

Policy/Procedure/Guideline**Driving and Care of Patient Transport UK Vehicles Policy****Version no:** 1.0**Issue Status:** Approved**Date of Ratification:** April 2016**Ratified by:** Clinical Governance
& Risk Board**Policy Author:** Bradley Woods**Policy Owner:** CG&RB**Review Frequency:** 1 year**Identifiable Document Code:** PTUK019**Last Review:** April 2020**Next Review:** April 2021

POLICY AWARENESS	
People who need to know this policy in detail	All staff
People who need to have a broad understanding of this policy	All staff
People who need to know this policy exists	All staff

CHANGE CONTROL DETAILS			
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11/04/2016	1	New policy	New policy

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The very nature of an Ambulance Service leads the public to associate ambulance personnel with a high standard of driving skill and road behaviour. PTUK personnel generally fulfil these expectations; however, there have been occasions where these standards have not been achieved. Any PTUK vehicle involved in a collision results in disruption to the operation of PTUK, an unacceptable personal injury risk to employees and other road users, delay in responding to calls, considerable money and materials being wasted in repairing damage, unnecessary 'down time' whilst vehicles are being repaired as well as damage to the public's perception of PTUK Ambulance Service and an increased insurance premium.

The purpose of this document is to draw attention to certain aspects of driving and vehicle care which will result in reduced accidents and lessen risk to patients, other road users and PTUK personnel. Reference is made to the Ambulance Emergency Response Driver's Handbook (AERDH) and the Highway Code (HWC) in this document. Copies of these publications are to be made available at each station, from your line manager and staff must maintain a sound understanding of the relevant documents commensurate with their level of training and duties. It must be emphasised that if staff receive a **Notice of Intended Prosecution (NIP)**, or they receive **any points** to their licence they **MUST** inform their Manager immediately. This is a legal requirement and failure to comply could result in claims involving the individual being void and that individual becoming personally liable. Throughout this document, the term 'PTUK vehicle' refers to any vehicle owned, hired, leased or borrowed by PTUK.

PTUK vehicles engaged on normal non-emergency duties must, at all times, comply with all legislation and the Highway Code.

As with the Official Highway Code (Revised 2007 Edition) where the words **MUST** or **MUST NOT** are used within this document, they refer to a specific legal requirement. Failure to do so would mean the driver is committing a criminal offence or a deviation from PTUK policy and would be open to prosecution or internal action, or both. The wording **SHOULD** or **SHOULD NOT**, and **DO** or **DO NOT** refers to advice to be followed to maintain the required standards. Failure to do so could be used to assist in determining accountability should an incident, collision or complaint occurs.

2.0 SCOPE

The principles of this policy apply to all driving PTUK personnel. Certain sections or information within this policy will only be applicable to trained emergency drivers.

3.0 AUTHORISATION TO DRIVE SPECIFIC VEHICLES

Staff **MUST** hold the appropriate DVLA licence entitlement to drive any given vehicle within PTUK and have received the appropriate level of training, assessment or familiarisation.

Only in exceptional circumstances, and with authorisation from PTUK, will a member of staff be permitted to drive a vehicle without completion of the appropriate training, assessment or familiarisation relevant to that particular vehicle. There will be no exemptions from road traffic law on these occasions. Persons using an PTUK vehicle without authorisation are uninsured.

4.0 LEGAL ASPECTS

4.1 The vehicle

The driver is responsible in law, for ensuring that the vehicle is in a roadworthy condition. At the beginning of each shift or each time during shift a new vehicle is to be used, PTUK drivers must check their vehicles to ensure they comply with the law, paying special attention to:

- Lights (condition and cleanliness)
- Windscreen, wipers and washers (clean, undamaged and working)
- Number plates (clean)
- Demisters (operating correctly)
- Steering (free from excess play and defects)
- Exhaust (noise levels)
- Horn
- Brakes (Static and mobile testing)
- Tyres (including spare where present) Tread depth *1.6mm across the central ¾ section of the tyre and around the entire circumference*. Must be free from certain cuts and other defects.
- Road Fund Licence (present valid and displayed the nearside of the windscreen)

Frontline staff should carry out a full VDI as per their IHCD training. Make Ready staff may have prepared a vehicle for the start of a shift; however, it still remains the drivers legal responsibility to ensure the relevant checks are made to the vehicle prior to its use.

Note; Frontline and other vehicles used for emergency response driving should have their tyres changed at 3mm because of the potential for additional expectations to be placed upon them. It is not permitted to VOR or refuse to use a response vehicle if the tyres are worn between 3mm and 1.6mm, but the driver should inform their line manager, supervisor and/or fleet department, who will arrange for replacement at the earliest convenience.

4.2 Spectacles/contact lenses

Drivers who wear spectacles to correct their vision should carry, where available, a spare pair at all times. Drivers who wear contact lenses to correct their vision should carry, where available, a spare set of lenses or pair of spectacles at all times.

4.3 Sunglasses

Tinted spectacles may only be worn during bright sunlight or during daylight hours following settled snow fall. The wearing of such spectacles would be dangerous in other conditions because loss of vision might result in a developing or existing hazard not being readily seen.

4.4 Driving Licence check

The employee is required to present their driving licence for inspection every 6 months as requested or at a shorter interval if required to do so. As with Road Traffic Law, it is the drivers' responsibility to ensure their licence details are accurate and the licence itself can be readily made available. It is the drivers' responsibility to ensure they inform the DSM of any endorsements to their licence. The responsibility of checking of employees licences lies with the DSM. Continued delay and failure to present a their driving licence, and having allowed a reasonable time to elapse, could result in suspension from driving duties until such time as the licence is presented and checked. It should be noted that the newer photo card licences have a 10 year life (because of the photographic facial image of the driver) and it is the driver's responsibility to ensure their licence does not lapse past this period. Line 4b on the photo card section of the licence gives the date of expiry.

4.5 Fitness to drive

It is the driver's responsibility to ensure they are fit to drive. If you are in any doubt as to your fitness to drive following being prescribed medication or taking 'over the counter' medication, or following a medical event, you MUST seek advice from your Doctor or dispensing chemists. Guidelines surrounding medical fitness to drive can be found within the current Highway Code and most recent DVLA Medical Guidance document (www.dft.gov.uk/dvla/) and from Occupational Health. Failure to declare any medical reason that precludes the driver from operating a vehicle would invalidate PTUK's motor insurance and render the vehicle uninsured whilst being driven by that person.

4.6 Removal of driving licence category entitlements for medical reasons

Any removal of licence category entitlement will be dealt with on a case by case basis in consultation with PTUK motor insurers, Occupational Health, DVLA documentation, the DSM and HR.

SPEED LIMITS TO PTUK VEHICLES WHILE NOT UNDER EMERGENCY DRIVING CONDITIONS				
Vehicle	Build up area MPH	Single carriageways MPH	Dual Carriageways MPH	Motorway MPH
Cars/motorcycles Car derived vans up to 2t (B category)	30	60	70	70
DCA (C1 category)	30	50	60	70
Decon / HART / CBRN trucks under 7.5t (C1 category)	30	50	60	70
Mobile Control Vehicles (C1 category)	30	50	60	70
Recovery truck (C category)	30	40	50	60
Any B or C1 vehicle towing a trailer	30	50	60	60

The above table shows the maximum speed limit for PTUK's vehicles where the national speed limits are in force. They apply to all roads unless signs show otherwise and the lower speed limit will always apply. See also 'Speed limited vehicles within Section 5.

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

4.7 Mobile communications equipment and mobile telephones

Mobile Communications Equipment

PTUK staff have an exemption in law relating to the use of 'fixed in-vehicle radios'. Whenever possible the attendant should be tasked with communications. Where this is not possible the driver MUST ensure messages are short and succinct and MUST NOT effect the driver's control the vehicle.

This exemption, as with all exemptions MUST be carried out when safe to do so, and as the driver has elected to act outside of the normal behaviour required on the road. The driver MUST be able to justify not only that the use of the equipment was necessary but also that its use was carried out safely.

Should an incident occur whilst the driver was engaged in the use of the 'fixed, in vehicle radio' they are likely to be open to prosecution under the appropriate section of Road Traffic Act.

There is no such exemption granted to the use of hand held communication devices (walkie talkies etc).

Mobile telephones

The Road Traffic Act 1988 (section 41D) states the following regarding the use of mobile telephones;

No person shall drive or cause or permit to be driven a motor vehicle on a road if the driver is using :-

- *a hand-held mobile telephone, or*
- *a hand-held device, other than a two-way radio, which performs an interactive communication function by transmitting and receiving data (including sending or receiving voice or text messages, fax, pictures and videos and internet use).*

No person shall supervise a holder of a provisional licence if the person supervising is using such a hand-held device at a time when the provisional licence holder is driving a motor vehicle on a road.

Exceptions

- *to call the emergency services on 999 or 112 in response to a genuine*
- *emergency if it is unsafe or impracticable to stop driving,*
- *two way radios (dual use devices which can also operate on mobile*
- *telephone frequencies are not exempt even when being used as a two way*
- *radio).*

A phone or other device mounted in a cradle is permitted providing it can be operated without holding it (the driver can still operate the buttons without holding device), however if the driver is distracted when operating the device the following offences may be considered – failing to have proper control of the vehicle or careless/dangerous driving.

'Road' can include verges and lay-bys.

'Driving' can include when the vehicle is stationary.

PTUK insists that the above is adhered to and also has the following mandate for all PTUK staff:

Hand held mobile telephones. The vehicle MUST be parked in an appropriate place, the engine switched off and ignition keys removed before the device can be used for any purpose. This is irrespective of the vehicle being on the public or private property whilst engaged in work activity.

Hands free mobile telephones. Whilst PTUK provides and installs hands free car kits for many of its vehicles, the use of these devices by the driver MUST ONLY occur when safe to do so and be kept to an absolute minimum. They MUST NOT be used at any point whilst driving if they distract the driver. Records relating to the use of the equipment prior to a road traffic collision or reported incident are likely to be investigated internally and possibly by the Police. If usage is confirmed the appropriate action and/ or charges considered. PTUK may consider any breaches of the above standpoint as serious misconduct, which may lead to disciplinary action.

5.0 NON EMERGENCY STAFF DRIVING PROCEDURES (NEPTS)

(Non Emergency Patient Transport Service (NEPTS) and all other nonemergency driver trained staff)

5.1 General

PTUK does not permit non-emergency personnel to claim the Road Traffic Regulations exemptions afforded to Emergency vehicles Operational NEPTS drivers may claim the 'stopping' or 'parking' exemptions listed in the AERDH. If these are claimed the driver must do so safely and there must be no legal stopping / parking alternative available to the same effect. The Highway Code and Road Traffic Regulations for normal road use MUST BE complied with at all other times, even if non-emergency personnel have been diverted by Ambulance Control to render first aid.

5.2 Speed limited vehicles

When an PTUK vehicle has a speed limited engine, it MUST NOT be driven in the right hand lane of a motorway with three or more lanes unless there are road works or other diversionary instruction permitting it. Limited vehicles will normally have a sticker advising the driver of its restriction, where limited, this would normally be to 62mph (100kph) or 56mph (90kph) depending on the vehicle type.

5.3 Bus Lanes

The only exemption NEPTS vehicles are permitted to claim relates to the use of the bus lanes and would normally only be claimed should any of their passengers' condition

deteriorate and not to claim the exemption may have a detrimental effect on the well being of the patient. There may be localised differences regarding this subject and therefore advice should be sought.

5.4 Drs Co-operative Vehicles

NO EXEMPTIONS are afforded to any driver using any of the Drs Co-operative vehicles under any circumstances, even where Green visual warning lights are fitted. There are **NO EXEMPTIONS** provided whilst using these devices. If used there is a distinct probability that the driver would be contravening the Road Traffic Law and be liable to prosecution in addition to the possibility of internal disciplinary actions.

5.5 Voluntary Ambulance Car drivers

No exemptions are afforded to Voluntary Ambulance Car drivers. It is the responsibility of the Senior Operations Manager to ensure that the legal requirements are met by these volunteers relating to their vehicle, licence, insurance and conduct whilst carrying out PTUK appointed journeys. The DSM will investigate and record any upheld complaints or observations regarding these drivers on PTUK's accident database. Should any driver within this scheme accumulate a number of points they may be removed from the scheme.

5.6 Community First Responders (CFR)

No exemptions are afforded to CFR's, whether driving their own vehicle or one owned and operated by PTUK or a community scheme. The purpose of a community based scheme is to allow appropriately trained members of the public to respond to certain clinical calls within their immediate location, this negates the need to act outside of the rules and regulations in force for all road users whilst responding. There is absolutely no dispensation of excessive use of speed, crossing red traffic signals or dangerous parking for example. Where authorised by PTUK, the fitting and use of amber light-bars is permitted. These units are to be hard wired to only operate / illuminate when the vehicle is stationary handbrake is activated. They must not be used whilst mobile.

6.0 EMERGENCY STAFF DRIVING PROCEDURES

REMEMBER

You are in a privileged position when driving to or from emergencies, and will be held accountable under the Law for your actions. Never abuse the exemptions. The fact that you may be responding to an emergency call does not mean that there is an automatic right to claim an exemption. YOU, the driver, must always be able to justify the need for the exemption, possibly in Court of Law.

Emergency Visual Warning devices must be used when allocated to an emergency response and Audible Warning devices (where appropriate and at the drivers discretion) must be used when driving under these conditions.

6.1 EXEMPTIONS

Speed limits/ emergency driving

The driver of an emergency response vehicle being used for ambulance purposes may exceed any statutory speed limit (those governing roads and vehicles) if observance of the limit would hinder the use of the vehicle for its official purpose on that occasion. The exemption could be claimed when travelling to an emergency call but on the journey to hospital it would not normally be relevant unless the patient's condition justifies the exemption. Doctors and surgeons have commented on **the harm that ambulance staff have caused to casualties by an unsympathetic ride to hospital**, quite apart from the inevitable inability of the attendant to give proper treatment during the journey. The ambulance should always be driven at a speed compatible with the patient's condition.

Safety must always be the over-riding priority of the driver and the safest speed for the existing circumstances must be applied at all times. The vehicle must be driven at a speed whereby the driver can accurately assess, plan and deal with all existing and developing hazards safely.

Speed limits (Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984, Section 87)
'No statutory provision imposing a speed limit on motor vehicles shall apply to any vehicle on an occasion when it is being used for Fire Brigade, Ambulance or Police purposes if the observance of that provision will be likely to hinder the use of that vehicle for the purpose for which it is being used on that occasion.'

Whilst exemption from statutory speed limits exist whilst engaged on emergency response driving and authorised driver training courses, there still remains an overriding statutory requirement for the driver, and in the case of driving courses the student and Instructor, to maintain safety margins. The exemption afforded the Ambulance Service does not allow staff to drive at a speed or in a manner which would amount to driving dangerously or without due care and attention. The various Police Authorities covering PTUK are within their rights under certain circumstances to view excessive use of speed as dangerous driving and allocate the appropriate proceedings against the driver.

You, the driver, must be able to justify the speed and manner in which you chose to drive the vehicle at all times, possibly in a court of law.

PTUK Ambulance Service staff SHOULD comply with the following absolute limits whilst driving. These standards apply to all vehicles including, front line Ambulances, Solo Response vehicles and responding Managers cars –

Statutory speed limit	PTUK advisory limit
20mph	30mph
30mph	45mph
40mph	60mph
50mph	75mph
60mph	90mph
70mph	105mph

These speeds **SHOULD** be regarded as absolute limits and are dependant on all other road, traffic, weather and visibility conditions having been fully assessed and being in the drivers favour. Whilst an exemption from adhering to speed limits exists when engaged on emergency driving, there still remains a statutory requirement to maintain safety margins at all times, under no circumstances can an Ambulance Service vehicle be driven at a speed or in a manner which would amount to driving dangerously or carelessly.

Where instances come to light that indicate a vehicle has been driven at over PTUK's guidance regarding maximum speeds it may be investigated by the DSM. Riders of Emergency Response Motorcycles must comply with the training / instruction provided during their Emergency Response Motorcycle Course and **SHOULD** adhere to PTUK guidelines regarding the use of speed under emergency conditions.

Remember

You must be able to stop your vehicle, at any given time, in the distance you can see to be clear.

And

No emergency is so great that it justifies an accident. It is far better to arrive late than not at all.

6.2 Traffic control signals

Traffic Signals (Traffic Sign Regulations and General Directions 1994, Regulation 33 (1(b))

'When a vehicle is being used for fire brigade, ambulance, bomb or explosive disposal, national blood service or police purposes and the observance of the prohibition would be likely to hinder the use of that vehicle for the purpose for which it is being used, the requirement instead shall be that the vehicle shall not proceed in a manner or at a time likely to endanger any person, and in the case of a red light to cause the driver of any vehicle proceeding in accordance with the signals at the junction to change its speed or course in order to avoid an accident.'

The phrase 'treat a red traffic signal as a give way' means exactly that. There is no exemption whatsoever from a 'give way' afforded to emergency service vehicles. The general public are advised to assist emergency service vehicles, whilst engaged on an emergency call, to react and allow the safe passage of the emergency service vehicle. The over-riding responsibility for safety rests with the emergency service driver at all

times. When approaching a red traffic signal it **MUST** be treated as a 'STOP' or 'GIVE WAY' sign and no attempt should be made to proceed unless the driver is sure the way is clear. On the approach to the red traffic signal consideration should be given to use of the visual and audible warning devices, if they are not already activated. These devices are to alert other road users of your presence and do not give any 'right of way' to your vehicle. Only when you, the driver, are absolutely certain that you have been observed by all the other road users and they have reacted in the appropriate / required manner can you proceed onto the junction. Progress through the junction with extreme caution and at a speed appropriate to the prevailing road, traffic and weather conditions. Under no circumstances should the vehicles audible warning devices be used to intimidate or force members of the public over the stop line at a red traffic signal. If the vehicles in front at the stop line have nowhere to go in order to assist you with progress you should turn the audible warning devices off and position your vehicle 1 – 2 vehicles length back so as not to force the driver in front over the stop line. Audible warnings should be reactivated once the obstruction clears. If the 'keep left' exemption is available as the most appropriate option audible warning devices are to remain active throughout approach and negotiation of the junction. In order to comply with the above guidance, your approach speed to any red traffic signal **MUST** be reduced accordingly and in any case no more than a maximum of 20mph.

6.3 Temporary traffic signals and Pedestrian crossings

Temporary traffic signals - these have exactly the same legal standing as fixed traffic signals. You must be absolutely certain that you are able to negotiate the hazard without causing danger to any other road user. Whilst operatives at road works may be signalling you through, it is you the driver who must be satisfied it is safe to proceed.

Pedestrian crossings – Owing to the nature and use of these crossings extreme caution **MUST** be exercised at all times on the approach and negotiation of these crossings. You **MUST NOT** proceed until you are completely satisfied that any pedestrians have observed your approach and you have elicited the appropriate response, enabling you to negotiate the hazard safely.

REMEMBER

You, the driver, MUST at all times be in a position to give way to the legal precedence of other road users.

Refuges - Passing on the offside (keep left/right signs)

There are occasions when because of traffic or an obstruction, it becomes necessary for an PTUK vehicle to pass on the offside of a refuge to avoid delay when engaged on an emergency call. In these circumstances, the greatest care **MUST BE** exercised; the onus for ensuring that there is no possibility of a collision or of causing harm rests with the driver.

6.4 Use of bus lanes

Road Traffic Law permits Ambulance Service vehicles to use bus lanes when engaged upon emergency calls only. It is at the discretion of the local council, and by written

agreement that local bus lanes can be used for any other journey by Ambulance vehicles. Each PTUK Division must advise staff of any local agreements of this nature. If you are not sure, do not use the bus lane. Drivers exercising this exemption **MUST** comply with the direction of bus flow lane at all times if claimed, extreme caution **SHOULD** be applied on entering and / or leaving.

6.5 Clearways

PTUK vehicles are permitted to stop and park on clearways subject to it being necessary to carry out essential duties that could not be done if the vehicle were to be parked elsewhere. It **MUST** be remembered that no driver is exempt from leaving the vehicle in a dangerous position and it is the responsibility of the driver to ensure that the vehicle is not left in such a manner, position or circumstances as would be likely to present a danger to other road users.

All precautionary means (e.g. blue lights, rear red flashing lights, flashing beacons or hazard warning lights) should be considered when stopping in potentially hazardous situations.

6.6 Parking within restricted areas surrounding pedestrian crossings (Zebra, Pelican, Puffin and Toucan)

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

This exemption is to allow ambulance personnel to deal with an emergency and would not be justified for routine non-emergency duties. Justification **MUST** be absolute, as dangerous parking could be a strong consideration in these instances.

6.7 White / Yellow lines

Parking at or near to double white or yellow lines is permitted subject to the previous clause.

6.8 Floodlights

White lights, other than reversing lights, are allowed and can be used whilst stationary, to illuminate an incident. These lights **MUST** be extinguished when mobile.

Side white lights may be used whilst moving slowly to assist in identifying an address at night providing it does not distract or affect other road users.

6.9 Stopping the engine whilst parked

Stopping the engine whilst stationary is not necessary if there are good grounds for not doing so. This should only take place where the crew is working in close proximity to the vehicle. See also Run lock in section 9.0 Vehicle Security.

Exemptions continued

- Parking on the offside of the road at night
- Parking on footway/verge/central reservation
- Using audible warnings at night
- Entering a pedestrian precinct
- Motorway regulations

Non Exemptions

There are no other exemptions for the driver of an Emergency vehicle except for those described and listed above, even when responding to an emergency call. The list below are examples of actions where a legal exemption does not exist:

- Careless Driving
- Crossing or straddling a solid white line nearest to you in the centre of the road (other than those occasions listed in the Highway Code rule 129)
- Dangerous Driving
- Reckless Driving
- Dangerous parking
- Driving without wearing a seat belt (see also 'wearing of seat belts' section)
- Using a mobile phone (or similar device) whilst driving or in control of a vehicle
- Failing to obey traffic lights controlling a railway crossing or fire station
- Failing to obey a 'STOP' or 'GIVE WAY' sign **
- Failing to obey a "NO ENTRY" sign**
- Failing to obey a "ONE WAY TRAFFIC" sign
- Failing to stop if involved in a road traffic incident

Note ** Unless instructed to by a police officer or traffic warden in uniform.

No Left / No Right Turn and No U Turn signage

The Ambulance Service has no exemption from any of the above restriction. Where a negative order sign is in place to enforce this restriction it MUST be adhered to.

7.0 USE OF AUDIBLE AND VISUAL WARNINGS

General

At the commencement of each shift (duty) the audible and visual warning devices MUST be checked in conjunction with the vehicle daily inspection (VDI). It is the driver who holds full responsibility for the use of all emergency warning devices. Where such checks are prevented for reasons of planning or public nuisance, the appropriate checks MUST be carried out as soon the vehicle is free from such constraints and, in any case, within 0.5 miles of departure from base so a prompt return is possible if any issues are identified.

Visual warnings (blue lights) and alternate flashing headlights (wig-wags) are provided to assist the vehicle in achieving maximum progress when responding to emergency calls or when conveying a patient to hospital, and the audible warning should be used at the driver's discretion. The blue lights may be left on at scene if required to protect scene and alert other road users of the potential hazard if considered to be necessary.

Wig-wags would not normally operate when the vehicles dipped beam headlights are on, on some older vehicles this may not be the case and in these instances they are not to be used in the periods where headlights are required, as their use is likely to be confusing to the general public and could very well be seen as an invitation to pull out in front of the vehicle. The manual flashing of the headlights **MUST** not be used during emergency driving, day or night. The use of audible warnings at night (2330-0700) is only permitted in built up areas, if essential to the safety of the vehicle and surrounding road users.

The 'bull horn, where fitted, MUST NOT be used as it is viewed as aggressive and intimidating. The other siren tones should be used on the approach and negotiation of hazards, coupled with appropriate speed, positioning and sound driving plans for the situation.

Some PTUK vehicles are fitted with alternate flashing rear facing red lights, these are to be used to make the vehicle as conspicuous as possible when stationary at scene and **MUST NOT** be used at any other time.

The audible and visual warnings are not to be used when returning to a base or standby point or engaged in an urgent/non urgent journey unless the patient's condition deteriorates. If this is the case, and audible and visual warnings are used, the crew must inform/advise Control. This can be done retrospectively having arrived at hospital if required, this decision would be determined by the patient's condition. The rear facing blue (and red where fitted) lights and hazard lamps should be kept on as a protection whilst stationary at the incident*. Front facing emergency lighting should be extinguished once parked at scene as it can cause unnecessary problems and distractions to drivers on the opposing carriageway.

** However when dealing with a motorway incident, where the incident is adequately protected by Police, Fire and Rescue or Highways Agency vehicles and/or cones, all the visual warnings are to be switched off.*

These devices are to protect you, other road users and pedestrians. Do not assume you can be heard, it is essential to control your speed whilst using audible warning devices.

7.1 Following other emergency vehicles whilst responding on emergency

PTUK does not carry out any training in 'escort' or 'convoy' driving and as a result staff should not carry this practice out. There may be occasions where an PTUK vehicle responding to an emergency call travels on the same route and in close proximity to another emergency vehicle also responding under emergency conditions. If this situation does occur the following vehicle **MUST** increase their safety distance from the vehicle in front and change the audible warning tone so not to coincide with the lead vehicle. It is appreciated that you may not be able to hear the tone being used by the lead vehicle and it is therefore recommended that you alternate tones on a regular basis. It is important to remember that the public may not recognise that there is more than one vehicle responding to an emergency in their vicinity. Both drivers must be

aware of the possibility of the onset of 'red mist' or any elements of competitive driving entering their thoughts whilst engaged on the drive - these **MUST** be avoided at all costs.

Emergency escorts by PTUK / BASICS vehicles

PTUK does not permit any emergency escorts for ambulances. Should the driver of the response car's clinical skills be required then they must travel in the ambulance with the patient. If possible, additional PTUK staff at scene may then drive the response car to the ambulance's destination to repatriate it with its original driver. This journey **MUST** be carried out UNDER NORMAL DRIVING CONDITIONS.

7.2 Police escorts from scene.

PTUK has made the decision that its staff will not request Police emergency driving escorts for any of its vehicles. This decision has been reached having considered the following factors;

- neither parties are trained in its execution
- relative infrequency of the need to request this activity
- the increase in emergency driver training by PTUK
- dangers of multiple emergency vehicles travelling together
- the increase in visibility and size of modern ambulances
- the increase in effectiveness of both visual and audible warning devices on modern ambulances

When responding to emergency calls at some larger establishments (e.g. airports), the establishment may provide advice surrounding any specific lighting requirements whilst under their jurisdiction. A guide or 'pathfinder' may also be provided to assist with the route to scene. They should be followed at a safe distance and caution must be applied. Upon returning to the public highway the guide **MUST NOT** be used as an escort.

REMEMBER

When using blue lights and audible warnings you remain responsible under Road Traffic Law for your acts or omissions. The fact that you were responding to an emergency or major incident will not be a defence in law.

Any misuse of these devices may lead to formal disciplinary action being taken.

8.0 GENERAL GUIDANCE

8.1 Smoking

It is forbidden to smoke inside any PTUK vehicle or within close vicinity. It does not portray a professional image and there is a serious risk of explosion due to the close proximity of medical gases. **See PTUK Policy on Smoking-PTUK029**

8.2 Reversing - Double manned vehicles/ single manned

It should be noted that a huge amount of PTUK money is spent each year repairing avoidable damage to its vehicles, inflicted whilst travelling in reverse. By following a few simple rules, this type of incident can be avoided.

Double manned vehicles - Prior to reversing, the driver and attendant/passenger must agree a safe path for the vehicle to take. The attendant/passenger should act as guide where ever possible, and the vehicle is not to be reversed until he/she has checked that the area into which the vehicle is to travel is clear. He/she is then to stand in the position from which they can best be seen and heard by the driver in their nearside mirror. Verbal instructions alone are inadequate as they may be drowned by the vehicle engine or other noise. When the attendant's/passenger's view is restricted from the front or side of the vehicle, he/she should take up a position towards the rear of the vehicle; eye contact must be maintained between the driver and attendant / passenger. The attendant must not position themselves between the reversing vehicle and a static object (wall, post etc). Where the attendant is working with the patient and cannot assist, the driver should continue single manned and should attempt to illicit assistance from any available and appropriate person at scene. With regards to reversing incidents where damage or injury has resulted and the driver is deemed accountable, if the attendant was not engaged as a banksman and was not engaged in any other more important activities then they may be awarded a point(s) for their omissions in addition to the drivers' award.

Reversing cameras are present in some vehicles but they **MUST NOT** be relied upon in isolation and are to be used only as an aid to the driver. Should a collision occur whilst reversing the camera / or faults within its functionality cannot be sited as mitigating circumstances.

Single manned vehicles - The driver should take the opportunity to fully assess the space to be reversed into when approaching / passing it. The vehicle is not to be reversed until the driver is satisfied that the way is clear and sufficient space exists for the manoeuvre to be completed safely. Even then, particular care is to be taken in case a person approaches unseen behind the vehicle. On ambulance stations and hospital premises, other members of the Ambulance PTUK are often about. There should be no hesitation in calling on them, or other responsible persons, to assist in a tricky situation. A little extra care is a small price to pay for a clear conscience. Any driver, who does not obtain assistance when they could reasonably do so, will be held responsible for any subsequent incident which occurs. It should be noted that all reversing manoeuvres must be carried out at very low speeds and, where fitted, the reversing alarm should be used. On the majority of road surfaces, tick-over is sufficient to carry out most manoeuvres allowing the right foot to cover the footbrake. Hand signals within the AERDH **MUST** be used by staff who have received the training to do so.

8.3 Refuelling of vehicles

Attention is drawn to the hazards involved in over-filling fuel tanks. A rise in temperature or a change in gradient could cause spillage, creating a reduced grip on the surface area of the spill and a fire hazard. Care must be taken when refuelling not to

overfill the tank. Disposable gloves should be worn in the interest of Health and Safety of employees.

Each year there are incidents of vehicles being incorrectly refuelled. Should an error of this nature occur, staff should not start the engine as this will seriously compound any damage caused and could ultimately result in irreparable damage to the engine. They must then contact their respective control centre to arrange recovery and the person who fuelled the vehicle must complete and submit an internal accident report form (see section 11.0).

Every effort should be made to ensure frontline, PTS and on-call vehicles are refuelled towards the end of shift. This is to ensure PTUK is prepared to respond to any major incidents without the need to first refuel. In the case of frontline vehicles this practice is of obvious importance due to the permanent role, demands and time constraints placed upon these vehicles and staff.

8.4 Wearing of seat belts

Drivers and all passengers in PTUK vehicles are required by law to wear front seat belts if fitted and suitable. In cars and Ambulances, rear seat belts must be worn if fitted. Though there is no exemption in law for wearing seatbelts for ambulances purposes, it is accepted that certain clinical management or other exceptional circumstance in an ambulance, will necessitate the removal of a seatbelt. The decision to remove a seatbelt to facilitate clinical management or to deal with some other matter that poses a serious and imminent danger, is the responsibility of the individual following a dynamic risk assessment. The decision to remove the seatbelt in a moving vehicle will be made after considering the appropriateness of asking the driver to stop first. If the decision is made to remove a seatbelt, your lack of restraint must be communicated to the driver. On being made aware of the clinician (or other) being unrestrained in the rear of the ambulance, the driver must adapt their driving to accommodate an unrestrained passenger, until they are informed that all passengers are once more restrained. This will often require adjustment to vehicle positioning and a reduction in speed, but any anticipated significant changes in acceleration; braking or direction must be communicated to the unrestrained passenger in plenty of time. This communication to the unrestrained passenger does not absolve the driver from having to make the necessary adjustments to their driving whilst unrestrained and where appropriate, staff must make full use of available handrails or consider lowering their centre of gravity to increase personal stability. Then active clinical or other patient related management necessitating the removal of a seatbelt is complete, the seatbelt must be reapplied to reduce the risk of injury.

Additional circumstances where a seatbelt does not legally require to be worn are very rare and would only be from the following list:

- If you are driving a vehicle and are carrying out a manoeuvre which includes reversing
- If you have a valid medical exemption certificate verified by PTUK
- If your seat belt has become defective on your journey and you are on route to have it repaired.

The responsibility for wearing a seat belt rests with each individual if over the age of 14. It is the driver's legal responsibility to ensure that any child between the age of 12 and 13 or over 1.35 metres tall wears a seat belt, and any child under that age or height wears the appropriate child restraint. Failure to do so could result in a prosecution of the driver. Care should be taken when alighting from a vehicle that the seat belt has returned and it is not causing obstruction, or tripping hazard. When engaged on an emergency call that involves transportation of a child, appropriate child restraints must be used, however, front line vehicles are exempt from the child restraint legislation due to the journey being over '*a short distance for reason of unexpected necessity*'. This exemption should be considered as a 'last resort' due to the obvious increased risk placed upon the patient / passenger.

8.5 Rough ground

Every effort must be made to avoid driving an PTUK vehicle across soft ground. This may well cause damage to property (playing fields etc.) and could result in the vehicle being bogged down. When property is entered all reasonable instructions of the owner / inhabitant should be accepted and steps taken to avoid damage to premises or property consistent with the assistance to, or recovery of, the patient. If it is necessary to negotiate prepared turf to reach a casualty, and driving over the area is likely to cause damage, staff should approach the patient on foot. When attending public sites such as playing fields etc. you may be offered advice from bystanders as to the state of the surface. YOU the driver are solely responsible for the safe entry and exit of the vehicle and as a result MUST be entirely sure that this can be achieved.

If you are unsure about the surface do not commit the vehicle until a survey has been completed.

8.6 Recovery and or towing of PTUK vehicles

The recovery and/or towing of PTUK vehicles can only be carried out by trained and authorised personnel (normally from within the Fleet Department). These activities carry a high level of often overlooked or unforeseen dangers and risks and require specialised training to perform these activities safely.

8.7 Traffic calming measures

Consideration must be given to the speed and manner in which traffic calming measures are negotiated. The drivers' considerations must be the comfort of any passengers / patients, stability and mechanical well-being of the vehicle.

8.8 Driving/attending incidents on a motorway

Special instructions must be followed for driving/attending incidents on motorways. Drivers must familiarise themselves with these instructions, which are contained in the AERDH. Additional information regarding attendance at a motorway incident can be found in the Police Motorway Manual (information only).

8.9 Positioning of vehicle (non-motorways)

When attending an emergency call the driver must position the vehicle with their safety and the safety of the vehicle as their priorities. Where possible the vehicle should be positioned so that it is clearly visible to other road users and if possible to offer protection to the scene, however it is not the drivers place to use the vehicle as protection of the scene if safety is compromised in any way. It is desirable that the vehicle should be positioned in the 'move off' position before loading the patient. This does not necessarily mean manoeuvring the ambulance into position before attending to the injured, but delay and an incident is more likely if the driver attempts to turn the vehicle around unaided, particularly at night in a place with restricted areas of manoeuvrability.

8.10 Interior vehicle cleanliness

Reasonable effort should be made to ensure the interior of the vehicle is kept clean and as far as possible germ free during use. These efforts should not only be confined in the patient carrying saloon of the vehicle, but should also include the cab of the vehicle in order to prevent the spread of infection and germs unnecessarily. Disposable gloves should not be worn whilst driving as they could spread germs and may affect the drivers' control of the vehicle.

8.11 Exterior vehicle cleanliness

It is extremely important that the front line vehicles are kept clean as the visibility of a marked vehicle's livery forms a fundamental safety feature. Whenever possible PTUK vehicle's displaying Battenberg livery should be kept clean in order to maintain the effectiveness of this safety feature. All other PTUK vehicles should be kept in a clean and presentable condition in order to present a professional image to the public. Windows, lights and number plates MUST be kept clean in accordance with Road Traffic Law.

8.12 Driving through standing water and fords

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

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

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

Driving at speed into standing water that is more than a few centimetres deep can have dramatic effects - it could initially almost feel like driving into a brick wall with a dramatic reduction in speed and possibly loss of control. This is why it's especially important to watch your speed on roads where there might be standing water. The mixture of speed and standing water can cause the tyres to become lifted from the road surface (aquaplaning) this feels exactly like skidding across sheet ice, with total loss of steering control. If this occurs, lift off the accelerator and keep your steering straight, when grip is resumed reduce speed with deceleration and gentle braking. Extra consideration to the possibility of aquaplaning occurring should be applied when travelling on motorways, dual carriageways or on roads around inclines or declines.

If you intend to drive through a flooded section of road or ford, your first task is to check the depth of the water. In normal vehicles you should not attempt to drive through water that is more than about 30 centimetres deep (roughly around the centre of cars wheels). Take special care if the water is fast-moving - even 30 centimetres depth of fast moving water could lift your vehicle from the road surface. After driving through a flooded section of road or a ford, as soon as safe to do so, test your brakes (whilst still driving slowly) and be prepared to dry them off by touching the brake pedal very lightly with your left foot whilst gently accelerating.

8.13 Carrying Children in PTUK vehicles

Drivers of emergency vehicles have an exemption to the legislation governing the carriage of children in motor vehicles and the use of appropriate child seat restraints. This exemption **MUST** only be claimed when dealing with life threatening or serious injury/illness situations and not as a routine event. In other words, the routine transport of unrestrained children on non-emergency ambulances is unacceptable. Children must not be carried in any PTUK vehicle unrestrained in any other circumstances and a child restraint must be utilised at all other times.

Like any driving related exemption there is an onus on the driver of a vehicle, (and in cases like this, possibly the attendant), to justify their claim to the exemption in a court of law should injury or death of the patient occur as a result of them being transported unrestrained in an PTUK vehicle.

9.0 VEHICLE SECURITY

9.1 Stopping and leaving the vehicle

Once a safe and convenient stopping position has been chosen, the handbrake **MUST** be applied fully, the engine and unwanted auxiliaries should then be switched off and the seat belt nePTUKy secured. An automatic gearbox should be left in 'P' position and with a manual it may be desirable to select either first or reverse gear when parking on a gradient. The vehicle should be properly secured if it is to be left unattended. All reasonable precautions must be taken to ensure the safety of the vehicle and its equipment and to prevent it being driven away by unauthorised persons.

'Run-lock' is a feature of some front line vehicles. Once at scene, activate the run-lock facility and this allows the engine to remain running and the ignition key to be removed, the engine will automatically cut out should the handbrake be released. This option should be used when emergency lighting is required at scene. On all occasions when a vehicle without 'run-lock' fitted is left unattended away from its station, the engine must be switched off and the ignition key removed. Keys should not be removed from the ignition when at a major incident. Ensure that the vehicle doors are closed when you are not working in close proximity of the vehicle.

Please note, the locking facility on some vehicles may not function when 'run lock' is activated.

9.2 Securing of vehicles

Vehicle doors are to be properly fastened to ensure they do not open whilst the vehicle is on the move. In no circumstances may an ambulance vehicle be moved with any doors open. Equipment must be properly secured to avoid injuries to passengers. It is the responsibility of the driver to ensure that the rear step is in the up position and that all doors are closed before moving off. Vehicles should remain locked whenever unsupervised. This includes when parked at hospital after having transported a patient. The only exception being that of a pre-alert ('blue call'), where to delay in locking the vehicle would compromise patient care.

9.3 Transport of Animals by PTUK Vehicles

Animals are not to be transported in PTUK vehicles except if they are registered disability assistance animals (guide dogs, hearing dogs etc).

10.0 EMERGENCY WARNING DEVICES FITTED TO PTUK LEASED / OWNED VEHICLES

Before such cars are fitted with blue lights and audible warning devices the individual MUST have successfully completed an IHCD D1 D2 Driving Course.

The driver must make themselves available for any update or refresher training as PTUK sees fit. Staff not meeting this criterion MUST NOT drive vehicles under emergency conditions at any time.

The use of blue lights and audible warning devices are intended to assist the member of staff to make safe progress when responding to emergency calls and for protecting the scene in hazardous situations where appropriate.

10.1 Permanently mounted roof-rail mounted LED units

Due to the development of these units and their semi-permanent fixings to the vehicles they are permitted to remain on the vehicles providing they are displaying a white or clear outer lens.

10.2 Deployment of removable roof mounted blue lens light units

If a manager is on call, or is the duty officer, it is acceptable for the blue lights to remain in place on the vehicle. They **MUST** be removed at all other times. They **MUST** also not be left on the vehicle if a family member or other named driver is using the vehicle. However remember if left on display, these lights may attract criminal attention. In the wrong hands, these lights can, and have been used in serious crimes and could be used by terrorists. All reasonable precautions must be made by the driver to ensure the safety of the emergency equipment including, for example parking the vehicle in prominent and well populated positions in car parks whenever possible and not secluded areas. **Criminals / terrorists will normally choose the easiest target - don't make your vehicle and its equipment an easy target.**

When using the light it should be mounted in the centre of the car roof, preferably between the rear and front windscreens, enabling greater visibility to other road users. The police may stop any unmarked vehicle not displaying identification, even if that vehicle is proceeding to an emergency. However if the situation does arise the driver must comply immediately with the Police Officers instructions and reasonable requests. When not on duty these lights must always be stored, preferably in the car boot, never on the rear parcel shelf. Left on rear parcel shelves they become very dangerous projectiles in the event of sudden braking or a collision.

NOTE

Ambulance PTUK Officers vehicles and Service Responders that are likely to respond to emergencies are recorded on the Police National Vehicle Database Computer System and as a result would not normally be asked to pull over by the Police when engaged on an emergency call.

11.0 INCIDENT REPORTING PROCEDURES

Any incident involving loss or damage to property or persons must be reported immediately to the Control Manager by telephone. An incident form must be then be completed as soon as practicably thereafter but no later than the end of the shift of the staff reporting the incident. Copies can be printed from PTUK's document store, located on the local server or requested from the Control Manager should they be required.

11.1 Duties of drivers

Drivers of PTUK vehicles are under the same legal obligations relating to road traffic incidents as any other driver. There are no exemptions, which may be claimed regarding road traffic collision reporting.

Road Traffic Act 1991 - Section 170 states;

When, owing to the presence of a mechanically propelled vehicle on a road, an incident occurs causing injury or damage to:

- *Any person (other than the driver of that vehicle)*
- *Any vehicle (other than that motor vehicle or trailer drawn thereby)*
- *Any animal (other than an animal in, or on, that motor vehicle or trailer drawn*

thereby) for the purpose of this act, 'animal' means sheep, horse, ass, goat, pig, cattle, mule or dog.

- *Any other property constructed on, fixed to, growing in or otherwise forming part of the land on which the road in question is situated or land adjacent thereto.*

The driver commits an offence if he/she fails:

1 - To STOP

2 - To give, on request of any persons having reasonable ground for doing so:

- His or her name and address
- The vehicle owner's name and address
- The registration make of the vehicle
- Insurance details for injury incident
-

Definitions

- Any vehicle - a vehicle includes a pedal cycle, but does not include damage to your vehicle or a trailer drawn thereby.
- Injury to persons - injury has been held to include shock and a nervous hysterical condition, but also actual bodily harm. It does not include injury to the driver.

Notes

The responsibility for compliance with the legal requirements is the drivers and may not be delegated to any other person, such as the attendant. The driver of the vehicle cannot make a claim for damage to their own property or possessions resulting from their acts.

11.2 At scene

There is no legal exemption from leaving the scene of a road traffic collision (RTC), even when engaged on an emergency call. EOC should be informed immediately following a RTC in order to allocate another vehicle to the original call if appropriate.

11.3 Actions

Whilst drivers can become stressed or agitated following a RTC, no matter what the circumstances or provocation PTUK staff **MUST NOT** admit to liability at scene. If the RTC is not of a serious nature and it involves an PTUK non front line vehicle, the driver must report it to Control Manager immediately. The company details, vehicle registration and driver name should be given to the third party and their details recorded so they can be contacted by PTUK DSM.

11.4 Reporting to police

Should the driver be UNABLE to give the required information (the person has been injured and would not comprehend the information; the owner of the animal or

property is not present) then the driver MUST report the incident to a police constable or at a police station as soon as possible and, in any case, within 24 hours.

NOTE

The word 'unable' means just that. If you do not wish to give the information, for example, the person is argumentative; you would have committed an offence notwithstanding subsequent reporting to the police.

Should the owner of a vehicle or property not be available, the driver must wait a reasonable time to enable any interested party to arrive at the scene. The law does not state what 'a reasonable time' is, but the driver must be able to justify their actions at a later date if required to do so.

'As soon as possible' means without avoidable delay. To report at the end of your shift might not be as soon as possible. 24 hours is the absolute maximum permitted period.

11.5 Ambulance Service vehicle incidents

An ambulance vehicle incident is defined as any incident involving a motor vehicle owned, hired, leased or borrowed by the Ambulance PTUK, being driven by a member of staff or an authorised user, or that the presence of PTUK vehicle could be considered as a contributory factor to an incident.

11.6 Reporting (general)

It is the responsibility of the driver or attendant of the vehicle involved in the incident (or the first manager on the scene if the driver and attendant are incapacitated) to ensure that Control are apprised of the ongoing situation regularly. It is the driver's responsibility to comply with the legal reporting procedures as stated in the Highway Code rules 286 and 287, Road Traffic Act 1988, Section 170 (above).

Whenever a serious incident occurs, or extensive previously unreported damage to a PTUK vehicle is found, the incident will be investigated by the DSM.

11.7 Fatal or serious incidents

The Duty Manager and DSM or his nominated on-call member will be informed by Control in cases of serious incidents, fatal or serious injury to any person involved in the incident. This will also apply to any other motor vehicle related incidents if the Duty Officer or Control considers it appropriate. The driver would normally be immediately suspended from driving by the senior Officer / Manager in attendance. This driving suspension should be followed up by a letter, written by the suspending Officer / Manager, to the driver confirming this action within 3 days. The suspension will remain in force until the incident has been investigated to the appropriate level by the DSM. (See Section 12.0)

Control will arrange for attendance of a Duty Officer and the DSM or on-call manager.

11.8 Previously unreported damage found

A member of staff finding damage to an PTUK vehicle during the pre-drive inspection that has not been previously reported will immediately inform their line manager or Control and comply with the PTUK incident reporting procedure. Failure to do so could result in the last recorded driver being held responsible for the damage.

11.9 Criminal damage to PTUK vehicles

When there is a reason to believe that damage found is the result of a crime, the reporting member of staff will ensure that the incident reporting procedure is followed and the crime is reported to the police and a crime number obtained (URN – Unique Reference Number). The damaged should then be reported via the normal vehicle incident process using the appropriate report form.

11.10 Alleged or Inferred mechanical defects resulting in an accident or collision

Where an alleged or inferred mechanical failure of defect has been sighted as a causational factor in an accident or collision, the police may impound the vehicle. If this is not the case the vehicle must be held at the nearest PTUK workshops or appointed garage until an inspection has been arranged by DSM.

11.12 Suspected defects to PTUK vehicles following an incident

Where the vehicle is suspected to have a defect rendering it un-roadworthy following an incident, that vehicle must be recovered and removed from service and it will be the responsibility of the DSD to ensure that An appropriate mechanical inspection takes place as soon as practically possible and reports their findings before the vehicle can be returned to service. Persons injured whilst travelling in, operating or being loaded / unloaded from an PTUK vehicle, **PTUK's Incident and Reporting procedures** MUST be complied with as these type of incidents are covered under the Motor Insurance policy in the first instance. The incident will be handled by the DSM in the first instance.

11.13 **Incident Report Forms**

Incident Report Forms should only be completed and submitted to the Compliance Manager for motor vehicle incidents if either of the circumstances below are apparent;

- Incident has resulted in a personal injury
- Incident involves either a known or inferred mechanical defect or failure

Incident report forms (Insurance / Internal)

For every incident in which an PTUK vehicle is involved, the relevant Road Traffic Collision form must be completed (IARF or insurance report form). If the incident involves a personal injury an incident report form must be completed in addition to the above. These are to be distributed as follows;

IARF / Insurance Report Form – Driving Standards Manager

Insurance Report Form - to be completed as soon as possible, at the latest at the end of the shift except in exceptional circumstances. For use when an incident has occurred causing damage to persons, property, other vehicle(s) or animals (as previously listed)

All forms must be completed in BLACK INK. The details required on the forms are fairly straightforward. Where "Duty on which engaged at time of incident" appears the words "Ambulance Duties" should always be inserted if applicable. It is important that a detailed sketch of the scene is given, one before and one after the incident and all questions are answered on the form as fully as possible.

Statements should be clear and concise but with as much relevant detail as possible. If there is insufficient room on the incident report for all the details, use an additional sheet of paper. If this is done, the relevant section should be marked "see attached sheet". The relevant section letter should be shown on the attached sheet for ease of reference. Verbal admissions by other parties to the incident should be shown in the statement in block letters and in inverted commas, e.g. "I'M SORRY, IT'S ALL MY FAULT".

Practical implications

(In addition to the Road Traffic Law)

If involved in an incident, however slight, STOP:

- Inform Control and request a Duty Manager to attend if applicable
- Attend to any injured people
- Give particulars if possible and attempt to obtain particulars from third party
- NEVER offer, or agree to a cover-up agreement; this could be interpreted as an admission of guilt
- Obtain all relevant details, especially of independent witnesses, and complete a Traffic Incident Report, also making a sketch of the scene of the incident, whilst on scene if possible.
- Statements - on no account make any statement, verbal or written, to any non-
- PTUK person which could be interpreted as an admission of liability or responsibility at a later stage.
- No statement should be made to the police at the scene, or later at a police or ambulance station, unless there is a PTUK manager present or a manager directs otherwise.
- Any document received by a member of staff relating to an incident involving a PTUK vehicle (i.e. letters from insurers or third parties, police notices, witness statement forms etc.) must be forwarded to the DSM without delay.

12.0 INCIDENT INVESTIGATION AND ADJUDICATION PROCESS

12.1 Serious incident investigations

Should a serious incident occur involving an PTUK vehicle the DSM or appointed manager will investigate the incident and produce a full and detailed report. All correspondence and contact between the Police and other interested parties MUST be directed through the DSM.

The investigation report will include an assessment of whether the incident should be adjudicated as 'accountable' or 'not accountable' with regards to the liability for the incident. An incident will be assessed 'accountable' where the larger proportion of accident cause accrues to the member of staff. Where no, or minimal cause is apportioned to the member of staff, the incident will be recorded as 'not accountable'.

ALL INCIDENTS, NO MATTER HOW TRIVIAL, MUST BE REPORTED

12.2 Less serious incident investigation

For less serious incidents there will not normally be a need to carry out a full investigation, the incident report form will usually suffice in the allocation of liability. Should the report form not contain enough information the DSM or Line Manager may request additional information from the driver to determine accountability. Where the adjudication is not agreed, an appeal must be lodged.

12.3 Suspension from driving duties

Where the senior attending Officer / Manager suspends the driver from driving duties they must inform the Line Manager, Resources, Control and DSM. This MUST be instigated if they believe that to allow the employee to continue driving would represent an unnecessary and unacceptable risk to PTUK.

The suspension will apply until:

- The DSM (or nominated manager) carries out an investigation to the appropriate level as soon as possible (where the suspension remains in force it will be reviewed in accordance with HR Policy)
- All recommendations from the above report have been successfully completed or rejected / deferred by the Manager / Director receiving the report.
- The investigation report has been presented at the appropriate panel hearing and the panel have over-ruled the suspension
- The Managing Director over-rules the suspension

12.4 Removal from driving duties

If it is the opinion of the DSM or driver's Line Manager that an employee should be removed from driving duties, a detailed account of how and why the decision has been reached must be produced without delay. Obviously to instigate this sanction will have serious implications surrounding the terms of the employment of the employee, so should not be taken lightly.

12.5 Assessment of driving

When a member of staff is referred for an assessment of their driving skills, this will be undertaken by the DSM or their nominated manager who must hold an IHCD

Ambulance Driving D1/2 qualification. Any recommendations made by the assessor will be discussed with the employee and a corrective action plan agreed and implemented.

12.6 Reinstatement

A driver who has been suspended from driving duties may be directed to take an assessment before reinstatement. In addition to the driving assessment, they may also be required to undertake a written test and any other assessment process as deemed necessary to address the cause(s) of the original incident(s).

Any member of staff suspended from driving duties can only be reinstated with consultation through the DSM or for any of the conditions bullet pointed above (Suspension from driving duties). In cases where the appropriate manager and the DSM cannot agree on the reinstatement of a member of staff, the matter will be referred to the Managing Director or other appropriate Director for adjudication and resolution.

12.7 Extended periods of absence from the driving role

Any driver who has been absent from driving duties for any reason for a consecutive period of 6 months or more must undergo a driving assessment commensurate with the level of training they have received prior to their absence, or in cases where no training has been received they must demonstrate compliance with all the relevant laws, regulations and procedures applicable. The member of staff will not be permitted to drive PTUK vehicles until this assessment has been completed. The assessment must be carried out as soon as reasonably possible following notification of the employees intended return to duty. It must be carried out by an assessor as described above and should be conducted in a vehicle similar to that which the member of staff would be expected to be using during their normal working shifts.

The assessor will complete the appropriate PTUK Driving Assessment Form. Where necessary the assessor will also complete an attachment sheet detailing any information deemed to be relevant regarding the drives. If the driver can consistently demonstrate the required standard the Instructor will inform the employees direct Line Manager and a copy of the completed paperwork will be forwarded to them. If the driver is unable to demonstrate the required standard during the day then a remedial action plan will be created, suitable to address the areas of concern. This should be delivered as soon as is reasonable practicable and fully documented. All documentation related to the drivers assessment and subsequent remedial training, if appropriate, will be sent to the DSM.

12.8 Disqualification from holding a driving licence

The policy applies to all members of the PTUK for whom the possession of a current driving licence is a pre-requisite to employment and driving continues to form an integral part of the duties of their post. If a member of staff is disqualified from driving, it follows that they will effectively breach their contract of employment and unless there are exceptional mitigating circumstances, a disciplinary hearing may result in their dismissal from PTUK in accordance with company policy.

12.9 Notice of Intended Prosecution (NIP)

If as a result of an incident, or alleged motoring offence committed on or off duty, you receive a Notice of Intended Prosecution (NIP) you must report it immediately to your manager. An NIP has to be served within 14 days of any alleged motoring offences (but need not if it results from involvement in a road incident). Should PTUK receive an NIP relating to an offence committed whilst not entitled to claim a legitimate exemption, the driver's details will be passed to the authorities in line with the Road Traffic Act 1988 section 172.

Your trade union may help in making legal advice available to you or you are, of course, free to consult a private solicitor at your own expense. Alternatively, if your trade union cannot help you in this regard, your employing PTUK's solicitor may assist, if in the circumstances of the case it is appropriate for your employing PTUK to provide support and there is no conflict between PTUK's position and that of PTUK's driver concerned.

12.10 Reporting of previous incidents to insurers

Any previous incident(s) a driver has been involved in should be detailed on the insurance incident report form if requested to do so. This includes the driver's personal motor insurance policy should they have one. This process works in reverse as well, i.e. 'At work' road traffic incidents are reportable to your private motor policy provider.

This stipulation is included in the vast majority of motor insurance policy conditions and failure to comply could result in the insurers withdrawing cover, even after a claim has been submitted.

12.11 Court proceedings

You must inform your manager immediately of any legal action or criminal charges following an incident whilst on or off duty. This should include the receipt of any documents relating to a prosecution, or intended prosecution, and the resultant decision of the Court. It is anticipated that ambulance staff summoned in respect of traffic offences whilst on duty may seek to be represented by the Solicitor of their trade union. If representation in this way is not possible and the circumstances are such that PTUK may wish to become involved, the manager should be asked to enquire whether assistance could be obtained.

Should a serious criminal charge be raised against an employee for a driving offence, PTUK would normally maintain a full driving suspension until such time as the Police / CPS had reached a decision, and if deemed appropriate the case had gone through the Court system. Only under exceptional circumstances would this suspension be lifted prior to completion of the legal process.

12.12 Poor driving standard reports / complaints

Where incidents of poor driving by PTUK personnel are reported, even though no collision or damage has occurred, the incident will be investigated and, if proven will result in the appropriate action being taken, possibly disciplinary action. Any investigation will be carried out by the DSM or their nominated manager without judgement. They must then promptly pass all details to the DSM who will decide whether further action is warranted.

Courtesy, patience, concentration and anticipation are essential ingredients of good driving. At all times make sure that your patients and the general public benefit from your skills and that neither they nor other road users are harmed, inconvenienced or put at risk by your inconsiderate or dangerous actions.

REMEMBER
THAT NO EMERGENCY IS SO GREAT AS TO JUSTIFY AN INCIDENT -
IT IS FAR BETTER TO ARRIVE LATE THAN NOT AT ALL

13.0 MONITORING AND REMDIAL ACTION

13.1 Monitoring of Service driving history

The DSM will provide an overview of the incidence and causation of ambulance incidents and will carry out wide monitoring of incidents and driving incidents. Analysis of the detailed information included from the database will enable:

- The analysis of trends in driver behaviour and driving standards for the identification of any need for additional or modified driver training in consultation with the DTM.
- Information on the operational performance and suitability of vehicles used by members of staff to be considered by the Clinical Risk and Governance Board.

It must be remembered that the object of the system is to identify training needs, identify unsuitable vehicles or practice and improve upon the standard of driving within PTUK.

Remedial action(s)

Following a review of the driver's history and incident reports, the appropriate action will be instigated.

Discipline

Nothing within this document prevents any Senior Manager or Manager from instigating disciplinary proceedings arising from the operation of PTUK Vehicles in order to address serious risks and protect the individual, PTUK or the general public.

Criminal Proceedings Resulting from an Incident or Event

Following the indication from the Police that they are to investigate an incident or event and the driver is potentially facing a related criminal charge, the process of carrying out an internal investigation will be the responsibility of the DSM. All correspondence and contact between the Police and other interested parties MUST be directed through the DSM.

Where a subsequent prosecution results in a 'Not Guilty' verdict, then the appropriate Director, Manager or DSM may review the incident and review any internal actions already taken.

The DSM in consultation with the Directors and HR Department will select a course of remedial action from the list of options set out below. In some cases it may be appropriate to combine two or more options.

(Links with Company Disciplinary Policy)

No Action at this time / Informal advice

No further action need be taken at this time, having regard to all of the circumstances. This option may be appropriate where the points have been accrued over a long period or for minor, unrelated matters.

Informal advice

The member of staff will be informally advised either, verbally or in writing, in relation to their driver history and future conduct. This advice may be recorded on the staff's personal file and will be recorded on the point allocation form.

Formal Disciplinary Action

Appropriate and relevant to the nature of the incident and the staff member's current disciplinary record.

Sanctions

1. Restrictions

The DSM may impose restrictions on the manner or circumstances in which the member of staff may drive certain PTUK vehicles or the conditions they may be driven under.

2. Restriction of Classification of Vehicle

The DSM may withdraw a classification of vehicle that the member of staff is authorised to drive. Reinstatement of classification will be subject to reassessment by a driving assessor.

3. Training

The driver will be required to undertake an appropriate course of instruction to increase their level of driver training.

4. Reassessment

The driver will be required to undertake a practical and / or theoretical re-assessment commensurate with their pre-incident level of driver training. Where a driver fails to reach the required standard then remedial training should be considered in the first instance. Should the driver be unable to attain the required standard after remedial training, capability to perform their duties may be considered.

5. Redeployment

The driver may be transferred to an operational environment where the driving requirements are more suited to the staff's skill level. This option will be dependant on a suitable position being available and would involve HR.

6. Driving Suspension

The member of staff will be suspended from driving PTUK vehicles. The suspension may relate to all vehicles or specific classes of vehicles. The DSM, or Line Manager will specify the type of driving suspension (emergency or all driving). This decision would be influenced by the incident circumstances and any historical incidents the driver may have been involved in. Reinstatement of driving duties will be subject to reassessment and retraining as listed in previous sections. Obviously, any form of suspension from duty should be viewed as a last resort and the decision to suspend should not be taken lightly.

Nothing within these instructions will prevent Senior Managers, Managers, or DSM from suspending a member of staff from driving PTUK vehicles where such action is considered necessary in the best interest of PTUK, the individual concerned, the safety of other road users or where the acts or omissions of the driver could result in a serious incident.

14.0 COMMUNICATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

PTUK will inform all new employees, through induction, the existence of this policy and their responsibilities.

PTUK will advise all staff of their need to ensure they maintain their relevant certification.

A copy of this policy will be made available to all staff. This will be located in every staff/crew room at each location within the business

15.0 APPENDICIES

Appendix 1- Equality Impact Tool

Appendix 2 – Checklist for Review and Approval

Appendix 1 - Equality Impact Assessment Tool

To be completed and attached to any procedural document when submitted to the appropriate committee for consideration and approval.

	Yes/No	Comments
Does the policy/guidance affect one group less or more favourably than another on the basis of:		
• Race	No	
• Ethnic origins (including gypsies and travellers)	No	
• Nationality	No	
• Gender	No	
• Culture	No	
• Religion or belief	No	
• Sexual orientation including lesbian, gay and bisexual people	No	
• Age	No	

		Yes/No	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability - learning disabilities, physical disability, sensory impairment and mental health problems 	No	
2	Is there any evidence that some groups are affected differently?	No	
3	If you have identified potential discrimination, are any exceptions valid, legal and/or justifiable?	No	
4	Is the impact of the policy/guidance likely to be negative?	No	
5	If so can the impact be avoided?	N/A	
6	What alternatives are there to achieving the policy/guidance without the impact?	N/A	
7	Can we reduce the impact by taking different action?	N/A	

If you have identified a potential discriminatory impact of this procedural document, please refer it to Human Resources, together with any suggestions as to the action required to avoid/reduce this impact.

Appendix 2 - Checklist for the Review and Approval of Procedural Document

To be completed and attached to any document which guides practice when submitted to the appropriate committee for consideration and approval.

	Title of document being reviewed:	Yes/No/Unsure	Comments
1.	Title		
	Is the title clear and unambiguous?	Yes	
	Is it clear whether the document is a guideline, policy, protocol or standard?	Yes	
2.	Rationale		
	Are reasons for development of the document stated?	Yes	
3.	Development Process		
	Is the method described in brief?	Yes	

	Title of document being reviewed:	Yes/No/ Unsure	Comments
	Are people involved in the development identified?	Yes	
	Do you feel a reasonable attempt has been made to ensure relevant expertise has been used?	Yes	
	Is there evidence of consultation with stakeholders and users?	Yes	
4.	Content		
	Is the objective of the document clear?	Yes	
	Is the target population clear and unambiguous?	Yes	
	Are the intended outcomes described?	Yes	
	Are the statements clear and unambiguous?		
5.	Evidence Base		
	Is the type of evidence to support the document identified explicitly?	No	
	Are key references cited?	No	
	Are the references cited in full?	No	
	Are supporting documents referenced?	No	
6.	Approval		
	Does the document identify which committee/group will approve it?	Yes	
	If appropriate have the joint Human Resources/staff side committee (or equivalent) approved the document?	Yes	
7.	Dissemination and Implementation		
	Is there an outline/plan to identify how this will be done?	Yes	
	Does the plan include the necessary training/support to ensure compliance?	Yes	
8.	Document Control		
	Does the document identify where it will be held?	Yes	

	Title of document being reviewed:	Yes/No/ Unsure	Comments
	Have archiving arrangements for superseded documents been addressed?	Yes	
9.	Process to Monitor Compliance and Effectiveness		
	Are there measurable standards or KPIs to support the monitoring of compliance with and effectiveness of the document?	Yes	
	Is there a plan to review or audit compliance with the document?	Yes	Internal & External ISO auditing
10.	Review Date		
	Is the review date identified?	Yes	
	Is the frequency of review identified? If so is it acceptable?	Yes	
11.	Overall Responsibility for the Document		
	Is it clear who will be responsible for co-ordinating the dissemination, implementation and review of the document?	Yes	

Individual Approval

If you are happy to approve this document, please sign and date it and forward to the chair of the committee/group where it will receive final approval.

Name		Date	11.04.2020
Signature			

Committee Approval

If the committee is happy to approve this document, please sign and date it and forward copies to the person with responsibility for disseminating and implementing the document and the person who is responsible for maintaining the organisation's database of approved documents.

Name		Date	11.04.2020
Signature			

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