

KENT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS



DRIVING POLICY

The Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) is committed to reducing the risks staff face when driving at work. We expect staff to comply with this policy, irrespective of whether they use their own vehicle or a hired vehicle for work purposes.

The objective of this KALC policy is to identify and minimise risks and encourage safe driving in order to reduce the risk of accidents and comply with Health and Safety legislation.

KALC places great importance on the health and safety of employees, as well as members of the public and must rely on every employee to maintain a responsible attitude to the welfare of others.

On the basis that all accidents are preventable, when using their vehicle for work purposes KALC staff are required to operate their vehicle in a responsible and considerate manner, with due regard to the safety of themselves and others, the objective being to minimise the risk of accident.

Definitions

KALC defines Driving for Work as:

- Travelling from the employees site base (Dover District Council Offices at Whitfield or from the staff members home if travelling directly to a meeting/event) for the purposes of work on behalf of KALC.
- Travelling to or from home when attending out of hours events on behalf of KALC.
- Vehicle – includes any type of motorised transport including motorcycles.

Travelling from home to/from the employee's site base is not classed as Driving for Work.

Vehicle speed: When at work staff must obey relevant speed limits at all times and must not drive faster than the prevailing conditions safely allow. Exceeding the speed limit is against the law.

Driving and mobile phones: Staff driving at work must avoid making or receiving calls on a mobile phone whilst driving, including the use of hands-free systems.

Therefore, they should ensure their phone can take messages whilst they are driving, or arrange for a passenger to use the phone. The use of text messaging whilst driving is against the law. Staff should plan journeys so they include rest stops during which time telephone messages can be checked and calls returned whilst the vehicle is stationary and switched off.

Driving and alcohol and/or drugs: Staff driving for work purposes must not contravene the drink driving laws nor have taken drugs or medicines which adversely affect their ability to drive safely.

Drivers Hours: KALC policy is that where longer journeys are unavoidable, trips should be planned to enable a break of 15 minutes to be taken after every two hours spent driving. Wherever practicable, the use of public transport should be considered as an alternative, particularly when driving long distances.

Driving Licence Check Procedure: The employee's driving licence must be submitted for inspection before employment commences. It is the employee's responsibility to then ensure that they have a valid driving licence and suitable insurance to cover them whilst driving at work and also have a valid MOT and car tax. The employee should notify either the Chief Executive or the Chairman if they subsequently become disqualified from driving.

Further Information: All staff will be issued with a copy of the ROSPA leaflet – "Driving for work – Safer Journey Planner".

Advice and Good Practice

1. Vehicle Safety Check
2. Emergency Breakdowns
3. Planning the Journey
4. Seat Belts
5. Pregnant Drivers
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1. VEHICLE SAFETY CHECK

Staff are encouraged to undertake a weekly safety check of their vehicle. A suggested checklist is set out below.

Private Vehicle Weekly Safety Check List

Item
Tyres – pressure & treads
Lights (front, full beam, rear, brakes, reversing and indicators)
Windscreen/windows
Mirrors (rear view and wing)
Washers and wipers
Oil, coolant and battery levels
Seating position
Hand brake
Hazard warning lights
First aid kit
Warning triangle
Torch, reflective safety vest
Shovel, blanket and water when snow threatened

2. EMERGENCY BREAKDOWNS

Many breakdowns are the result of neglect, failing to make routine checks and abuse of the vehicle, in particular running out of fuel.

If the vehicle breaks down whilst driving, the driver should remove the vehicle from the carriageway (if both safe and practical to do so) and contact your break down service provider.

Guidance for Breakdowns:

- Stay calm, breakdowns are common and can be dealt with easily.
- If you have enough warning of an impending breakdown, try and pull up in a busy well-lit place.
- If anyone offers help, ask them to drive to the nearest telephone and call an emergency breakdown service. Do not get in their car.
- Consider carrying a fluorescent/reflective jacket, warning triangle, torch, blanket and first aid kit.
- It is a good idea to practice changing a wheel using the jack provided before you really need to.
- Always know where your locking wheel nut key is located if you have one.

SINGLE CARRIAGEWAY ROADS

- Think of other traffic:

- If you have enough warning of an impending breakdown, try and pull up in a busy well-lit place. If possible, move your vehicle off the carriageway.
- Use your hazard warning lights (plus side lights at night).
- Use a red warning triangle (at least 45m behind your vehicle on the same side of the road) to warn approaching traffic. Always take great care when placing them and NEVER use them on motorways.
- Keep passengers and animals well under control and away from the road.
- Contact a breakdown service if you are unable to rectify the fault.
- Contact the nearest police station if your vehicle is causing an obstruction, you are travelling alone or want advice.

MOTORWAYS

- Do not stop on the carriageway. Move over to the nearside carriageway as soon as you feel the problem developing. Take your time, don't panic or cause other traffic to brake.
- Leave the motorway at the next exit or pull into a service area.
If you cannot do so:
- Move your vehicle slowly onto the hard shoulder. Stop as far to the left of the hard shoulder as possible.
- Try to stop near an emergency telephone. They are one mile apart and the arrows on the marker posts point to the nearest one.
- Switch on your hazard warning lights. Keep your sidelights on at night.
- Exit your vehicle by the left hand door and make passengers do the same (leave any animals inside or keep them under proper control on the verge). Wait near the vehicle, well away from the motorway and hard shoulder, behind the crash barrier or on grass verge.

- Wear a fluorescent/reflective jacket if you have one.
- Use the motorway telephone to seek assistance. It is free and connects directly to the police. If alone, tell them. Most motorway telephones are monitored by video cameras linked to the local police.
- Every motorway emergency telephone is fitted with an inductive coupler for people with hearing impairment who are wearing a hearing aid. Those who are profoundly deaf should take the phone off the hook, this will alert the emergency services who will investigate.
- If you are travelling alone, tell the police. They will alert a police vehicle to check you are all right.
- The Highway Code advises you to decide whether or not to stay in the vehicle or stand on the verge. The Department of Transport, Police, RAC and AA advice is to stay on the verge, only re-entering if you feel in danger. 10% of all fatal motorway incidents take place on the hard shoulder. Consider the weather, time of day and if it is dark and deserted or busy and well lit.
- If someone should approach you whilst you are on the telephone, tell the police the car's registration and a description of the driver. Then return to your vehicle and lock yourself in. Do not lower the window more than half an inch to speak.
- If you see a woman driver whose vehicle has broken down think before stopping. Rather than stop and risk your actions being misinterpreted, carry on until you reach a phone. Let police know that a woman's vehicle has broken down, appears to be alone and give the location.
- When the breakdown truck arrives, check that the driver knows your name and has in fact been sent to you.
- When rejoining the motorway, build up speed along the hard shoulder, signal and move onto the nearside lane when it is safe.

3. PLANNING THE JOURNEY

When driving on long or unfamiliar routes or spending some time away from home or base, driving can become much safer and less stressful if a little time is spent beforehand preparing for the journey. The following guidance is recommended:

The Driver

- Take your driving licence with you in case you are stopped by the Police and asked to produce it. This could save time and inconvenience later.
- Ensure that you are safe to drive. Do not drive if you feel tired, unwell or are under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- You should have at least 11 hours rest before starting out on a long journey.
- Ensure the vehicle is well ventilated.
- Wear comfortable shoes. High heels and slippery soles are not recommended.

The Vehicle

- Make sure your vehicle is roadworthy before you set out. Referring to "Keep your vehicle maintained" will give some guidance.
- Do not overload your vehicle (refer to manufacturers recommendations). You must secure any load and it must not protrude dangerously. Make sure nothing is left loose on seats or in the foot-wells. If your load doesn't fit safely try an alternative vehicle.

The Route

- Plan and note your route before you set out scheduling places where you intend to take a rest. There are a number of web sites that can help. Estimate how long the journey will take and leave plenty of time to get to your destination.

- You may wish to inform someone of your travel plans (intended route, expected arrival time, vehicle details and mobile phone number). You can phone them on arrival. If you are delayed or change your plans, don't forget to give them a call.
- Try to avoid travelling in peak times. Check teletext information before starting out for traffic information. Keep your radio tuned into the RDS mode for up to date information.
- Consider joining a motoring organisation such as the AA, GEM, Green Flag, or RAC. In addition to providing breakdown services, they can provide very useful travel plans and a host of other services.

4. SEAT BELTS

Wearing seat belts saves lives and reduces the risk of serious injury in a crash. The Law requires everyone to wear a seat belt if one is available, unless you are exempt (exemption certificates are only available via your GP). It is illegal to carry an unrestrained child in the front of any vehicle.

1. Summary of the Law

	FRONT SEAT (all vehicles)	REAR SEAT (Cars & small minibuses*)	WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY
Driver	Seat belt must be worn		Driver
Child under 3 years of age	Appropriate child restraint	Appropriate child restraint must be worn	Driver
Child aged 3 to 11 and under 1.5 metres (approx. 5ft) in height	Appropriate child restraint must be worn if available. If	Appropriate child restraint must be worn if available. If not, an adult seat belt	Driver

	not, an adult seat belt must be worn	must be worn if available	
Child aged 12 or 13 or younger child 1.5 metres (approx. 5ft) or more in height	Adult seat belt must be worn i	Adult seat belt must be worn	Driver
Passenger (over the age of 14)	Seat belt must be worn	Seat belt must be worn	Passenger

5. PREGNANT DRIVERS

If you are pregnant there is no need to give up driving. Pregnancy gives no exemption to wearing a seat belt. For safety and comfort, try to ensure that the straps cross the body above and below the bump, not over it.

Once management have been notified of a driver's pregnancy a risk assessment will be carried out by the Health and Safety Coordinator, the driver will be given information about safe posture when driving and a leaflet on The Safe Use of Seatbelts for Expectant Mothers.

Expectant mothers **MUST** notify their managers if there are any difficulties carrying out their job and the risk assessment must be reviewed accordingly.

6. ABS BRAKING

1. Most new car models offer ABS brakes which is the Antilock Braking System. Drivers must check their car manual or observe the instrument panel for an amber ABS indicator light after the ignition is turned on.
2. This system works with the regular brakes on the vehicle and keeps the base brakes from locking up. For example, in an emergency braking situation, in vehicles not equipped with ABS the driver can manually pump the brakes to prevent wheel lock up. In vehicles equipped with ABS, the driver's foot must

remain firmly on the brake pedal, allowing the system to automatically pump the brakes.

3. ABS is important because when brakes lock up on wet or slippery roads or during an emergency stop the driver may lose steering control and the vehicle can spin around. Rear wheel ABS prevents wheel lock up so that the car stays in a straight line. ABS control on all four wheels retains the driver's control of the steering.
4. In some vehicles the driver may experience a rapid pulsation of the brake pedal, almost as if the brakes are pushing back at the driver. Sometimes the brake pedal suddenly drops and there could be a grinding or buzzing noise and/or a slight vibration. This means that the ABS is working. It is important that the driver's foot remains steady on the brake pedal and that the pedal is firmly pressed and not pumped.
5. The effect of ABS is to slow the car down safely, retaining the driver's control over the steering. Sometimes, especially on some surfaces such as loose gravel or unpacked snow, it could take longer to stop but the steering should still be working
6. At all times, the driver must maintain safe braking distances between their vehicle and the vehicle in front.

7. FUEL CONSUMPTION

Drivers are encouraged to practice driving techniques which reduce fuel consumption. Two good reasons for this are firstly, the cost of fuel keeps increasing and secondly, the effect of fuel emissions on the environment. There are several techniques that help:

Use gears wisely. Drive in the highest gear without labouring the engine. It is estimated that a vehicle travelling at a speed of 37 mph in third gear uses 25% more fuel than when at the same speed in fifth gear.

Drive smoothly. Apply light throttle and avoid heavy braking. Vehicle wear and tear will be reduced as well. Research suggests that careful driving techniques can influence fuel efficiency by as much as 30%.

Switch off the engine whenever it is safe to do so, especially if stuck in a heavy traffic jam.

Think twice before using air conditioning system as running this uses additional fuel.

Drive off as soon as safe to do so. Do not leave the engine of a stationary vehicle running to “warm it up”. Drive off straight away but drive gently until the engine has reached its normal operating temperature.

Lighten the load. Think carefully about what you are taking on a journey. Remove the roof rack if it is not necessary for the journey. Think about the contents of the vehicle. The lighter the load, the lower the fuel consumption and emissions.

8. SAFETY ACTION LIST IN THE EVENT OF AN ACCIDENT AND/OR PERSONAL INJURY

The personal safety of both the employee and passengers and the safety of any other driver and passengers are of prime importance. However, the safety of other road users and pedestrians not directly involved in the accident must also be taken into account.

In the event of an accident, ensure that the people involved move on to the pavement, hard shoulder or embankment (if on a motorway)

If safe to do so, move the vehicle/s to the side of the road

The police must be called if anyone has been injured or if the road has been blocked by the accident.

If the accident is relatively minor, with no injuries to the people involved and no risk to the safety of other road users or pedestrians, there is no requirement to call the police. The process for managing the accident is as follows:

1. Exchange insurance details with the third party. (If the third party refuses to cooperate the police must be called even if the accident is relatively minor).
2. Record the name and address of any party involved
3. Record the registration marks of all vehicles involved and the nature of the damage.
4. Ask for and record the names and addresses of any witnesses to the accident.
5. If it has been necessary to call the police, record the badge number of any police officers present.
6. Record details of the width of the road and road names, position of vehicles involved, speed, direction of travel, skid marks on the road, position of traffic signs, traffic islands, turnings etc. in the area. Show these details in a sketch.
7. Record the weather conditions and visibility

If you are unable to take details of the owner of a vehicle or property, you must report the accident to the police within 24 hours. An example could be if you were to collide with a parked car or other stationary property or if you return to your vehicle and find it in a damaged condition. Failure to report an accident that should have been reported is an offence and may result in a police prosecution.

9. VEHICLE SECURITY

To avoid your vehicle being stolen or broken into, the following may help:

- Remove the ignition key and engage the steering lock.
- Lock the vehicle and set the alarm, if fitted, even if leaving it for only a few minutes.
- Close all windows completely. Never leave young children alone in the vehicle.

- Remove all valuables/contents and lock them in the boot. Nearly a third of all stolen credit cards are from vehicles.
- Never leave the vehicle documents in the vehicle overnight
- Use attended or secure vehicle parking areas. Park in a well lit area. Never leave a soft-top vehicle where it will be vulnerable.

10. DRIVING IN ADVERSE WEATHER

- See and be seen - if you cannot see clearly use dipped headlights.
- Use front and rear fog lights if visibility is seriously reduced, only when you cannot see more than 100 metres. Switch them off when visibility improves.
- Keep a safe distance from the vehicle in front. You should always be able to stop within the distance you can see to be clear.
- In fog, don't get too close to the tail lights of the vehicle in front and use the edge of the carriageway, hazard lines and cat's eyes as a guide.
- Be aware of your speed. Keep your speed down where the road has been gritted, there are wet leaves, rain, oil, loose dust or gravel and mud.
- Pay particular attention to the road surface. Snow and ice will greatly reduce the grip of the tyres - drive slowly in a high gear to avoid wheel spin.
- Keep a careful watch on other road users, especially pedestrians, horses and their riders, motor and pedal cyclists.

11. ADVERSE WEATHER

- Never start a journey before ensuring that **all** glass areas (including lights) are clean and clear, free of frost and snow. An ice scraper/squeegee is essential. Don't rely on demisters and internal heating to do this for you whilst you are travelling
- Before setting off in hazardous conditions ask yourself 'is the journey absolutely necessary'?
- Check the national and local weather forecasts
- Tell someone you are going, an estimated time of arrival, your proposed destination and the route.
- Going to be a long journey? Consider taking food and a hot drink with you as well as a thick rug. Take some high energy food, such as chocolate, boiled sweets etc.
- Carrying a thermos flask filled with hot soup is recommended on longer journeys.
- Where possible, use major routes which may have been gritted/salted. Side roads which tend not to be treated may be blocked.
- If you take any medication ensure you have extra supplies if necessary.
- Do take a mobile phone if you have one. Before your journey ensure the battery is fully charged.
- Remember to allow more time to brake and accelerate. Leave more room between you and the driver in front and try to be patient.
- Drivers are advised to stay inside the vehicle until assistance arrives, unless road conditions make this a more dangerous action (Hard shoulder of motorways) or they are advised by the police to leave the vehicle.

12. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Drivers are advised to keep a coat in the vehicle in case of a breakdown or accident resulting in the driver having to stand on the side of the road for a lengthy period of time.

Drivers are advised to wear any gloves provided by the filling station when refuelling with diesel.

13. REVIEW

Notwithstanding the above, this Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Agreed by Executive Committee – 12 April 2014

Reviewed by the Executive Committee – 11 April 2015

Reviewed by the Executive Committee – 23 July 2016

Reviewed by the Executive Committee – 7 April 2018