



Cardiff University Students' Union Drivers Handbook



Introduction

This Handbook contains all you need to know when driving a CUSU Vehicle. Please take the time to read it and take it with you on your journeys as it contains invaluable help

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Drivers Handbook

Introduction

This Handbook contains all you need to know when driving a CUSU Vehicle. Please take the time to read it and take it with you on your journeys as it contains invaluable help

Collecting & Returning Vehicles

Do not attempt to gain keys without your own driver's card. The driver's card is the only form of ID that security will accept. Minibus keys are only available to minibus drivers. Keys will not be issued without a valid card.

Ensure that you have a valid Vehicle Authorisation form. This enables a driver to take the vehicle key compound key and box (Union Minibuses) from security. Ensure that the box contains:

1. Fire Extinguisher
2. First aid kit
3. Vehicle Handbook & the drivers Handbook

The fleet of vehicles is used heavily. Returning a vehicle late may significantly impact other users. If this occurs, the club or society may be subjected to costs incurred, and suspension from use of Union transport.

The vehicle should be left as you would like to find it. This means empty of rubbish, clean and tidy. If you collect a vehicle that is not as you would expect to find it, it does not mean that you can leave it in the same state. If you are unhappy, report the incident to the Transport Coordinator, who will be able to take action against the offending user.

If there have been any problems or incidents during the trip, report them to the Students Union at the soonest opportunity. If there is a problem with the vehicle, leave a note on the steering wheel to inform the next driver, and notify the Transport Coordinator immediately.

Driver Responsibility

When you collect the keys for a vehicle, you become legally responsible for it. If the police or local transport authorities stop you then you are personally liable for any transgressions of the law.

When driving a Union vehicle, you are not only responsible for your own vehicle. You are responsible for the lives of all 16 passengers, your life, and other drivers' lives. Be careful. If in doubt – do not do it.

The minibuses are operated under Section 19 of the 1985 Transport Act. This means that with a couple of exceptions, the same laws apply to our minibuses as to other larger commercial buses on the road. Breaking the law carries very serious penalties for both the driver and the Union. The driver could lose their driving licence and face a fine and or imprisonment. The Union could be fined up to £10,000 and lose their operating permit.

Am I responsible for Roadworthiness?

It is an offence to use an unroadworthy vehicle on the road; both CUSU and the driver have a legal responsibility to ensure roadworthiness.

The law requires that:

- **A daily** walk round check is made by a responsible person (for CUSU vehicles this is the driver) before the vehicle is used.

This also applies to hired vehicles

- Defects must be reported promptly in writing and rectification work recorded - defect reports have to be kept for at least 15 months.
- Regular, pre-planned safety inspections must be carried out.
- We must continually monitor the effectiveness of our system for maintaining roadworthiness.

Vehicle Checks

You are responsible for the vehicle that you have the keys for. If it is not road worthy – do not drive it. Trips are important, but lives are more important.

Below are the checks that should be carried out to Union Vehicles to insure that they are road worthy, and mechanically sound to complete the trip that you are about to go on.

Vehicle checks fall under four categories:

1. Vehicle exterior
2. Engine fluid levels
3. Vehicle interior
4. Vehicle systems – checked once vehicle is running.

Not only do these checks ensure that the vehicle is road worthy, but they protect you from blame and fines if the vehicle is broken or damaged. Any user failing to show evidence that the checks have been completed may face suspension from driving Union Vehicles.

On the Vehicle Authorisation Form is a list of checks to be carried out, with space to write down any problems. If the section is ticked and left blank, it is assumed that there is no problem with that aspect.

If you do find any problem affecting the roadworthiness of the vehicle, you must inform the Transport coordinator immediately.

There are some aspects of the following checks that only apply to minibuses. These are indicated with *italic* writing.

Section A Checks: Vehicle Exterior

To do this, simply walk the entire round the vehicle, checking the following:

Body work	Are there any dents or scrapes in the exterior panels?
Mirrors	Are both wing mirrors present and undamaged?
Aerial	Is the radio aerial present and undamaged?
Lights	Are any of the lights smashed?
Fuel Cap	Is it present and does it work properly?
Tyres	Check all tyres, including the spare, for excessive wear, correct pressure and any other damage (i.e. cracks in the tyre wall). Tyre pressures are difficult to inspect visually. If going on a long trip, check the tyres at a garage. Ensure that there are no objects between the double rear tyres.
Cleanliness	Is the exterior reasonable clean? It is illegal if any of the windows are dirty to an extent that obscures the driver's vision.

If there is a problem with a tyre, change the wheel for the spare. **This must be done by the transport coordinator, a qualified garage or the AA.** If the Vehicle becomes fairly dirty during use, you are expected to wash it. Jet washes are suitable for this.

Section B Checks: Engine Fluid Levels

Open the bonnet and check each of the fluid levels. Think ahead and bring a rag with you to wipe the oil dipstick on. If you have a problem identifying any of the fluid reservoirs, consult the specific vehicle handbook (in the vehicle).

- Oil level
- Brake fluid
- Power steering
- Radiator Coolant
- Washer reservoir. Remember that it is illegal to drive a minibus if the washer reservoir has run dry.

If any fluid levels are below half, make a note on the Authorisation form. This will be topped up as soon as possible. If you need to top up the reservoirs, check the vehicle manual to find what fluid is required. Fluids are available from the Transport Coordinator, or in the yellow transport box in the tunnel. If you are away from the Union, keep the receipts from any purchase, and claim the money back from the Transport Coordinator on your return. Please leave any containers that are not empty in the vehicle. If you are driving a hire vehicle that you know is being returned, please remove all containers.

Section C Checks: Vehicle Interior

Check that these are present

Vehicle manual	Specific manual for vehicle. Found in the vehicle box.
Tax Disc	Ensure it is present and valid for your entire trip.
<i>Section 19 Permit</i>	<i>It is illegal to drive our minibuses without a section 19 permit.</i>
Endsleigh emergency card.	This is a laminated page with the breakdown phone number, insurance policy number, and other useful information.
First Aid Kit	If any part is used, inform the Transport Coordinator on your return so that it can be restocked. – <i>Legal requirement for minibuses only.</i> Found in the vehicle box.
Tyre changing equipment	Ensure the jack and all other relevant pieces of equipment are present in the vehicle
Warning Triangle	
Fire Extinguisher	<i>Found in the vehicle box. Ensure that it is present, sealed, and the pressure gauge shows it is charged – Legal Requirement for minibuses</i>
Seat Belts	Check that all seat belts are undamaged and in working condition.

Finally, check the cleanliness of the vehicle. There should be no litter left by previous users and the floor / interior surfaces should be reasonably clean.

Once you have completed all these checks and you are satisfied that the vehicle is ok so far, start the vehicle and complete the last section.

Section D Checks: Vehicle Systems

These should be done once the vehicle is started, and before you leave campus.

Fuel	Has the vehicle a full tank of fuel? It may take a few minutes for the gauge to warm up and read correctly.
All Lights (External and Internal)	Check that all lights are working. If not, make arrangements to replace the bulbs. Keeps receipts and claim money back upon your return.
Windscreen wiper and washers	<i>It is illegal to drive a minibus if either of these systems are not working.</i>
Horn	Sound briefly to check that it is working

Brakes	Ensure they are working properly
Steering	Is the power steering working efficiently?

Fuel: Filling the fuel tank before returning is common courtesy to the next user, and a requirement under the Students' Union Transport System

When all the checks have been successfully completed, and you are satisfied that the vehicle is in a safe and roadworthy condition, sign the declaration on the bottom of the Vehicle Authorisation Form. Do not forget to enter the mileage on this form and to fill in the details on the Vehicle Log Sheet, before and after.

Driving the Vehicle

- There are a number of legal and Students' Union requirements that you as the driver must comply with when the vehicle is being driven on public roads.
- It is illegal for the driver to be over the legal limit for alcohol whilst driving, or be under the influence of any illegal narcotics.
- The CUSU has a twelve-hour ban on consumption of alcohol by the driver prior to using a Union vehicle.
- The CUSU also operates a 24-hour driving ban after excessive alcohol consumption.
- The CUSU has also banned the consumption of any sedative drugs by the driver prior to using Union vehicles.
- The CUSU has banned smoking on all Union Vehicles
- It is illegal to overload the vehicle with equipment, or carry more than the maximum permitted number of passengers. **Doing this also nullifies vehicle insurance.**
- **It is illegal for the driver or any passenger to consume alcohol whilst in a minibus which is in motion.**
- It is illegal for any passenger to distract the attention of the driver without due course.
- The driver and passengers must use seat belts.
- Rear doors must not be used for the loading /unloading of passengers unless required in an emergency
- The Highway Code must be obeyed at all times. This includes the following speed limits (where no traffic signs indicate a lower limit).

Road	Car	Minibus	Towing
Motorway	70 mph	70 mph	60 mph
Dual Carriage Way	70 mph	60 mph	60 mph
Single Carriage way	60 mph	50 mph	50 mph
Built up areas	30 mph	30 mph	30 mph

- Luggage must not block ANY door or the gangway down the centre of the vehicle.
- All doors (including sliding doors) must be closed while the vehicle is moving.

Practical considerations when driving the minibus

The main concern is of course the size of the vehicle. Minibuses are approximately 5.6 metres long and 2 metres wide. This means that extra care needs to be taken when turning and manoeuvring.

When you drive a minibus adjust both mirrors so that you can just see the corner of the vehicle and rear wheel in each mirror. This will allow you to judge clearance from obstacles more easily.

When the minibus is full of passengers or equipment the vehicle-laden weight may reach 3.5 tonnes. In addition to allowing longer stopping distances and slower speeds, a different approach to driving is required. The brakes are not designed to withstand sustained rates of heat dissipation, so change down a gear going down hills and use the engine to brake the vehicle.

The gearbox is not designed to change gear quickly or at excessive revs. Do not over-rev the engine or force the gears if any resistance is felt. This can quickly wreck the gearbox. If you find it difficult to change gear first change into neutral, lift the clutch and depress again before changing gear. Don't use first gear when the vehicle is moving – use second instead.

Above all, take it slowly if you are unsure of the situation. Free practice sessions driving and manoeuvring are available if required please get in touch with the Transport Coordinator.

Driving Hours

Drivers who are licensed under the Department of Transport regulations to drive Passenger Carrying Vehicles have their driving hours rigidly defined and strictly enforced. These rules specify the maximum number of hours that can be driven, and breaks that must be taken. The rules are too complicated to enforce on minibus drivers.

General advice is

- It is not sensible to undertake a long trip after a full day's work.
- For long trips arrange to share driving amongst drivers.
- Breaks should be built into the journey planning – aim for at least a 10 minute break every 2 hours.

Remember tiredness can and does kill.

Problems with the vehicle

If you complete the checks, and find a problem, **only attempt to rectify it if you are absolutely sure what you are doing.** If it can not be fixed and there is any possibility that either the problem could affect the safety of the roadworthiness of the vehicle, or you run the risk of causing damage, you must:

- Note down the problem on the Vehicle Authorisation Form
- Return the keys to security
- Ask security to leave a note with the keys stating the problem.

Do not take the vehicle out. You risk prosecution if stopped by the police or transport authorities for a spot check, and possibly the safety of the vehicle and other road users.

Inform the Transport coordinator about the problem, which they may not be aware about. If you get in touch, it might be possible to assign another vehicle to your trip.

If a previous user is found to be responsible for a problem, they will be held responsible for the inconvenience they have caused you.

Overloading

It is illegal and unsafe to overload any vehicle.

Is my Minibus Overloaded?

- Weigh the fully fuelled vehicle at a weighbridge (without any passengers or the driver).

This gives the kerbside weight (KW)

- Deduct the KW from the Gross Vehicle Weight

(GVW is shown on the registration document)

This gives you the Payload (PL)

- Divide the PL by the maximum number of people in the vehicle.

If your sum is less than 75 kg (the amount available for each person, their luggage **and equipment**) you may be overloaded

In case of breakdown / Accident

Should a minibus break down on the highway, the occupants are immediately at risk and it is the driver's responsibility to ensure that the vehicle is placed in the safest possible position before assistance is summoned.

Attempt to stop the vehicle off or at the side of the road where it is out of danger. If this is not possible, unload all the passengers and get them to safety. Switch the hazard lights on, and erect the warning triangle at least 50 meters behind the vehicle. If the vehicle is obscured by a bend, place the triangle around the bend.

If on a motorway:

- If practicable, leave the motorway at the next exit and seek assistance. Otherwise pull safely off the carriageway onto the hard shoulder.
- Try to stop near an emergency phone: they are one mile apart. You may coast along the hard shoulder to reach one. White posts positioned every 100 metres have an arrow indicating the direction of the nearest telephone.
- Park as close to the nearside of the hard shoulder as possible.
- Switch on the vehicle's hazard warning lights and, at night, switch on all other lights including saloon lights.
- If possible get all the passengers out of the vehicle using nearside exits.
- Keep passengers well away from the carriageway, preferably on the embankment.
- Do not cross the carriageway
- If your vehicle carries an emergency triangle, position it on the hard shoulder 150 metres behind the vehicle.
- Phone the police. The emergency phones are free and connect you directly with the Motorway Police Control Room. They will arrange any help you need. The emergency phones are coded so your exact location will be known.
- This is general advice and your particular circumstances may justify an alternative course of action. For example, waiting outside the vehicle in mid-winter may be inadvisable; some passengers with disabilities may be unable to climb over the crash barrier to reach the embankment, and so on. You should therefore assess the situation, taking account of your individual circumstances and follow the safest course of action.

Mechanical Breakdown

All our vehicles have breakdown cover. Hire vehicles have their own cover, and information about this is on the inside of the front windscreen. Union Vehicles are covered by our policy. Information about this is on the windscreen inside the vehicle.

When you ring for recovery:

1. Tell the operator that it is a Cardiff Union Services Ltd. (Hire Company Name) Vehicle
2. Vehicle registration number
3. Vehicle make, model, seating capacity and number of passengers you are carrying
4. Precise location of vehicle
5. Tell the operator if the vehicle is causing a hazard or obstruction.

When the recovery vehicle attends, if the operator is unable to repair your vehicle on the spot they will recover it to a garage and arrange to return driver and passengers to the union. No relief vehicle will be provided.

If you have any problems, contact the Transport Coordinator to report the incident. Outside of the Transport Coordinators working hours contact Union Security/Reception to inform them of the incident.

Changing a Tyre

If a wheel needs to be changed on a journey please callout the AA. Incorrectly refitted tyres cause accidents.

In the event of Fire

- Stop immediately and switch off the engine.
- Leave the gear stick in neutral in case of accidental engine re-ignition.
- Engage fuel cut-off switch, if fitted.
- Get the passengers out and away from the vehicle, closing the vehicle doors behind them.
- Call the emergency services.
- If you have time, remove the ignition key, engage battery isolation switch if fitted, close all windows and, if you think there may be an engine fire, release the bonnet catch. **Do not** open the bonnet.
- Tackle the fire **ONLY IF IT IS SAFE TO DO SO.**

When the emergency services arrive, inform them if there is a hazardous load on board, for example gas canisters.

In case of Accident

Assess the condition of any casualties. Do not attempt to move them unless they are in imminent danger as this could seriously worsen any injury.

Attempt to get the vehicle off or to the side of the road where it and any passengers are out of danger.

Never admit liability in the event of an accident, even if you feel it is your fault.

For this reason do not apologise to the other driver. This complicates later insurance claims if one party claims the other is liable.

Telephone the emergency services if appropriate (i.e. any injuries or a disabled vehicle is left on the road). Telephone the Students' Union (or Security outside of normal hours) to let someone know what has happened.

Write down the name and address of all drivers and witnesses, and the registration numbers of all vehicles involved. If possible, take photographs or make a quick sketch of the accident. This can prove extremely useful for insurance claims or any legal proceedings. Use the Accident Details Form in the pack in the vehicle, and return it to the Transport & Technical Support Assistant as soon as possible.

If somebody is injured in an accident, it must be reported to the Police with 24 hours.

You are obliged by law to give any person affected by the accident your details.

Our insurance policy is with Endsleigh Insurance.

On return to the University, make a full report in writing to the Transport Coordinator as soon as possible.

Incident Procedure

The Transport Coordinator/CUSU reserves the right to remove the privilege of being able to drive Union Vehicles. This may be done if a serious incident occurs, or complaints made about a driver.

Following an accident, an investigation will be launched into the circumstances surrounding it. It may be decided upon conference with the finance department and insurers of the vehicle that the driver is banned from using Union or Union hired/insured vehicles for a period of time. The nominal recommended period is one (1) academic year. This may be increased if circumstances dictate.

Any complaint or incident will be dealt with on an individual basis, depending on the nature of the situation.

Getting Fuel

Do not let the minibus run low on fuel. The fuel gauges are inaccurate in the lower half. If you run out of fuel the only way that you will be able to restart the vehicle is to get a mechanic to prime the engine for you.

If you fill up a vehicle with the wrong fuel, do not start the vehicle. Seek technical advice from a qualified mechanic (refer to the breakdown section).