new legislation by the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) (Amendment) (No.4) Regulations 2003. It came into force on 1 December 2003. The legislation relates to the use of mobile telephones and other data products whilst driving a motor vehicle.
- 5.16 The legislation prohibits a person from using a handheld mobile telephone or other data product whilst driving. The legislation directly affects all Brigade users of mobile communication devices.

LFB instruction

- 5.17 Whilst the new legislation does not prohibit the use of handsfree kits the Brigade instruction, based on Health and Safety advice, guidance from the Department for Transport document 'Think! Road Safety' and in accordance with the Highway Code, rules 127 and 128, goes further than the legislation, to reduce the risk from accidents.
- No driver (while driving) may use any form of handheld radio (including telephone, pagers and anything else). This applies whether the device is transmitting or receiving. It applies whether the device is handheld or fixed to the vehicle (e.g. in a 'handsfree kit'). The only exceptions are:
 - '999 calls' – see below.
 - The use of voice activated satellite navigation equipment by appliance and other vehicle drivers.
 - A radio device (Brigade main-scheme radio, mobile telephone or other) may be left switched on, so that the driver may hear transmissions to it, or be alerted to a call to it.

But:

- If the transmission requires the driver to respond in any way, they must stop safely before responding.
 - 'Responding' includes reading a message sent to a telephone, pager, or other communications device such as a two-way radio.
- 5.18 If you need to use a telephone or pager to make or receive a call or message whilst driving, you must pull over in a safe and legal area, make sure the vehicle is stationary with the handbrake on, before using the device. The instruction applies equally to telephones, pagers, and all other mobile handheld data and communications devices (not satellite navigation devices – see above).
- 5.19 The same rules apply to anyone involved in driving instruction who is supervising another driver.
- 5.20 Nothing in the new legislation or in this instruction will apply to making 999 calls in a genuine emergency, if it is unsafe for the driver to stop. This exemption applies only to making a 999 call and not to the actions taken in response to such calls.

Use of airwave radios

- 5.21 Whilst two-way radios, used for speech transmission, such as the Brigade main schemes are exempt from the new legislation, the guidance contained in Policy Number 987, remains unchanged. Drivers of vehicles being used for brigade purposes are not to operate the brigade radio until the vehicle has been brought to a halt.

Reversing

- 5.22 When it is necessary to reverse an appliance a banks person should be detailed to assist the driver.
- 5.23 Modern vehicles may be equipped with reversing cameras and other parking aids to assist with reversing manoeuvres and these should be utilised but must not be solely relied upon.

General principles to ensure safe reversing manoeuvres

- 5.24 Under no circumstances are reversing manoeuvres to be undertaken until the driver and attendants are clear about how the manoeuvre is going to be executed and the attendants are in position.
- The driver must always reverse slowly.
 - The driver must ensure they have an unobstructed view before starting the manoeuvre.
 - The attendant must use clear standard signals (see appendix 2) and must remain visible at all times while standing in a safe position from where they observe the route to be travelled and not be in the way. High visibility clothing must be worn when carrying out this task.
 - If the driver has any doubts about the route to be travelled, they must physically check the route before they start reversing the vehicle.
 - Drivers must use mirrors to maximum advantage but should not completely rely on them. If in doubt drivers must stop and look.
 - Drivers must wind the door window(s) down and ensure that they can hear instructions from attendant(s) and be more aware of their surroundings.
- 5.25 On LFB premises the following must be undertaken to ensure reversing manoeuvres are undertaken safely:
- Avoid reversing manoeuvres wherever possible; ensure the distance that has to be reversed is as short as possible.
 - Where reversing is unavoidable, organise the route to reduce the risk, if possible allocate a reversing area that is kept free from obstructions and people.
 - Ensure the area is well lit and, if necessary, marked out with stop lines and/or lines for the appliance to drive between. Any part of the structure in the vicinity of where the appliance will be reversed must be conspicuously marked.
- 5.26 Off LFB premises, reversing is more difficult as there is less control of the environment:
- Remove the need for reversing manoeuvres, when this is not possible ensure the distance that has to be reversed is as short as possible.
 - Before the vehicle is moved ensure someone has checked the route over which the vehicle will travel and any hazards created by the environment, e.g. street furniture, other vehicles and pedestrians.

Single crewed vehicles

- 5.27 If the appliance is crewed by one person the following must be observed:
- Under no circumstances is a single crewed vehicle to be reversed or manoeuvred on LFB premises without an attendant being present.
 - Anticipate where you are driving the vehicle, and whenever possible do not drive into a position you will have to reverse out of.
 - If you must reverse the vehicle, and you are unsure of your surroundings, physically check behind the vehicle before starting to reverse.

Eco-driving

- 5.28 **Hone your observation and anticipation skills.** Plan routes before travelling and keep a close eye on the road ahead to avoid stopping unnecessarily when approaching lights or roundabouts.

- 5.29 **Accelerate smoothly and minimise the number of gear changes.** Ease off the gas where possible to lower fuel consumption and use the highest gear available – but without labouring the engine. Keeping the revs between 1,500 and 2,500 rpm should help.
- 5.30 **Keep your tyres at the correct pressure – as stated in the car's handbook (or often on a sticker on the driver's door pillar).** Under-inflated tyres can significantly reduce your car's fuel economy.

Traversing soft or uneven ground

- 5.31 In normal circumstances Brigade appliances or vehicles should not leave the carriageway of a road or other hard standing.
- 5.32 If the nature and/or severity of the incident being attended justifies an appliance traversing soft or uneven ground, the appliance and incident commanders must ensure that the utmost care is taken to ensure that it does not become damaged, bogged down or stranded. On these occasions, the minimum number of appliances required to achieve the objective should leave the carriageway or hard-standing.
- 5.33 Crew members are to dismount the vehicle to act as 'look outs' and continually observe the appliance wheels for signs of sinking, and to ensure the ground is free from obstructions that could foul the vehicle. If the slightest doubt exists, the "look outs" will signal the driver to halt. The vehicle should then return to the highway by the same route as it left, if necessary by reversing the entire.
- 5.34 Personnel undertaking the role of lookout are also, particularly in the case of uneven ground, to exercise extreme caution in respect of their proximity to the appliance, and should ensure that they remain a safe distance in the event that they slip or stumble.
- 5.35 Should an appliance become bogged down or stranded, the crew must inform Brigade Control immediately and make no attempt to free it. Brigade Control will arrange for the appliance or other vehicle to be recovered.

Low clearance or restricted headroom

- 5.36 Under no circumstances should an appliance driver attempt to negotiate a low structure or obstruction without observing the following precautions:
- Crew members should dismount the appliance to act as 'look outs' and be so positioned as to give warning of possible fouling of the structure.
 - The appliance is to proceed with extreme caution.
 - If any doubt exists, no attempt should be made to negotiate the obstruction.
- 5.37 Appliance dimensions can be found in the operator's handbook and on a plate in the driving area in all appliances.

Note: In the course of routine business on the station ground, the opportunity should be taken by officers to survey the suitability of appliances to pass under any arches or structures where headroom is restricted and access to reach an operational incident is reasonably foreseeable.

6. Emergency response driving

Introduction

- 6.1 This section talks about emergency response driving and exemptions from road traffic legislation.

Road traffic legislation

- 6.2 Road traffic legislation contains exemptions for fire and rescue vehicles from specific traffic regulations in certain circumstances when being used for fire and rescue authority purposes. These exemptions must be exercised with caution and only when such vehicles are being used to respond to emergencies or other urgent priorities that have been deemed appropriate

In addition to internal policies and procedures, and the requirement to comply with health and safety legislation, the Brigade and personnel driving vehicles on Brigade business must ensure that the following legislation is complied with:

- (a) Motorways traffic (England and Wales) regulations 1982 (SI 1982/1163).
- (b) Road traffic regulations Act 1984. Road traffic act 1988.
- (c) Motor vehicles (construction and use) regulations 1986 (SI 1986/1078).
- (d) Zebra, pelican and puffin pedestrian crossings regulations and general directions 1997 (SI 1997/2400).
- (e) Road vehicles lighting regulations 1989 (SI 1989/1796).
- (f) Traffic signs regulations and general directions 2002 (SI 2002/3113).
- (g) The road safety act 2006.

Speed

- 6.3 It is expected that all emergency response drivers will proceed in a timely and safe manner when responding to emergencies, utilising visual and audible warning devices and exercising exemptions only when it is safe to do so, and where not to do so would cause an unacceptable delay in response to an emergency. It should be noted that achieving attendance times is not a legal requirement, and as such would not be accepted as justification for dangerous driving or driving without due care and attention.
- 6.4 Many journeys to incidents involving certain roles and types of vehicles do not warrant an emergency response speed but may warrant the use of audible and visual warning and the use of the other road traffic legislation exemptions to safely facilitate progress through heavy traffic. Only vehicles that are responding to an emergency, or whilst undertaking ERD driver training, may exercise a speed limit exemption. See Appendix 2.
- 6.5 All drivers have a responsibility to control their speed and drive in a safe manner, ensuring a duty of care to their passengers, other road users and pedestrians.
- Note:** Road traffic legislation does not exempt a driver from possible prosecution for dangerous driving or driving without due care and attention. An authorised driver must be able to justify their engagement of any road traffic exemption when responding to incidents.
- 6.6 See appendix 3 regarding action to be taken following activation of enforcement cameras.
- 6.7 At all times a driver must be able to demonstrate that their speed, road behaviour and progression is safe, taking into account prevailing road, traffic and weather conditions; and the expected or intended role upon arrival.
- 6.8 Vehicles ordered to incidents as a relief (or immediate relief) will unless otherwise directed attend at normal road speed. However, in exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to instruct appliances and/or officers to utilise vehicle warning devices and make use of exemptions to make progress to ensure prompt arrival, but safety of the crew and public must still be the utmost priority

Use of warning devices

- 6.9 Whenever traffic exemptions are being exercised warning devices (audible and visual) must be used. Audible warnings, however, should be switched off if there is no apparent advantage in their use, or when their use would endanger other road users e.g. by making other drivers cross red traffic lights to allow an LFB vehicle to pass.
- 6.10 The responsibility for the use of audible and visual warning devices rests with the driver of the vehicle. Whenever a vehicle is fitted with driver only operation, the driver is the only person permitted to turn on and off audible warning devices and change tone when deemed appropriate. On appliances where this facility has not yet been installed, the driver will direct the officer in charge to change tone and turn on and off audible warning devices.
- 6.11 All vehicle warning devices should be used appropriately by the driver every time a vehicle responds to an emergency incident, except when specifically ordered not to by Brigade Control or the appliance commander, after taking into account the nature of the incident, or other relevant circumstances, such as public disorder in the vicinity.
- 6.12 Blue lights and audible warning devices do not remove the need for caution when driving under emergency circumstances, nor do they reduce the likelihood or severity of a collision or permit the driver to ignore road safety legislation.
- 6.13 When used correctly, emergency warning devices fitted to vehicles may enhance a driver's ability to make progress and manoeuvre in traffic, reducing the risk to their self and other road users.

Audible warning

- 6.14 Long tones (wail) should be used on approach to an identified hazard; long tones are directional and will give advance warning to all other road users that an emergency vehicle is approaching and the direction it is coming from.
- 6.15 Short tones (yelp) should be used at the hazard; these are non-directional and give warning to all other road users in the vicinity. Due to the nature of the short tone, they should be used sparingly.
- 6.16 The wail tone should normally only be used by the second appliance when following in convoy behind an appliance which is utilising one of the above tones. This is to allow for motorists to be aware that two appliances are approaching a hazard.
- 6.17 The use of bull horns should only ever be used as a last resort. If the driver believes that motorists are not reacting to the audible warning device, it may be necessary to use the bull horn as a means to clarify if other drivers have understood the intentions of the driver.
- 6.18 Road users generally do not anticipate two emergency vehicles travelling together in succession. This situation creates additional risk and requires enhanced caution by the driver of the second or following vehicle. In order to augment a safe passage, the second/following vehicle must use a different audible warning setting.

Traffic lights

- 6.19 Suitably qualified, trained and authorised personnel exercising the red-light exemption at traffic light junctions, must ensure extra care and caution is exercised. The driver should anticipate that other road users approaching the junction may not have a full view of emergency lights or be able to hear audible warning devices. A red traffic signal should be treated in a similar manner to a 'give way' sign. The driver should approach the stop line at a significantly reduced speed and must be able to stop if necessary. An emergency vehicle can only pass the stop line at a time and speed that will not endanger any person or other road users.
- 6.20 An emergency response driver must not at any time, when proceeding through a red traffic light, cause danger to another road user or cause them to change speed or direction to prevent an accident.

- 6.21 Drivers must be aware when proceeding through a green traffic light that other road users or pedestrians may make unexpected actions or manoeuvres.

Audible warning devices must not be used to 'push' other vehicles through a red traffic light in order for an emergency vehicle to progress, in these circumstances the emergency vehicle should hold back and audible devices should be switched off until the lights change to green.

Use of headlights for ERD driving

- 6.22 Some fleet vehicles are fitted with dipped beam alternate flashing headlights.
- 6.23 Drivers should refer to the appropriate vehicle handbook to determine:
- Whether flashing headlights are fitted to that vehicle; and
 - the appropriate operating instructions for the system installed.
- 6.24 During darkness or poor visibility normal use of headlights, using main or dipped beams, should be used. In these circumstances dipped beam flashing headlights are automatically disabled.
- 6.25 Front and rear fog lights must not be used unless visibility is less than 100m.

Acceptable use of warning equipment

- 6.26 Making use of emergency warning equipment and traffic exemptions to facilitate urgent progress carries with it a number of risks for both the responding vehicle crew and every road user in its proximity. It puts the responding vehicle in unexpected positions on the road - commonly offside/towards oncoming traffic, making unexpected and unusual manoeuvres such as travelling through red traffic lights, and travelling at speeds either in excess of the speed limit, or of the prevailing traffic. These risks increase the possibility of a collision, which will not only delay or prevent the response, but may very well cause an additional incident requiring another emergency response. The increased risk to vehicle crew and public from response driving must be both proportionate to, and justified by, the potential consequences of a slightly longer, safer journey under routine driving conditions.

Use of emergency warning equipment when not attending an incident

- 6.27 The decision to use audible warning equipment and blue lights to make progress lies with the driver alone. In any vehicle where there are passengers, regardless of rank, the driver is in charge of the vehicle when the vehicle is moving. For this reason, the decisions around when to and when not to use audible warning equipment also sits with the driver alone. Whilst legislation does not specifically refer to 'attending an emergency incident', the Road Traffic Act does stipulate that any use of this emergency warning equipment is only permitted where it is necessary or desirable to do so either to indicate to other road users the urgency of the purposes for which the vehicle is being used, or to warn other road users of the presence of the vehicle on the road; and additionally for blue lights. at the scene of an emergency. (Regulation 99(5) Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 and regulation 27(6) Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations 1989 refer.)
- 6.28 There will be other occasions when it may be prudent to make use of legal exemptions such as travelling in excess of the speed limit or progressing through a red light taken as a give way sign.
- 6.29 The following are examples of where it would be acceptable to utilise emergency warning equipment:
- The officer of the day (OOD) or duty deputy assistant commissioner (DAC) are mobilised into the London Operations Centre to support a spontaneous emergency incident by providing remote command and control functions
 - A mobilisation to MPS special operations room to provide incident support functions where an urgent response is requested.

- In order to complete a driving assessment with an appropriately qualified blue light driving instructor.
- In order to remedy a failure to the mobilising system which has an impact on mobilising appliances to incidents.
- In order to attend a location if a serious incident/event has occurred which will have wider implications on the operational efficiency of the Brigade in fulfilling its statutory duties.
- In order to attend an urgent operational briefing to an ongoing spontaneous emergency.
- In order to attend the scene of an accident involving an LFB vehicle in addition to any emergency response sent to resolve the emergency (making progress to the scene if congested).

6.30 The following are examples where it would be inappropriate to utilise warning equipment:

- In order to attend a training exercise regardless of whether there has been notice thereof.
- In order to attend a meeting.
- In order to practice blue light driving skills.

7. Operating on a road

Introduction

- 7.1 This section provides instruction and guidance on how to create and maintain a safe working area for LFB personnel, other Emergency Service staff and the public when working on or adjacent to roadways.
- 7.2 Attending incidents on or adjacent to roadways may pose significant risks to LFB personnel. Crew and public safety and hazard awareness must remain a priority throughout the incident.
- 7.3 Incidents on roadways will often result in the roadway being completely closed. At incidents where road closure is only partial, moving vehicles will be encountered, this will present a greater hazard to personnel working on the roadway, especially on class 'A' roads and motorways.

Pre-planning

- 7.4 Pre-planning is an essential part of the preparation for an operational incident on roadways.
- 7.5 Information should be gathered and recorded in accordance with Policy number 800 - Management of operational risk information, where appropriate.
- 7.6 Familiarisation with the major risks on the stations ground and adjacent areas is essential. The focus for familiarisation and training should be on high risk roadways where the majority of attendances are made and risk factors such as traffic speed and road design will be most prevalent.
- 7.7 Pre-planning should include an awareness of all available access and exit points to dual carriageways, potential rendezvous points (RVPs), water supplies, drainage and water courses is important to reduce the risk of delay. This information will support safe and effective operations at an incident and the potential for our actions to affect the environment.

Legislation

- 7.8 The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 introduced new powers and responsibilities for fire and rescue services. In an emergency a firefighter may, for the purpose of rescuing people or protecting them from harm:

- (a) Close a highway;
- (b) stop and regulate traffic; and
- (c) restrict the access of persons to the place concerned.

Support from other agencies

- 7.9 When working on 'class A' roads or motorways the Highways Agency or TFL contractor may attend and their principal objective is to manage the traffic, with the aim of reducing congestion and improving traffic flows. Although police guidance states that they and the Highways Agency have a responsibility to provide a safe working area for other services, the LFB incident commander (IC) is responsible for the safety of LFB personnel and for the impact of LFB operations on others.
- 7.10 It is essential that early liaison between all agencies in attendance is carried out, and the clear needs of the Brigade are expressed. The IC should confirm there is an agreed understanding with other agencies attending the incident regarding the establishment of a safe working area on the roadway.
- 7.11 Effective scene management will be achieved by balancing the needs of all responders. In the event of any disagreement between agencies regarding the establishment of the safe area of operation, the IC should request the attendance of a LFB senior officer via Brigade Control.

Hazards

- 7.12 The hazard of moving traffic is present at all incidents on roadways. The risk of collision remains during all phases of an incident up to and including driving away from the scene.
- 7.13 The potential for further collisions can be influenced by a range of factors, including:
- (a) **Visibility:** which may be obscured or adversely affected (e.g. by fog, heavy rain, bright sunshine, darkness, smoke).
 - (b) **Road conditions:** such as, snow, ice, rain or flooding.
 - (c) **Incident factors:** vehicle debris, damaged street furniture, oil, fuel, hazardous loads, smoke, fire, time of day etc.
 - (d) **Road configuration:** sharp bends, undulations, widths, access roads, class of road, temporary road works, tunnels, bridges etc.
 - (e) **Traffic:** speed, rapid slowing, density, drivers, cyclists and pedestrians taking avoiding action, other road users slow to respond to the incident etc.
 - (f) Traffic management measures in operation.
 - (g) The time emergency service personnel spend on the roadway.
 - (h) **People:** casualties, members of the public offering assistance, emergency service colleagues, onlookers etc.
 - (i) Driving on the hard shoulder, the surface of which does not provide the same level of grip as the roadway and may contain debris that can cause punctures or may be being used by members of the public.

Fast roads/motorways

- 7.14 Appliances approaching an incident should be driven with caution, and speed should be reduced in order to:
- (a) Minimise the risk of collisions with other road users.
 - (b) Provide the IC with an opportunity to undertake an initial assessment and determine:
 - (i) Obvious hazards;

- (ii) the appropriate positioning for appliances;
 - (iii) the extent of a safe area to work;
 - (iv) safe access and egress to the incident; and
 - (v) which lanes will be affected and how safe closure of the road or carriageways may be achieved.
- (c) Identify how the incident will affect other roads, carriageways, railways or any other near-by infrastructure.
- 7.15 If the police are not in attendance, a priority message should be sent informing the police and transport services as appropriate.
- 7.16 Appliances should always follow the general flow of the traffic when approaching incidents. Where it is necessary to proceed against the traffic flow the driver of the appliance must:
- (a) Follow any directions and guidance of the police and/or Highways Agency Transport Officer (HATO); and
 - (b) proceed with caution at reduced speed, and only if it is safe to do so.
- 7.17 On motorways or other dual carriageway roads, the central reservation must not be crossed by appliances or crews to approach an incident on the opposite carriageway. An exception to this is where traffic has been stopped by the police and/or HATO, crossing the central reservation will only be undertaken under their direction.
- 7.18 An appliance must not stop in the outside lane of a motorway or dual carriageway at any time to deal with an incident on the opposite carriageway, except where the incident has spread across the central reservation. Where this is necessary "fend off" positions must be adopted before operations commence.

On-arrival

- 7.19 Initial decisions by appliance commanders and the IC concerning the location of appliances, creation of the safe working area and the provision of adequate access and egress from the incident will have a significant impact on bringing the incident to a satisfactory conclusion.
- 7.20 Where the LFB are first in attendance and either the incident or moving traffic presents a significant risk to crews or the public, consideration must be given to closing the roadway and requesting the immediate attendance of the police and/or HATO to control traffic.
- 7.21 The positioning of appliances in the 'fend off' position, where this is necessary to create a safe working area, will provide a barrier between the scene of operations and approaching vehicles.
- 7.22 Pumping appliances should park before, and 'special appliances' beyond the incident, where possible and/or appropriate, creating the boundaries of the safe working area.
- 7.23 The IC must ensure that:
- (a) The size of the safe area created is proportionate and suitable for the type and location of incident, taking into account any hazards present and the area of affected roadway.
 - (b) Sufficient space is available to allow for the movement of rescue personnel, equipment, the deployment of extinguishing media and the access and egress of other emergency services.
 - (c) Appliances are positioned and illuminated with consideration to road layout, such as bends or dips in the roadway, prevailing weather and lighting conditions.
- 7.24 Additional LFB support vehicles or senior officer cars should park within the police cordon, if one is in operation, or in a safe location on the nearside of the road away from the incident.

- 7.25 Firefighters must dismount the appliance on the side away from any moving traffic. Where appliance cab design prevents the driver from doing this, the driver should actively check for approaching traffic from all directions, using the appliance mirrors, before dismounting the appliance. If road conditions dictate that the driver cannot dismount safely, the appliance should be repositioned to facilitate this. Drivers must always rig in PPE in a safe working area.
- 7.26 Where appropriate, a request should be made to Brigade Control requesting that a message is displayed on overhead gantries and matrix signs to warn approaching traffic of the incident and presence of LFB personnel and appliances. This request should contain as much relevant information as possible; this includes road numbers and direction of carriageway; roadside marker posts; junction numbers; bridge or underpass identification plates; or emergency telephone identification numbers.

Safety considerations

- 7.27 High visibility of appliances and personnel is essential when working near moving vehicles, especially on roads that have fast moving traffic or sharp bends and undulations. The requirement to wear hi-visibility clothing takes priority over the requirement to wear any other identification tabard.
- 7.28 Appliance mast flood lighting, blue warning and fend-off lights must be used to enable other road users to clearly see appliances attending the incident ahead of them. Lighting of the scene must be considered, and where LFB lighting is used, this should be provided without creating a hazard by dazzling other road users.
- 7.29 Blue lights should be used throughout the incident by all attending appliances to help secure the safe working area.
- 7.30 High visibility clothing must be worn by all attending LFB personnel except those wearing BA. Where BA is required, wearers are not to rig in high visibility clothing, but must only operate within the defined safe working area.
- 7.31 If moving traffic is to pass adjacent to the established safe working area, traffic tape and cones are to be used (as described in Appendix 2) to identify the boundary of the safe area and to warn crews of the danger of moving traffic.
- 7.32 The IC should appoint safety officers to specifically monitor and help to manage the maintenance of the safe area of operations, as soon as practicable.

Intersections and slip roads

- 7.33 Where an incident has occurred on an intersection or slip road either leading on or off of a dual carriageway, prompt closure of the access point should be made. In these circumstances there is an increased risk of the physical characteristics of the roadway affecting the viewing distances of other road users approaching the incident. The same principles described above with respect to the creation and maintenance of a safe area of operations and the provision of fend off vehicles applies.

Deploying the police accident sign

- 7.34 The 'police accident' sign should be deployed at all incidents where LFB personnel are working on the roadway to provide early warning to other road users.
- 7.35 The 'police accident' sign must only be deployed if it is considered by the IC that it is safe to do so.
- 7.36 When considering whether to deploy the 'police accident' sign, the IC must consider:
- Exposure of LFB personnel to fast moving vehicles;
 - road layout, such as bends or dips in the roadway;
 - prevailing weather conditions that may affect visibility; and
 - sufficient lighting during darkness to ensure that the sign can be seen.

- 7.37 If it is considered by the IC that a 'police accident' sign is required, but it is not safe for LFB personnel to deploy, the IC must request the attendance of the police/HATO for assistance.
- 7.38 The sign must be located in a position:
- Which does not cause an obstruction to moving vehicles, e.g. grass verge or paved area; and
 - prior to any bends, dips in the roadway or other obstructions which may reduce visibility for vehicles approaching the incident.

SMART motorways

- 7.39 All smart motorways use a range of technologies and traffic management measures to monitor and respond to fluctuating traffic conditions. Signals are used to inform road users of conditions on the network and to indicate a lower variable mandatory speed limit (VMsL) in response to congestion or incidents. On Hard Shoulder Running (HSR) and All Lanes Running (ALR) smart motorways additional capacity is provided by either temporarily or permanently opening the hard shoulder to traffic.
- 7.40 SMART motorways can pose unique challenges to emergency services when responding to incidents. This is especially true when there is no dedicated hard shoulder. Depending on time of day and traffic volume it's quite possible that the traffic will back up very quickly behind the incident causing delays for responding emergency services. The Regional Control Centre (RCC) monitors every section of a SMART motorway via CCTV. When an Incident is identified the RCC will put signage in place to create a temporary hard shoulder for responding appliances. However, it is recognised that the vehicles in the temporary hard shoulder close to the incident are unlikely to be able to move out of the temporary hard shoulder.

Reverse access on a SMART motorway

- 7.41 Reverse access is where emergency vehicles travel against the normal flow of traffic on the affected carriageway by accessing the carriageway via the next available point after (downstream of) the incident. This may be an emergency turnaround/access point or the next junction. There are strict protocols to be followed before reverse access is implemented. Before proceeding in the wrong direction, the control measure listed below must be implemented.

Implementing reverse access

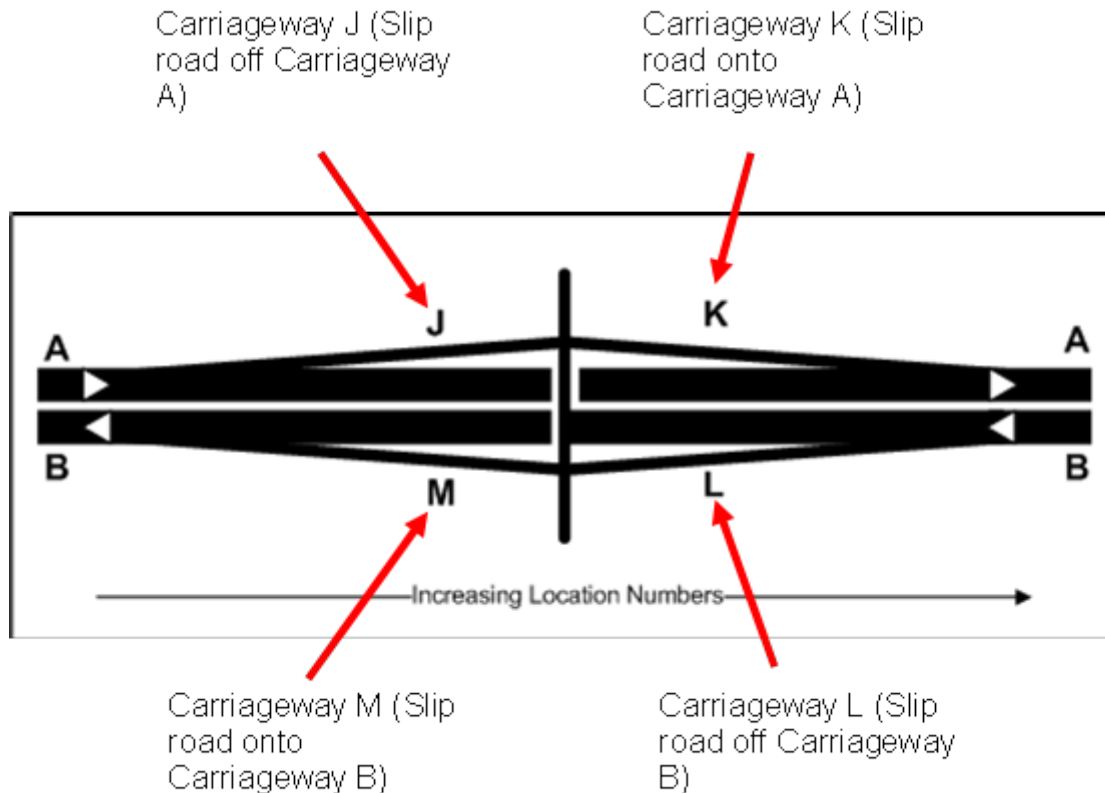
- 7.42 Before reverse access can be implemented the following must apply:
- Police or Highways England commander has control of the head of the scene, otherwise known as the Forward Command Point (FCP). This is to ensure that vehicles are unable to pass through the incident scene and continue along the carriageway. The FCP, by physical presence prevents traffic flowing past the scene. This is supported by Highways England RCC closing the carriageway with variable message signs (VMS) and signals.
 - Confirm no vehicles after (downstream of) incident scene to chosen access point. On ALR this can be through the Highways England RCC using CCTV, line of sight or vehicles in attendance.

Authority to proceed

- 7.43 When appliances arrive at the reverse access point they should make contact with the police officer or Highways officer controlling the access point. If authority is given to proceed in the wrong direction the appliance commander is to obtain the name of the officer giving authorisation and this is to be transmitted to Brigade Control to be logged on the incident log.
- 7.44 If no officer is in attendance the appliance commander is to contact control to obtain permission to proceed in the wrong direction. Control will contact the RCC to seek the relevant permission. Only once Control have informed the appliance that this authority has been given will the appliances proceed.

Reverse access route

- 7.45 Emergency vehicles will enter the motorway on the offside lane of the on-slip road and turn right across the motorway to enter lane 4 (or outermost lane). On reaching the end of the on slip responders should treat the access point as a "give way" and only enter the carriageway once satisfied that it is safe to do so, (see below).



Motorway carriageway and slip road identification

- 7.46 Main carriageways on all motorways are identified by the letters "A" or "B".
- 7.47 Carriageway "A" is the carriageway that has ascending junction numbers. It is almost always away from its origin (junction 1) of the motorway. On the M1 this is the northbound carriageway and on the M25 the clockwise carriageway.
- Carriageway "B" is the carriageway that has descending junction numbers. It is almost always towards the origin (junction 1) of the motorway. This would be the southbound carriageway on the M1 and the anti-clockwise carriageway on orbital M25.
- 7.48 Slip roads are usually referred to as "the northbound/southbound" (direction as appropriate) entry (or "on") slip road/exit (or "off") slip road. Highways England makes use of the additional letters "J, K, L or M" (as described below) which will be seen on marker signs.

8. Reporting of accidents

- 8.1 In the event that an employee, engaged in driving on Brigade business, is involved in an accident, the driver must ensure they report the safety event as soon as practicable, and report any subsequent notification of impending action by a third party, in line with current policies and procedures (see Policy number 409 - Legal and insurance aspects of vehicle accidents, Policy number 410 - Reporting of traffic accidents involving essential, lease and casual car users and hired vehicles and SPHERA reporting process).

- 8.2 Following an accident involving a vehicle being driven on Brigade business, it may be necessary to remove the driver from driving duties, pending further investigation. In this instance, an immediate decision to remove a driving qualification may be made on the advice of the duty DAC in conjunction with the duty SAI. The matter will then be considered by the driver assessment board as soon as practicable.

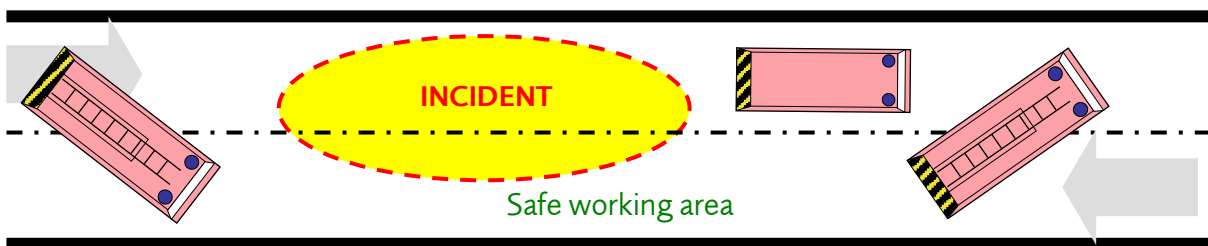
Appendix 1: Appliance positioning

Incident location	Lane closure
Two-way local roadway.	Both lanes.
Hard shoulder of motorway or similar.	Hard shoulder and lane 1.
Lane 1 of three lane roadway.	Hard Shoulder and lanes 1 and 2.
Lane 2 of three lane roadway.	Lanes 1, 2 and 3.
Lane 3 of three lane roadway.	Lanes 2 and 3.
Across central reservation.	Lanes 2 and 3 both carriageways.

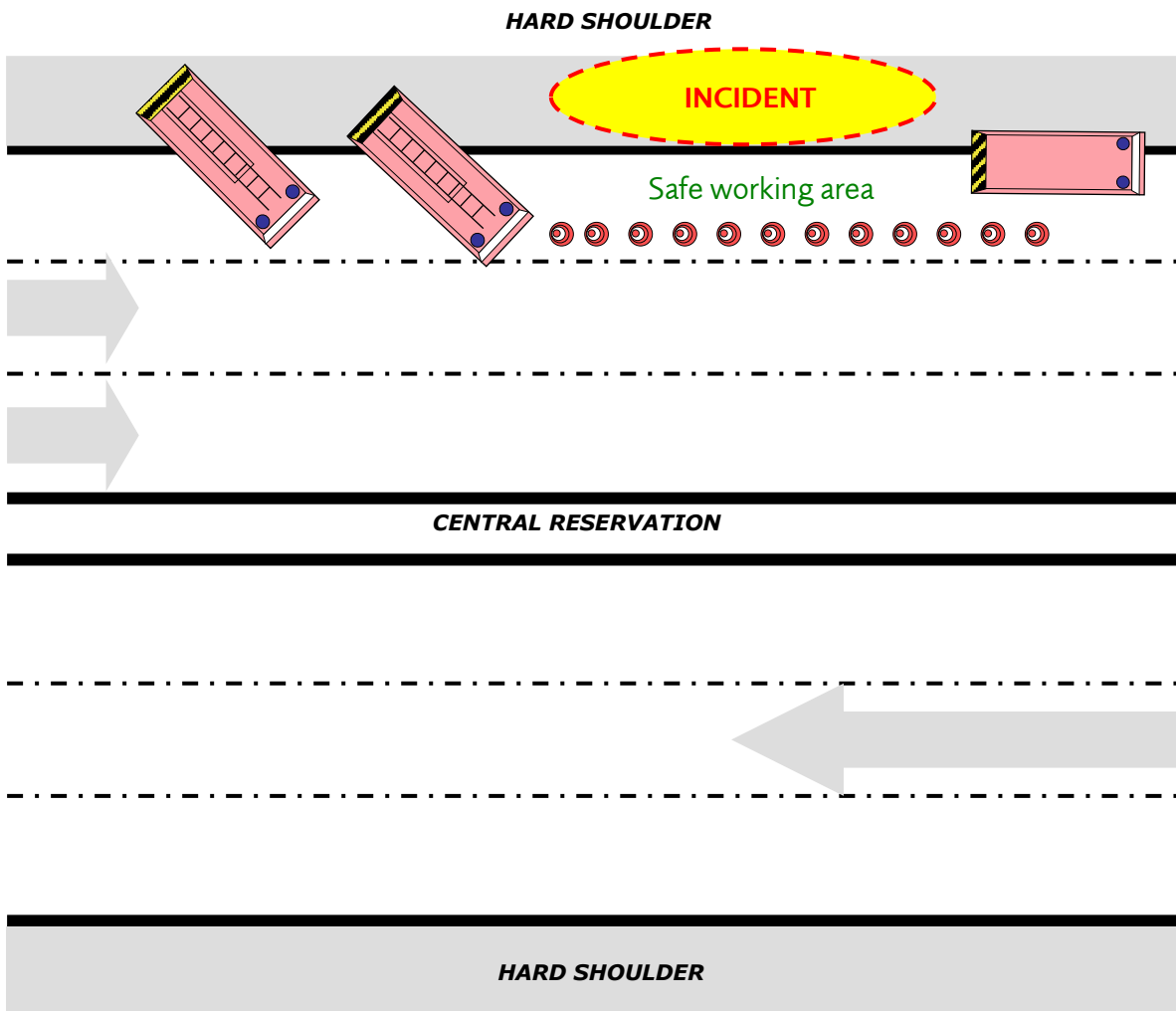
Note: Any encroachment into a lane means the lane must be closed to traffic.

1. The above table and following diagrams should form the basis for any road lane configuration, including those with more than three lane carriageways.
2. Lane closure is determined by the location of the incident, the incident size and inner working area for the Emergency Services.

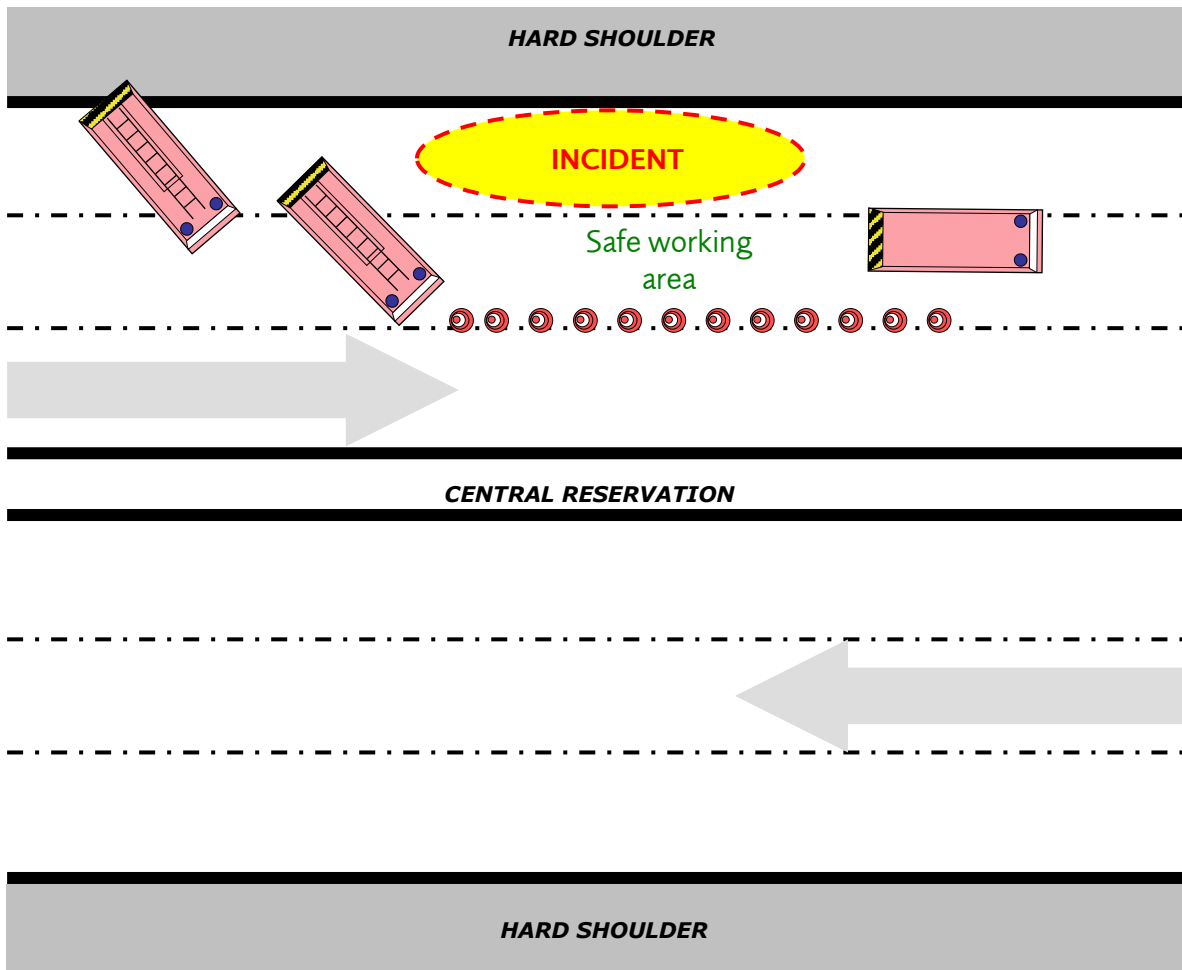
Incident on 2 way local road Fend Off adopted



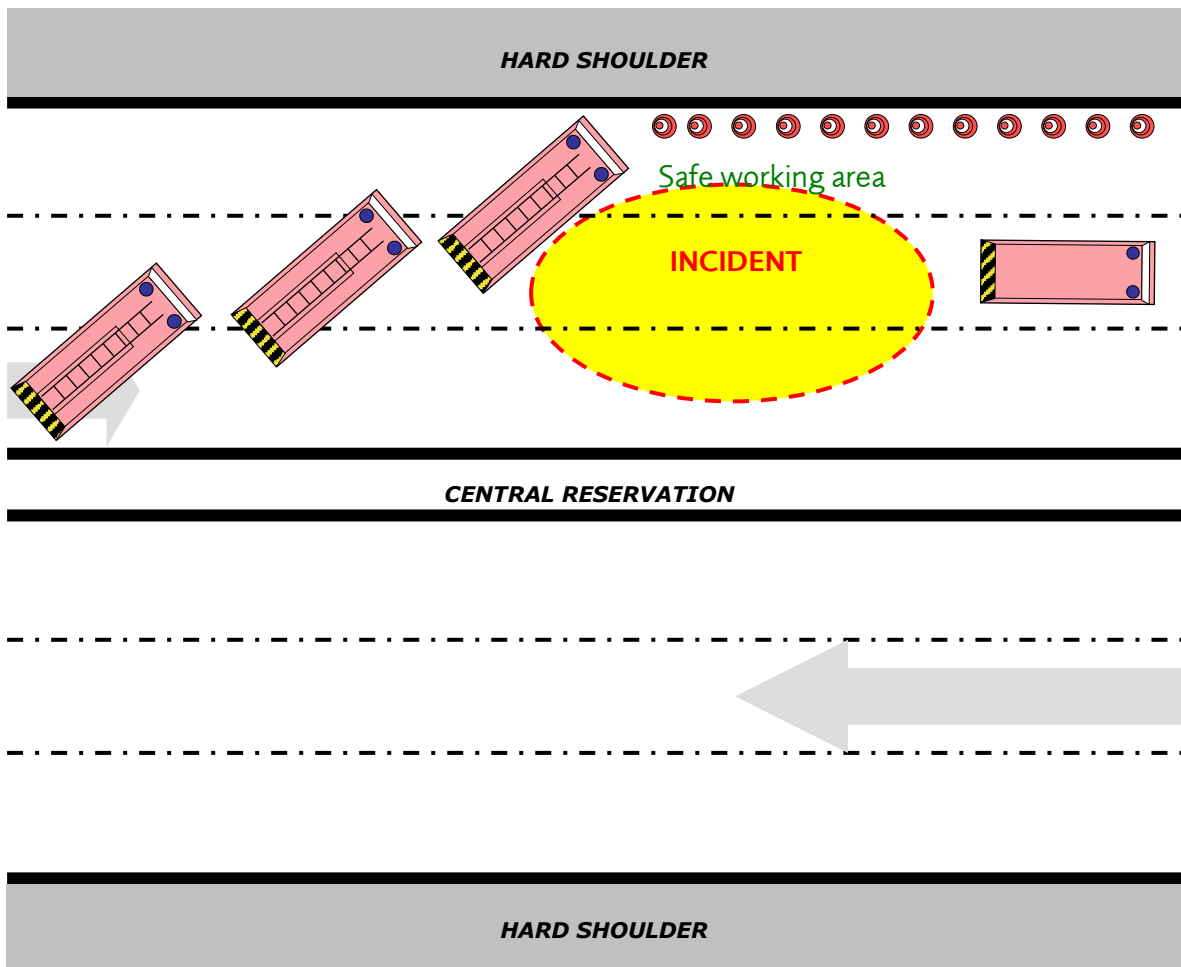
Incident on hard shoulder of a 3 lane carriageway



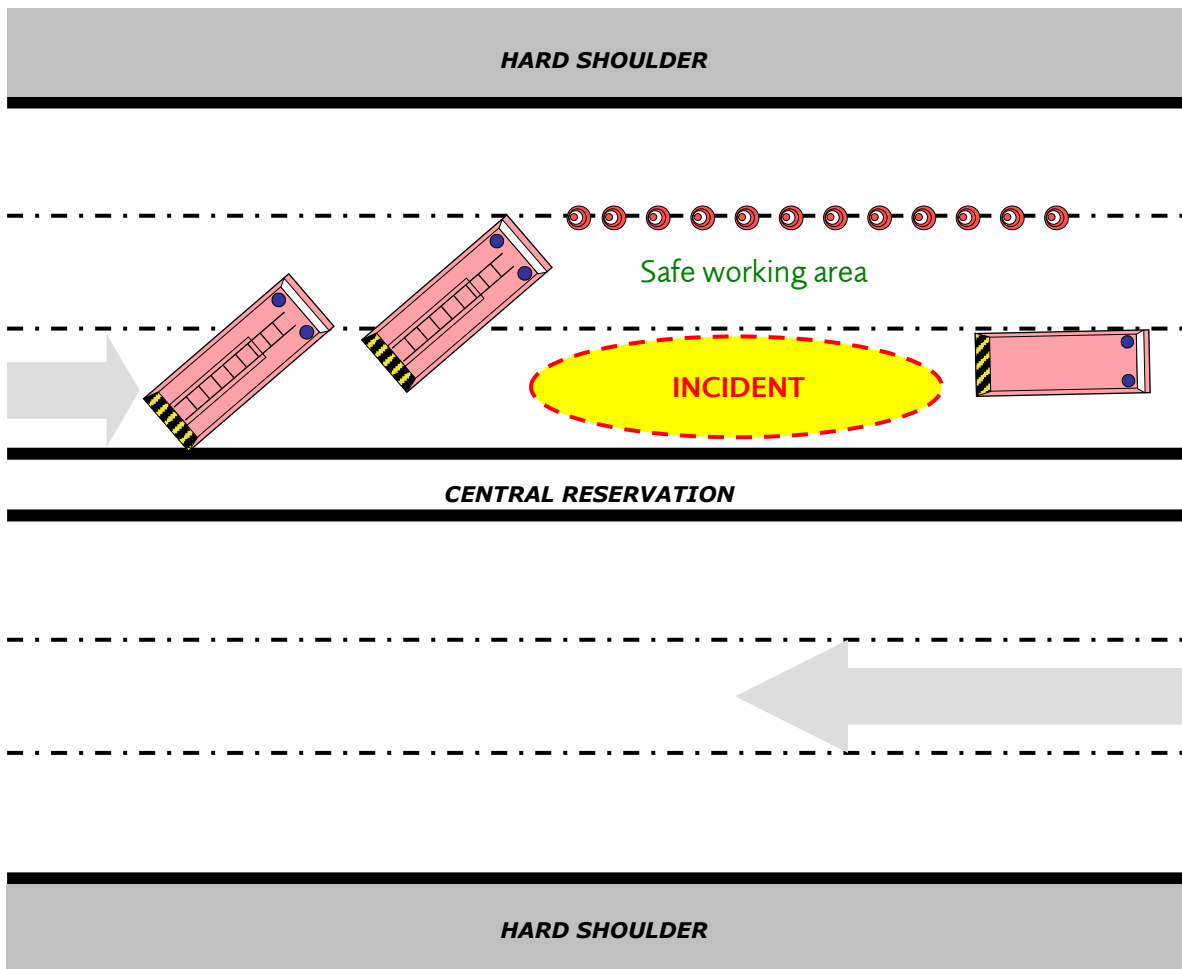
Incident in lane 1 of a 3 lane carriageway



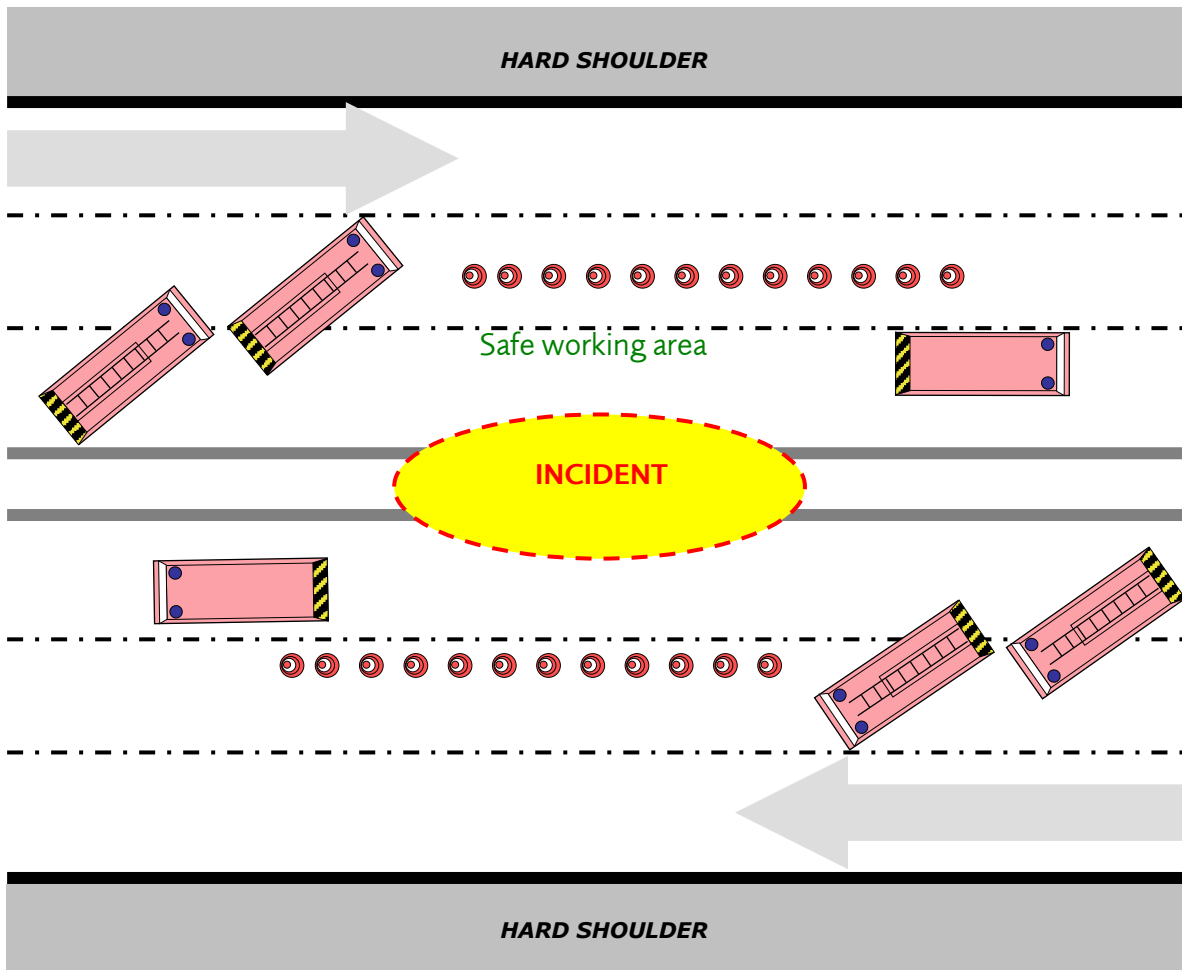
Incident in lane 2 of a 3 lane carriageway



Incident in lane 3 of a 3 lane carriageway



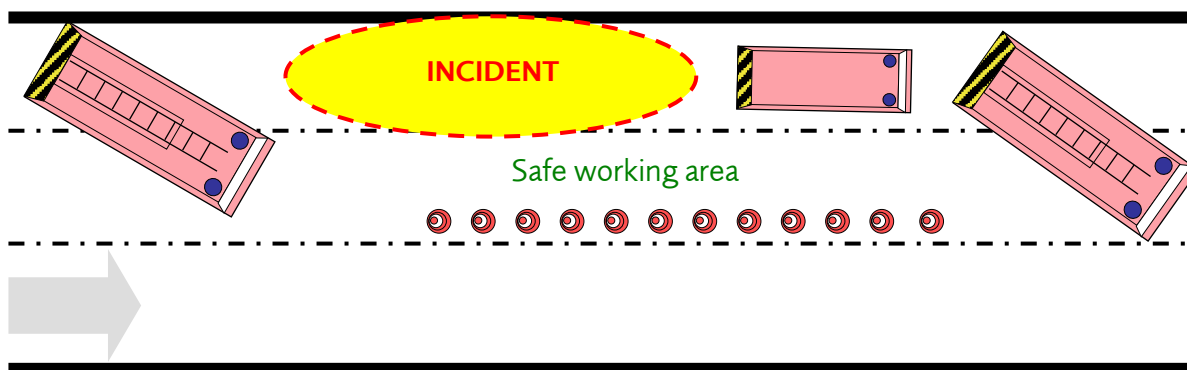
Incident across central reservation



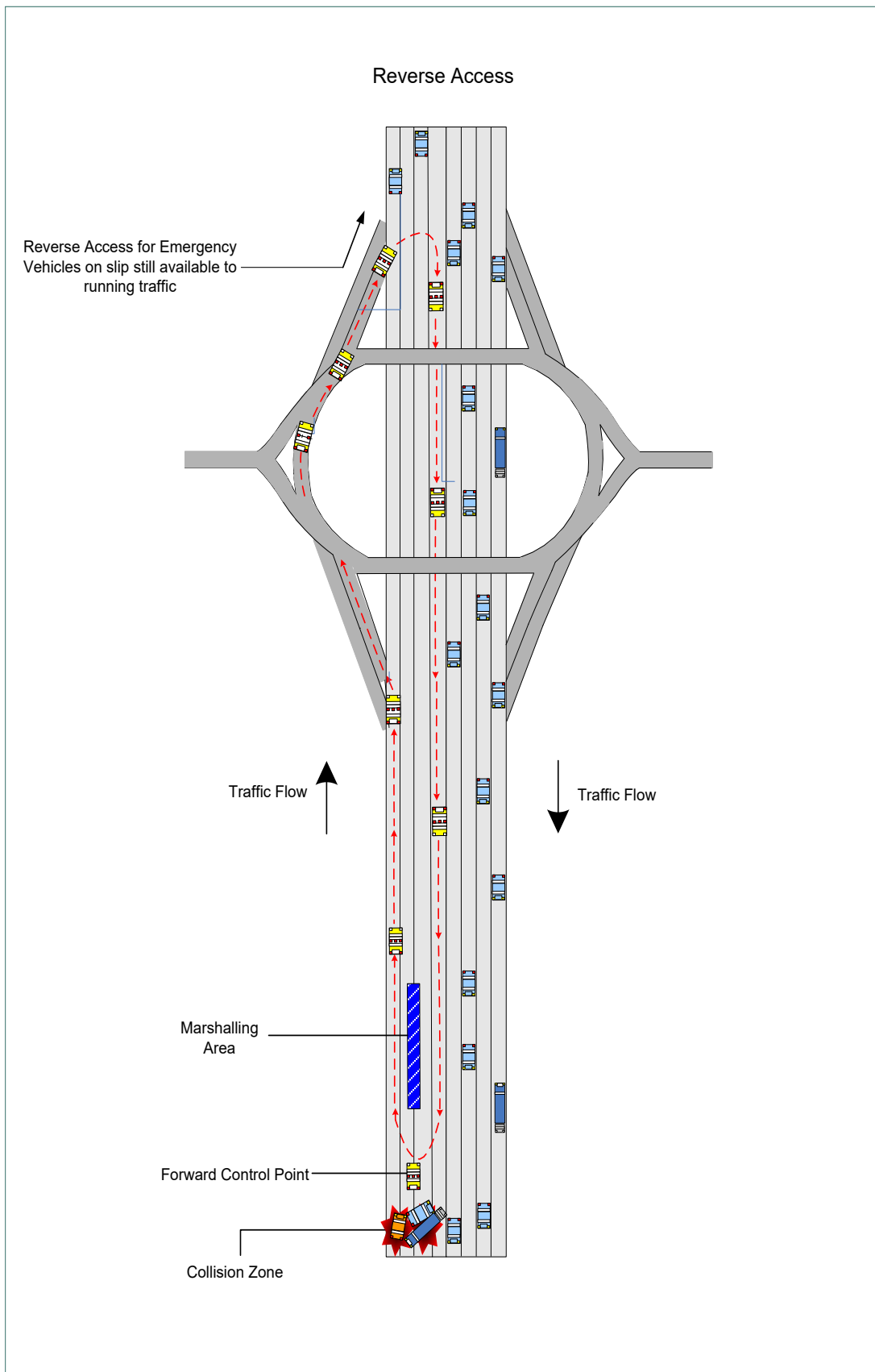
Appendix 2: Cones

1. Traffic cones must not be used for fend off positions, lane or road closures.
2. The police and Highways Agency are responsible for closing and managing traffic flow.
3. Traffic cones should be placed between appliances to designate a safe area of work, and should be placed approximately 1 metre apart, this is dependent on the incident and the number of cones available.

Using cones to denote the safe working area



Appendix 3:



Appendix 4: Driver responsibilities

The driver is responsible for:

- (a) the safety of the vehicle and its passengers
- (b) having a valid licence appropriate to the vehicle being driven and informing their line manager of any changes to their licence
- (c) maintaining their driving skills and qualifications
- (d) Carrying out bumper to bumper familiarisation on vehicles as necessary following a break in continuity with particular vehicles
- (e) Carrying out a familiarisation drive of vehicles to update or refresh the experience of the particular vehicle's handling characteristics
- (f) carrying out vehicle inspections and checks (including tyre pressure checks) before use and for reporting defects.
- (g) reporting safety events as soon as practicable
- (h) maintaining legal and acceptable standards of driving and behaviour
- (i) using eco-driving techniques in non-operational driving to reduce fuel consumption, vehicle wear and tear and emissions
- (j) ensuring they are fit to drive and informing their line manager of any change in their circumstances relating to their ability and availability to drive
- (k) ensuring the appropriate audible and visual warnings are used
- (l) wearing suitable footwear that will not hinder or obstruct the safe operation of foot pedals when driving
- (m) ensuring all door catches, locks and shutters are fully engaged before a vehicle is moved.

Document information

Dates

Issue status	Date
Issued	12 November 2012
Reviewed as current	1 March 2022
Last amended	21 September 2022
Next review due	1 March 2025

Assessments

An equality, sustainability or health, safety and welfare impact assessment and/or a risk assessment was last completed on:

EIA	18/03/11	SDIA	H - 31/03/11	HSWIA		RA	
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Audit trail

Listed below is a brief audit trail, detailing amendments made to this policy/procedure.

Page/Paragraph nos.	Brief description of change	Date
Throughout	Changes made throughout policy, please re-read to familiarise yourself with the content.	15/11/2012
Page 12	Content relating to headlights updated.	28/11/2012
Pages 11 and 12	Content relating to red lights updated.	07/12/2012
Pages 2 and 4	Content relating to responsibilities of fire appliance commander and driver updated.	03/01/2013
Page 9 para 8.1 to 8.4	Section 8 – Security of brigade vehicles when unattended added.	11/03/2013
Throughout	Minor changes made throughout with regards to drivers familiarising themselves with the vehicles and ensuring they are suitable qualified to drive.	19/06/2013
Page 11	New paragraph 9.9 added.	12/02/2014
Page 15	Updated vehicles which can use the speed exemption.	28/02/2014
Page 18	'Subjects list' table - template updated.	05/12/2014
Page 9, para 6.5	New paragraph added for LGV medical expenses.	14/10/2015

Page/Paragraph nos.	Brief description of change	Date
Throughout	This policy has been reviewed as current with no changes. The next review date has been set for the end of January 2016, to sort out a few problems prior to updating the content.	25/01/2016
Page 7 Page 16	New paragraph added as paragraph 5.2. Appendix 3 title updated. Reviewed as current.	03/02/2017
Throughout	Content added throughout relating to eco-driving, green cars and greener motoring.	03/11/2017
Page 13 and 14	Green cars and greener motoring section removed. Eco driving tips number list corrected and hyperlink removed.	23/11/2017
Throughout	This policy has been reviewed as current and the changes made result from the replacement of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority with the London Fire Commissioner.	17/04/2018
Throughout	Role to rank changes made. 'S/he' replaced with gender neutral language. PEG changed to OSG. Departmental name changes made.	28/06/2021
Throughout	Reviewed as current and added to NOG template.	01/03/2022
Paragraph 1.55	Changed to a heading instead of a paragraph and the paragraphs below have been renumbered.	08/09/2022
Page 26, para 5.21	Cross reference link updated.	21/09/2022

Related policies

Listed below are all the related policies:

Policy number	Name of policy