

Code of Conduct for Driving on Council Business

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The Council's Driving at Work Policy applies to all employees who drive at work on Council business. This includes driving as a work activity or travelling between locations in the course of your work.

You should read this Code of Conduct and complete the declaration before driving on Council business using either a personal or Council vehicle.. 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.

General Rules

These rules apply to all vehicles driven on Council business.

Use of vehicles on Council Business

When using any vehicle (private or Council) you must follow the Council's Travel Hierarchy contained within the Driving at Work Policy. This hierarchy sets out appropriate alternatives to driving on Council business and when these should be used by employees.

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 here](#).
- 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 a private vehicle 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)

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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.

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.

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.

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>.

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.

Smoking

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

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Drugs and Alcohol

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.

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.

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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.

Engine Idling

All employees should ensure that their vehicles engine is switched off whenever the vehicle is not in use and not left on unless necessary for driving the vehicle or operating attached equipment.

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.

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Occupant Safety: General Guidance

Seat Belts

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

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.

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.

Lights

You must use headlights during the hours of darkness or at any times when visibility is reduced; particularly in adverse weather conditions. You should never only use side lights when driving.

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

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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.

If you are involved in a collision you should also inform your own insurance company. If you fail to report an accident to your insurer your personal policy could be invalidated and any future claims rejected.

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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.

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.

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- 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.

Using Council Vehicles

The rules outlined below apply to the use of any Council vehicle (leased or owned).

Business use only

Private use of Council vehicles is not permitted and will be dealt with under the Council's Disciplinary Policy. For example, travel home at lunch time would be considered private use.

Vehicles taken home for stand-by and call out duties or any other authorised use must only be used for those purposes. Any other private use is not permitted.

A number of Falkirk Council vehicles are now equipped with Global Positioning Systems (GPS). Its use is intended to improve vehicle utilisation and job allocation as well as helping to ensure employee safety. Where an issue comes to light the system could also be used to support any investigation under the Council's Disciplinary Policy.

Passengers

Passengers are only allowed in vehicles where there are seats installed specifically for this purpose. Seatbelts must be worn on all vehicles where they are fitted. They should be worn at all times on or off the main highway. It is your responsibility to make sure your passengers are wearing a seatbelt before moving off.

Members of the public should not be carried as a passenger unless it is directly linked with the Council's work; for example, if a passenger carrying vehicle is being used to transport service users.

Passengers must not be allowed to ride on or in a trailer of any description or in the cab of a tractor.

Before passengers dismount you should make sure it is safe for them to do so.

Parking or leaving a Council vehicle unattended

Whenever you park a Council vehicle make sure it is parked in a safe place and properly secured.

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You should take care when parking vehicles; whether on Council premises, at home or on the street. Make sure it is not blocking the road or parked on pavements or footpaths. You will be liable for any fines incurred from illegal parking.

First Use Vehicle Checks

You must inspect any vehicle prior to your own first use of it in any work period. Inspections should be recorded on the First Use Vehicle Check Form.

If there are any defects you should notify your line manager immediately. If your line manager is not available you should contact Fleet Maintenance for advice. The vehicle should not be driven unless approved by your line manager or Fleet Maintenance. You should record:

- what action is required
- who instructed the action

All completed forms should be returned to your line manager.

Vehicle Cleanliness

You should ensure that:

- registration plates, lights, indicators, marker plates, wing mirrors, windscreen and cab windows are kept clean **at all times**.
- the vehicle is kept in a clean and tidy condition inside and out
- any vehicle which travels on landfill sites is washed daily
- all moving parts on the body and ancillary equipment of refuse collection vehicles are kept free of refuse and debris.
- sweeping vehicles are cleaned daily according instructions issued by the Service.
- all cleaning activities are appropriate to the vehicle and conditions where it's being used

Re-fuelling

You must ensure that your vehicle has sufficient fuel to complete the work schedule. If the vehicle requires the additive AdBlue you must ensure this is topped up as required.

Fuel for service vehicles should only be drawn from Falkirk Council depots or designated garages in the case of petrol. See Appendix A for authorised re-fuelling points.

Fuel key fobs must only be used to re-fuel the vehicle to which it is assigned. Fuel pin numbers should not be given to or used by any other person.

Fuel for pool vehicles is available from specified locations which are included in the vehicle pack.

Wheel Changing

If your Council vehicle suffers a puncture during normal fleet working hours (08.00-16.00 Mon- Thurs, 08.00- 15.30 Fri) you should contact Fleet Services on

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01324 590412. They will arrange for a tyre replacement. Outside of normal fleet working hours you should contact the Council's Emergency Control on 01324 503050 to arrange a replacement.

You should provide the following information:

- Your name & contact number
- Location of the vehicle
- Vehicle registration number
- Tyre Size and load index, where applicable
- Position of tyre to be replaced; offside front or rear, nearside front or rear

The wheel nuts must be rechecked for tightness after the vehicle has stood for a period of 30 minutes, whether the vehicle has moved or not, or within 30 miles of the tyre being replaced. During normal working hours you should take the vehicle to Fleet Services for this to be done. If you are unable to return to Fleet Services within 30 miles or 30 minutes of the tyre change you should notify your line manager.

Outside of normal fleet working hours Emergency Control will arrange for the duty Fleet Services mechanic carry out the retorquing procedure.

You must stay with your vehicle if it is safe to do so. You should advise your line manager of all actions taken.

Loading & Unloading vehicles

You should ensure that all loads are stable and properly secured. If your load has a number of separate items they should be secured so that no single part can move on its own. Load sheets are intended to protect the load from the weather and to stop loose material from being blown from the vehicle. They should not be used to secure a load.

Ropes, chains and other lashings should be checked before use and should be suitable for the job. Lashings should be attached to proper anchor points. You should regularly check that your load is secure.

You should ensure that your vehicle is suitable for the load to be carried. For example, flammable materials such as petrol or liquid petroleum gas (LPG) cylinders can only be carried in vehicles specially adapted or approved for this purpose.

You must ensure that all trailers and trailed equipment is properly hitched with lynch-pins and safety pins inserted where fitted. If the trailer is connected by a ball and socket coupling make sure that the ball and socket is free from all dirt and grime. The emergency safety braking cable should be properly coupled and the jockey wheel raised and secured.

All loose materials like sand, chips, granules or loose waste should be covered by a tarpaulin sheet and lashed.

If the load extends over the front, rear or sides of the vehicle you should get approval from your line manager before driving.

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Your vehicle must not exceed its maximum permitted weight at any time. The maximum permitted weight is the weight of the vehicle plus any load it is carrying. If you think your vehicle is overloaded you must report this to your line manager.

You must ensure that all people are kept well clear of the body of the vehicle before and during any tipping or unloading operations. When tipping you must pay particular attention to overhead power lines, wires, lighting, cross girders, doors etc.

It is your responsibility to ensure that the body of the vehicle is correctly secured after unloading.

You must use hazard warning lights when loading or unloading at the roadside. Vehicles should only be loaded or unloaded where it is safe and permitted to do so.

Reversing

Accidents involving vehicles reversing can result in serious injuries as well as considerable damage to vehicles, equipment and property. Reversing cameras must be used if they are fitted. You must also use a banksman whenever reversing if one is available.

The job of a banksman is to guide drivers and make sure the area behind the vehicle is free of pedestrians, vehicles and any stationary objects. If you are using a banksman make sure you understand the signals they are going to use and you keep them visible at all times.

If a banksman is not available you must drive with all due care and attention to pedestrians, other vehicles and all other stationary objects when reversing.

Vehicle body props

If you are required to go under the body of your vehicle in the tipped or raised position you must ensure the body of the vehicle is securely propped using suitable equipment.

Vehicle Height

Before driving you must familiarise yourself with the travelling height of the vehicle. You must not drive a vehicle for any distance with the body in the tipped position.

Emergency Equipment

Appropriate first aid equipment will be supplied. Where a first aid kit is carried on a vehicle you must regularly check it to ensure that none of the items are out of date or missing. You must report any deficiencies to your line manager.

If a fire extinguisher has been discharged for any reason you should report it to your line manager to be recharged or replaced.

If any piece of emergency equipment is missing you must report the loss to your line manager as soon as possible.

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Roadside Inspections

You must report any roadside inspection by VOSA or the Police to your line manager within an hour of it taking place.

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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