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PART 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

We are committed to maintaining a safe and healthy working environment for our employees, service users and other members of the public.

Driving is an everyday activity but we recognise that workplace transport presents risks to employees and others. Risks that have to be effectively managed as with any other work activity. We will ensure that appropriate management systems, procedures and risk assessments are in place to protect employees and others that could be affected by work activities involving workplace transport.

The Driving at Work Policy applies to all employees who drive at work on Council business. It also applies to people like youth leaders or voluntary drivers for Community Groups who drive to support Council activities. This includes driving as a work activity or travelling between locations in the course of your work. This Code of Conduct is intended for anyone who drives Council vehicles.

You should read this Code of Conduct and complete the declaration at page 10 before carrying out any work related driving. This is to confirm you have read and understood the Code. The signed declaration should be returned to your line manager to file in docstore in your personal file.
PART 2

1. GENERAL

1.1 USE OF VEHICLES ON COUNCIL BUSINESS

Often the simplest means of controlling risk is to avoid it altogether. Meeting with service users and colleagues is a vital part of how the Council does business. So travel is still necessary to support this. But it is still important that travel is planned to make most benefit of your time and those you need to meet. You should also consider the value each person will be adding to the meeting, it may be possible for others to represent your views and provide you with feedback.

Before driving on Council business employees should consider using alternatives. These include:

- Conference calling
- video-conferencing
- walk or cycle to the meeting
- meet at a central location to minimise travel
- public transport

Driving should only be carried out when really necessary and carsharing is recommended wherever it is practical.

1.2 AUTHORISATION TO DRIVE

Before driving your own vehicle on Council business you must complete an “Authorisation to Drive at Work” form and have it approved by your line manager. It is your responsibility to ensure you:

- have a valid driving licence appropriate to the type of vehicle(s) to be driven. More information on driving licence categories is available at https://www.gov.uk/driving-licence-categories.
- do not have a medical condition that impacts on your ability to drive at work;
- confirm that your eyesight meets the requirements set out in the Highway Code
- do not have any driving convictions that would prevent you from driving at work

Any vehicle you drive on Council business must also have:

- insurance that is appropriate for business use
- appropriate and valid road tax
- a valid MOT certificate (if the vehicle is more than 3 years old)

It is also advisable that your vehicle has:
• been serviced according to the manufacturer’s recommendations
• emergency breakdown cover that will provide roadside assistance or for the vehicle to be towed if a roadside repair is not possible

You must repeat this process annually.

1.3 HEALTH

You must report anything that could impair your driving abilities immediately to your line manager. This includes any changes in your health, any personal factors or the effects of any medication or intoxicating substance that could affect your ability to drive.

More information on conditions that can affect an individual’s suitability for driving can be found https://www.gov.uk/health-conditions-and-driving.

You should have a regular eye-sight test to ensure your vision is of a standard appropriate to driving.

1.4 CONVICTIONS

You must immediately report any endorsement on your licence to your line manager. If you accumulate 8 or more penalty points you may not be allowed to continue to drive for work purposes. This will be managed in line with Council policies and could result in you being redeployed to a non-driving role.

If you are disqualified from driving you must not drive any vehicle on Council business until the endorsement has expired.

1.5 RELEVANT LEGISLATION

You must be aware of and be able to apply the rules in The Highway Code. The Highway Code is available at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code.

1.6 REST PERIODS

Driving when tired significantly increases the risk of being involved in a collision. Your line manager will provide you with information on how many hours you can drive and the breaks that you need to take. You should organise your work to make sure you are able to take breaks from driving at appropriate intervals.
1.7  **ALCOHOL/DRUGS**

It can take several hours for the intoxicating effects of alcohol or drugs to subside. You are not allowed to drive if you are under the influence of alcohol or drugs at any time during the working day.

You should seek advice from your GP when being prescribed drugs of any kind on how they may effect your ability to drive.

You must report anything that could impair your driving abilities immediately to your line manager.

If you are found to have been under the influence of an intoxicating substance while at work it will be investigated under the Council’s Disciplinary Policy and may be regarded as gross misconduct.

1.8  **SMOKING**

You are not permitted to smoke in any vehicle being used on Council business. This includes your own.

1.9  **IN-VEHICLE TECHNOLOGY**

The use of in-vehicle technology, like mobile phones, satnav or audio systems, can distract a driver and increase the risk of accident. Distracted drivers generally underestimate the effects that distraction has on them and don’t perceive any reduction in awareness or ability to spot hazards. You must familiarise yourself with the safe use of in-vehicle systems before starting your journey and avoid making adjustments while driving.

It is illegal to use a hand-held mobile phone while driving. If you are stopped by VOSA or the Police and cautioned or charged you must report this to your line manager immediately. You can carry hand-held mobile phones in your vehicle but must be safely parked with the engine switched off before making or receiving a call.

It is not reasonable for your supervisor or line manager to expect you to answer your phone whilst driving.

If suitable hands-free equipment is installed mobile phones may be used. However, using a mobile phone while driving is still a significant distraction even with hands-free equipment. It can increase the likelihood of drivers being involved in a collision. To help keep you and other road users safe you should:

- not make or receive calls, send or read texts or e-mails or otherwise use a mobile phone while driving.
- switch off mobile phones whenever possible while driving and use voicemail facilities
- only be pick up and respond to messages when it is safe to do so
• satisfy normal business needs by checking mobile phones before or after driving or during a break in your journey

Just like mobile phones the use of other equipment like SatNav and entertainment systems can be a significant distraction while driving. You should avoid adjusting or operating any equipment while driving. The SatNav should be set before your journey commences and any adjustments should only be when safely stopped.

1.10 ROAD CONDITIONS

Weather conditions can cause a range of problems for travel and transport systems. Drive at a speed appropriate to road and traffic conditions. Plan ahead and allow extra time for your journey where necessary. Avoid getting into situations where you are taking risks on the road just to gain a few minutes. You should discuss any concerns regarding driving conditions immediately with your line manager.
1.11 BREACH OF DRIVING AT WORK POLICY

Any breach of the Policy will be investigated and where, appropriate, dealt with in line with the Council’s Disciplinary Policy.

2. OCCUPANT SAFETY: GENERAL GUIDANCE

2.1 SEAT BELTS

You must ensure that you and your passengers wear seat belts at all times while driving. There are no exceptions.

2.2 HEAD RESTRAINTS

Head restraints for you and your passengers should be adjusted correctly to help protect against whiplash and prevent long term injuries. The top of the head restraint should be level with top of the head and be as close to the back of the head as possible.

2.3 SAFE VEHICLES

It is your responsibility to ensure that your vehicle is safe and legal. You must check that:

- tyres are undamaged (no cuts or bulges), are at the correct tyre pressure for the number of passengers or equipment being carried and have enough tread depth. The legal minimum is 1.6mm but motoring and safety organisations recommend changing your tyres at 3mm
- there are no signs of vehicle damage;
- oil, coolant and windscreen wash levels are correct;
- brakes are working;
- lights and indicators are working;
- windscreen and windows are not damaged;
- washers and wipers are working;
- mirrors are correctly positioned;
- all occupants are using their seat belts and head restraints correctly; and
- loads are securely restrained.

2.4 TRAFFIC COLLISIONS

If you are involved in a traffic collision you must stop, switch off your engine and turn your hazard lights on to alert other road users to your presence.

Your first consideration should be whether the emergency services are needed. If you are able you should provide assistance to anyone else involved so long as it doesn’t put you in any danger. Do not move anyone who is injured unless they are in immediate danger.

You should immediately report the incident to the Police if:

- it involves an injury to a member of the public or a Council employee
- it has caused a hazardous situation
• someone leaves the scene without exchanging details
• you suspect the collision was deliberate to make a fraudulent insurance claim

If the Police are involved you must not move any of the vehicles without first getting their approval.

When you're involved in a collision you're obliged to give your name and address to anyone else involved. You should stop and give your details if you crash into something on or near the road even if there aren't any other people involved. If you hit a parked car, for example, you should leave your details on the windscreen.

You should tell your insurer about the collision as soon as you can. If you don’t report it within the time period set out in your policy it may invalidate your cover. You should always inform your car insurance company about a collision even if you don't want to make a claim.

You should try to collect the following information:

• Names, addresses and contact details from any drivers, passengers and witnesses.
• Insurance details for the other drivers. If they are not the registered keeper of their vehicle find out who is and make a note of their name and address.
• The registration numbers of all vehicles involved, plus a note of each vehicle’s colour, make and model.
• The time and date of the collision.
• A sketch showing the positions of the vehicles involved
• A description of the weather conditions, plus anything unusual you notice about the road quality or lighting.
• A list of damage to vehicles and a description of any injuries sustained by pedestrians, drivers and passengers.

You may find it useful to take photos of the car accident for use as evidence.

You shouldn’t accept liability or discuss the question of blame with anyone at the time of the incident; regardless of the circumstances. It could count against you later on.

You must report any incidents to your line manager as soon as possible.

2.5 AGGRESSIVE DRIVING

Aggressive driving behaviour can take many forms like speeding, driving too close to the car in front or improper lane changing or weaving; the list is long. Most people drive aggressively from time to time through impatience, annoyance or even in an attempt to save time. Many drivers are not even aware when they are doing it. Aggressive driving, regardless of its motivation, can increase the risk of collision. You should:

• plan ahead and allow plenty of time for your journey. Avoid getting into a situation where you are racing to gain a few minutes and taking risks on the road
• try to avoid driving when you are feeling stressful, emotional or angry or if you feel unwell or distracted for any reason
• be courteous to other drivers and avoid actions likely to provoke. Make sure that your driving does not upset others. Set a good example by respecting other road users. Recognise your own aggressive driving behaviour and correct it.

• be polite and courteous even when other drivers behave unreasonably. Do not react to other drivers who are challenging you or may be looking for conflict. Pull over and let them pass. Do not engage in eye contact. Keep your hands on the steering wheel and do not make any gestures which may show your irritation or frustration with their behaviour.

• Relax behind the wheel. Breathe out slowly, release the tension in your hands, arms and shoulders. Hold the wheel hard again and once more let go and sigh. As you relax, you can begin to think clearly.

• If you are forced to stop stay in the vehicle with the doors locked and engine running ready to drive off. If you are followed drive on carefully to the nearest police station, Council depot or a busy place such as a garage forecourt.

2.6 BREAKDOWNS

Breaking down can be dangerous particularly if you’re on a motorway. Here’s what you need to do to stay safe:

• Make sure you’re in a safe place. Move your vehicle off the road if possible (watch out for any soft verges), or pull up onto the hard shoulder if you’re on a motorway and can’t turn off at the next exit. Make sure you stop as far to the left as you can, with the wheels turned to the left.

• Put your hazard warning lights on. If it’s dark or foggy, keep your sidelights on too.

• Stay well away from moving traffic. It’s usually safest to get out of your car (using the doors facing away from passing traffic) and wait behind a barrier. If you’re on a motorway, move up the bank if you can.

• Wear a reflective jacket if you have one.

• If you’re on a road and it’s safe, you can put a warning triangle at least 45m behind your vehicle. If you’re on a motorway don’t put a warning triangle on the hard shoulder. It’s not safe.

• Telephone the emergency services, or breakdown organisation. Give them accurate details of your location and whether children or passengers with mobility problems are being carried

• On a motorway walk to an emergency phone on your side of the carriageway. Follow the arrows on the posts at the back of the hard shoulder – the phone is free and connects directly to the Police. This will enable the Police to pinpoint your location.
DRIVING AT WORK POLICY - DECLARATION

I have read and understand Falkirk Council’s Driving at Work Policy and agree to comply with this Code of Practice. I understand that any breach of these will be viewed seriously and may result in action being taken under the Council's Disciplinary Policy.

Signature ........................................................................

Print Name ......................................................................

Employee No. ..................................................................

Date ......................