

GMUK001: Driver responsibilities and standards

Who can drive?

To drive for Get Moved UK (GMUK) you must have a full UK driving licence, valid for the type of vehicle you drive. Once you've completed a health and driver declaration, your manager will let you know when you are authorised to drive on company business.

Drivers with any of the following will not be eligible to drive for GMUK:

- Drivers with nine or more points;
- Drivers with a previous ban of 12 months or more; and
- Any driver with more than one previous driving ban.

The stated requirements also apply

Driving responsibly

When driving on company business you are an ambassador for GMUK. As such you are expected to drive responsibly, showing courtesy to other road users, pedestrians and clients at all times.

Driving licences

As a driver on company business, your licence will be checked on a regular basis. You must produce your licence details on request, and failure to provide your licence upon request may result in disciplinary action.

Medical conditions

If you have one or more of the medical conditions below, or have a condition that makes you unfit to drive, you must inform GMUK and the Drivers' Medical Unit, DVLA Swansea:

- Epilepsy/fits or blackouts;
- Repeated attacks of sudden disabling giddiness;
- Diabetes controlled by insulin or tablets;
- An implanted cardiac pacemaker or defibrillator;
- Angina (heart pain) brought on by driving;
- Parkinson's disease;
- Narcolepsy or sleep apnoea syndrome;
- Persistent alcohol misuse or dependency;
- Persistent drug misuse or dependency;
- Ever experienced a major or minor stroke;
- Undergone any type of brain surgery, or had severe head injury involving in-patient treatment, or brain tumour;
- Any other chronic neurological condition;
- A serious problem with memory;
- A severe learning disability;
- Serious psychiatric illness or mental ill-health; or
- Any persistent limb problem for which your driving has to be restricted to certain types of vehicles or those with adapted controls.

Eyesight

You must be able to satisfy the requirements of The Highway Code when driving, ie to be able to read a number plate at a distance of 20.5m in good daylight, using glasses if necessary. You must inform GMUK and the DVLA if you have the following visual impairments:

- Total loss of sight in one eye;
- Any condition affecting one or both eyes, or
- Any condition affecting your visual field (the surrounding area you can see when looking directly ahead).

Drugs and alcohol

Driving your vehicle under the influence of alcohol or drugs is against the law. Some prescription and over-the-counter drugs can impair driving ability, so remember to check with your GP or Pharmacist for any side effects associated with such medicines. You must also be aware of the morning-after effects associated with alcohol consumption. You have a responsibility to inform your manager if you are unfit to drive for the stated reasons. Driving on company business while under the influence of alcohol or drugs will lead to disciplinary action.

Use of a company car

A company Van is permitted only for GMUK business use and for personal use where authorised. It is not permitted for hiring, pace-making, competitions and rallies whether on public roads or private land.

Own vehicle use

Employees using their own vehicles for ad hoc business use must ensure that they have business insurance and a MOT certificate, and maintain the vehicle in a roadworthy condition at all times.

Road traffic convictions and fines

Following any conviction or fine for driving related offences, you must inform GMUK within 24 hours of the occurrence or notification. If you lose your licence through disqualification GMUK will review your on-going employment. Driving fines are not reimbursable. If you do not tell GMUK of any driving related offences, disciplinary action may occur. Attempting to drive on company business while disqualified will be treated as gross misconduct.

Vehicle security

You must take care to avoid your vehicle being stolen, broken into or tampered with. To ensure vehicle security:

- Park the vehicle in well-lit areas during the night and avoid parking in places where the vehicle cannot clearly be seen at day and night;
- Keep all doors locked when re-fuelling and while loading and unloading; and
- Make sure the immobiliser/alarm is activated where fitted.

If you have a Satellite Navigation system or other valuable items of work equipment, do not leave them on view while the vehicle is unattended. You may be liable for the cost of replacing company equipment stolen from the vehicle where this was not stored safely or securely.

Maintenance and care of vehicle

GMUK are responsible for ensuring the vehicle is in a roadworthy condition where the vehicle is company owned. However, prior to making a journey please make sure that the following are checked:

- Tyre tread depth is above the statutory minimum;
- Tyre pressure is in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines;
- Oil and water levels; and
- Brakes, lights, wiper blades are in good working order and screen wash levels are maintained.

You should refer to the manufacturer's handbook if necessary. Any defects must be reported to GMUK immediately. Seatbelts must be worn by the driver and any passengers at all times while the car is being driven. Smoking is not permitted in any vehicle that is being used for company business.

Fuel

It is the Drivers responsibility to maintain adequate levels of fuel in a GMUK vehicle at all times, and also to exercise care when refuelling to make sure the correct fuel type is used. If you do use the incorrect fuel do not, under any circumstances, start your vehicle. Contact GMUK immediately and advise them of the issue. You may be liable for any costs associated with incorrectly fuelling your vehicle.

Towing

It is your responsibility to ensure that the load of any trailer being towed does not exceed the towing vehicle manufacturer's permissible weights and dimensions. This information can be found in the manufacturer's handbook. You should also ensure that the load is always distributed evenly and that you have an appropriate driving licence to tow the trailer. Further guidance can be sought from GMUK.

Safe driving

Vehicle induction and risk assessment

For all vehicles, your line manager will arrange the induction. It is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with all relevant vehicle controls. Your line manager will work with you to make sure that the risks when driving are assessed and reduced as far as is reasonably practicable. This will include ensuring that:

- Only authorised drivers drive on company business;
- Vehicles are fit for purpose and maintained in a safe condition; and
- Significant risks are controlled and reviewed on a regular basis.

Planning the journey

Planning your journey in advance will make it safer and less stressful, especially where the drive is long or on unfamiliar routes. You should:

- Be aware of the risks when driving if you feel tired or unwell;
- Do not drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
- Take a short time to check your vehicle is roadworthy by following the vehicle maintenance guidance in this booklet;
- Do not overload your vehicle. Follow the manufacturer's guidelines and ensure all loads are adequately secured prior to starting your journey;
- Plan your route before you set out, estimate how long the journey will take, and schedule intended rest stops where needed. Leave plenty of time for the journey;

- Managers must not ask drivers to achieve unacceptable deadlines resulting in the potential for both excessive speed and driving hours;
- Be aware of potential adverse weather conditions during the journey and consider the need to actually make the journey ie in difficult winter conditions (see 'Driving in poor weather' section in this booklet); and
- Sit comfortably with a good posture. Make sure you are familiar with all of the adjustments for the driving position. Use the rest break as a chance to change your posture for a short period.
- It is a standard operating procedure, when reversing/ completing a reversing manoeuvre all two man crews that the drivers assistant (porter) be behind the vehicle in a safe position, in a clear view of the driver, directing the vehicle.

Tiredness/rest periods

Driving when tired may affect your response times, judgement, hazard perception and ultimately the ability to make safe driving decisions. You should take a 15 minute rest break in every two hour driving period. Stop, leave the vehicle to change your posture and get some fresh air.

If you feel tired during a journey, park in a safe location and sleep for 5–20 minutes. Be aware that driving between 12.00am and 6.00am (when your body rhythm naturally prompts sleep), when you are hungry (when blood sugar levels are low) or immediately after a heavy meal may lead to tiredness when driving. You should not routinely drive and work on company business for more than 12 hours in a 24 hour period, and driving time should not exceed eight hours in a given day. If you are regularly exceeding these limits you must raise the issue with your line manager immediately.

Use of mobile phones

Use of a handheld mobile phone, BlackBerry/PDA, or similar device while driving is against the law, and can distract attention from safe driving. Unless business critical, your phone should be turned off before the journey starts. If you need to be contactable, your phone is only to be used with an appropriate hands-free kit while set to automatic answer. You should keep the call to a minimum. If a call is to be made, you should pull over to a safe location and make the call while stationary. Switch off your phone at a fuel station, even if the phone remains in the vehicle.

Drivers should refrain from activities that could distract their attention from driving, ie programming satellite navigation systems, map reading, changing CDs, etc.

Vehicle load security

Ensure that internal and external loads are secured before commencing a journey to allow safe transportation and unloading. Suitable means of storage or internal partitioning will be provided to prevent internal loads moving, in particular when braking in an emergency.

Prevention of overloading

You are responsible for ensuring that your vehicle is not overloaded when in use. Your line manager will make sure that you are informed of the safe working load of your vehicle and you have received appropriate guidance on the prevention of overloading. Where load sensing devices are fitted to the vehicle to detect overloading, you will be instructed in their use.

Motorway driving

- Join the motorway carefully by matching your speed to traffic in the left-hand lane of the motorway and entering when a safe gap appears;
- Follow vehicles at a safe distance by leaving a two second gap between your vehicle and the one in front. Remember to increase the distance in poor weather;
- Use your indicators and remember 'mirror-signal manoeuvre' when driving;
- Overtake only when necessary and do so with care;
- Give way to others and remember it's not a race;
- Leave the motorway safely by checking mirrors, signalling and manoeuvring well before the exit;
- Do not stop on the motorway unless in an emergency; and
- If you begin to feel tired, come off the motorway and find a place to stop and rest.

Driving in poor weather

- Before travelling, be aware of the potential for adverse weather conditions and only travel if absolutely necessary;
- Ensure you always have the right equipment (de-icer, scraper, glass cleaner, screen wash) to clear the windscreen of snow and ice;
- Keep emergency equipment (torch, gloves, blanket, etc) in the vehicle when adverse weather is forecast and ensure your mobile phone is fully charged;
- Leave longer for your journey to allow extra time to reach your destination;
- Watch your speed while driving as rain, ice and snow will increase stopping distances – so decrease your speed;
- Use your fog lights and dipped headlights while driving in fog;
- Be aware of the effects of high wind on your vehicle and on other road users; and
- Accelerate and brake slowly, taking care on bends during snow and ice.

Environmental considerations

Fuel efficiency is critical in reducing our environmental impact. The following tips will help you to be fuel efficient, save costs and improve our carbon footprint:

- Avoid high speeds. Fuel efficiency decreases significantly at speeds over 58 miles per hour;
- Drive smoothly. Smooth driving saves fuel and vehicle emissions. You should accelerate slowly, change to higher gears at the lowest possible speed and accelerate gently.
- Ensure tyres are inflated to the correct pressure. Under-inflated tyres can increase fuel consumption up to 5%. Avoid sudden starts and stops which increase wear on your tyres, and avoid rough roads and potholes where possible.

Accidents

You must report any road traffic accident in which you are involved while on company business to GMUK.

The incident should be reported within 24 hours in all cases. You are also responsible for informing your line manager, within 24 hours of the accident, who will arrange further investigation as appropriate. Immediately following the accident, first ensure your personal safety and the safety of your passengers. In the event of injuries, fire or chemical release, contact the emergency services immediately. You must do the following after the accident:

- Provide your name and (business/personal) address to those that have reasonable grounds to ask for it;
- Exchange vehicle and insurance details;
- Collect names and contact details of third party witnesses; and
- Contact the Police in the case of personal injuries. You must not admit liability for the accident. If details cannot be exchanged for any reason (other vehicles involved failed to stop or someone has been seriously injured) you must inform the Police immediately. If a camera is available, take photographs of the incident scene, or make a brief sketch showing the position of vehicles before and after impact.

Also note:

- Any nearby road signs;
- The condition of the road surface;
- Weather conditions and lighting at the time of the incident; and
- The number of passengers in other vehicles involved in the incident, where appropriate.

Remember, only do this if it is safe to do so.

If there is any doubt about the condition of your vehicle, do not drive it. Arrange for breakdown recovery via GMUK. Refer all enquiries from anyone representing the third party (ie, insurance company or solicitor) to GMUK management.

Breakdowns

If you break down or develop a fault on the road, stop the vehicle at the earliest safe opportunity and location. Put your hazard lights on and sidelights if conditions are dark or wet. Unless you are in a suitable stopping point well away from the road, do not stay in the vehicle. Make sure you get out of the vehicle in a safe way, ensuring the road around you is clear. If you break down on a motorway, to ensure the safety of yourself and passengers, you should vacate the vehicle and stand away from the vehicle on the verge where it is safe to do so.

Contact the fleet service provider or your own breakdown provider to arrange suitable recovery. If you are a lone female, you should advise the recovery service of this when reporting the breakdown.

A quick summary of driver responsibilities

- Only drive on company business once authorised to do so;
- Act as an ambassador for GMUK when driving;
- Report any road traffic offences or change in licence status to your line manager;
- Report relevant medical conditions to your line manager and the DVLA;
- Do not drive if under the influence of alcohol or drugs (including certain prescribed medication);
- Do not smoke in any vehicle being used for company business;
- Drive in a safe and environmentally responsible manner at all times;
- Use all safety related equipment at all times (i.e. seatbelts, loading sensors);
- Do not use your mobile phone whilst driving without an appropriate hands-free kit. It is illegal to do so;
- Inspect your vehicle before each long journey to ensure it is in a roadworthy condition;
- Make sure all vehicles are correctly loaded;
- Report any road traffic incident you are involved in to your line manager; and
- Report any damage or defect to your company car or commercial vehicle to your line manager/fleet service provider.

Tiredness is a major factor in road incidents. To avoid tiredness while driving:

- Make sure you have sufficient sleep;
- Eat and drink fluids regularly;
- Take breaks as recommended within this handbook;
- Avoid maintaining the same posture for long periods during the journey;
- If you begin to feel drowsy, stop at the earliest opportunity