

Driving Safety Bulletin

December 2022



Introduction

With temperatures in the region recently falling below zero and the hours of darkness increased at this time of year, your safety is paramount. This bulletin is to serve as a reminder of safety advice for all Trust staff.

Vehicle Daily Inspections

Prior to the use of any vehicle for ambulance purposes, especially those utilised for response driving, comprehensive checks must be completed to ensure that those vehicles:

- Are safe for their intended use
- Are roadworthy
- Comply with all road traffic law
- Satisfy all health and safety legislation
- Set a good example to other road users.

The vehicle daily inspection (VDI) is to be conducted at the start of every shift or where there is a switch to a different vehicle during a shift.

Items to be checked during Vehicle Daily Inspection:

- Examination of exterior
- Wheels and tyres
- Under bonnet cheques
- Lights and reflectors
- All glass wipers and washers
- All audible warning equipment and exhaust
- Ambulance specific equipment/supplies

(DTAG 2018)

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Night Driving

It's harder to see in anything less than full daylight and so your vision gives you less information. As the light fades there's less contrast colours fade in edges become indistinct.

Ways to improve observation at night:

- Keep your speed down when you leave brightly lit areas to allow time for your eyes to adjust to the lower level of lighting.
- Any light inside the vehicle that reflects off the windows will distract you and reduced your ability to see. Interior lights, torches and sat NAV screens can cause reflections, so limit their use.
- Glasses with tinted or photochromatic lenses may be unsuitable for night driving, so check with your optician.
- On the unlit roads put your headlights on main beam and only dip them for other road users.
- Use dipped headlights in built up areas with street lights, in situations when dipped headlights are more effective than the main beam and in heavy rain snow and fog, when these reflect glare from your headlights on full beam.

(Roadcraft 2021)

Winter Driving

With recent sub-zero temperatures, it is imperative to drive according to the adverse weather conditions.

When driving in icy or snowy weather:

- Drive with care, even if the roads have been treated
- Keep well back from the road user in front as stopping distances can be 10 times greater than on dry roads
- Take care when overtaking vehicles spreading salt or other de-icer
- Watch out for snow ploughs which may throw out snow on either side. Do not overtake them unless the lane you intend to use has been cleared
- Be prepared for the road conditions to change over relatively short distances

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- Listen to travel bulletins and take note of variable message signs that may provide information about weather, road and traffic conditions ahead

(The Official Highway Code, Rule 230)

Drive extremely carefully when the roads are icy. avoid sudden actions as these could cause loss of control. you should:

- Drive at slow speed in as high gear as possible; accelerate and brake very gently
- Drive particularly slowly on bends where loss of control is more likely. Brake progressively on the straight before you reach a bend. Having slowed down, steer smoothly round the bend, avoiding sudden actions
- Check your grip on the road surface when there is snow or ice by choosing a safe place to brake gently. If the steering feels unresponsive this may indicate ice and your vehicle losing its grip on the road. When travelling on ice, toys make virtually no noise.

(The Official Highway Code, Rule 231)

For further advice and information, please contact the Driver Training Unit.

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