

## Local Code of Safe Working Practice for drivers of vehicles owned or operated by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets



Handed to

Date

# WHY A CODE OF SAFE WORKING PRACTICE?

An associated Risk Assessment has identified many hazards or risks that are normally associated with driving at work. This Local Code of Safe Working Practice has been developed to give procedures and advice as to how to avoid and / or mitigate them.

It also sets out the various policies and procedures to be followed when driving vehicles on behalf of the Council and is to be followed at all times.

This Local Code of Safe Working Practice issued, in accordance with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, is a condition of your employment.

Drivers of Passenger Carrying Vehicles should also refer to the "Passenger Staff Handbook" which gives additional, specific, guidance regarding the transportation of passengers.

This Local Code of Safe Working Practice is a "working document" and will be updated as and when necessary.

***Remember! - THIS LOCAL CODE OF SAFE WORKING PRACTICE WILL, IF NECESSARY, BE ENFORCED BY DISCIPLINARY ACTION.***

***THIS LOCAL CODE OF SAFE WORKING PRACTICE IS COMPLEMENTARY TO THE USE OF GOOD "COMMON SENSE".***

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## SECTION 1

# INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 GENERAL RESPONSIBILITY OF EMPLOYEES

**Remember!** - If an employee is in any doubt about what is the safe method of carrying out a task or action they must seek their Supervisor's or Line Manager's advice before proceeding.

Employees have a vital part to play in the effective operation of the Borough's Corporate and Directorate's Safety Policies. Statutory requirements, as laid down in the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, places legal duties on employees to take reasonable care for the safety of themselves and others whilst at work and to co-operate with their employer and other duty holders in fulfilling their legal duties. Therefore, employees must:

- Take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and others, who may be affected by their acts or omissions whilst at work;
- Co-operate with management on all matters concerning health and safety, including attending training sessions when directed to do so;
- Correctly use all work equipment, items etc, provided by the Council in accordance with the training and the instructions they receive, to enable them to use the items safely.
- Inform their Supervisor or Line Manager immediately of any situation, which they believe might present a serious or imminent danger. The danger could concern their own or other's safety.
- Notify their Supervisor or Line Manager of any shortcomings in the Health and Safety arrangements, even when no immediate danger exists, so that appropriate remedial action can be taken.

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- Use any protective clothing or safety equipment or devices provided and ensure that such items are stored and maintained correctly and that any defects are immediately reported to their Supervisor or Line Manager.

**Remember!** - Employees must ensure that they know how to use equipment safely before they use it and always to leave plant and equipment in a safe condition.

Follow any Local Code of Safe Working Practice or Safe Working Procedure relevant to work activity and adhere to any verbal or written instruction given on Health and Safety matters.

**Remember!** - Failure to comply with any verbal or written instruction or wilful contravention of any safe working practices or requirements of the Safety Policy/Codes of Practice may lead to disciplinary action being taken.

- If an employee has any doubts about their safety responsibilities in their workplace, they must obtain clarification from their Supervisor, or seek guidance from their appointed Directorate/Corporate Safety Advisor, or Trade Union Safety Representative.
- Assist in the development and implementation of all relevant Risk Assessments
- Report any accident, near miss or equipment damage immediately to their Supervisor and ensure that an entry is made in the Accident Book.
- Report any defect in equipment, plant etc., and notify their Supervisor of any unsafe condition that may arise.
- Not indulge in reckless or careless behaviour or misuse equipment.
- Not consume any alcohol, drugs or substances that will impede their ability to drive or work safely.
- When directed by their Supervisor or Line Manager to do so, attend Health and Safety training courses.

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**Remember!** - Where employees are prescribed medication and are required to drive or operate equipment or machinery in the course of their employment, they should advise their Line Manager or Supervisor and where appropriate, seek the advice of their General Practitioner or the Occupational Health section.

## 1.2 RESPONSIBILITY OF EMPLOYER

The Employer (the "Council") must look for hazards that may result in harm when assessing the duties of staff who are engaged on driving duties. Key areas of risk have been identified as:

- The competency of the Driver to drive and keep appropriate records;
- The suitability, legality and condition of the Vehicle;
- The planning and scheduling of the Journey;
- Ensuring the Driver is aware of risks when undertaking journeys.

These risks and appropriate mitigating action are addressed in this Local Code of Safe Working Practice.

In support of this document the Council will ensure that Line Managers and Supervisors are suitably qualified to give advice to any employee who has any doubts regarding safe working practices.

## 1.3 RESPONSIBILITY OF DRIVERS

Whether you are a front-line full-time driver or someone who drives Council vehicles only occasionally, your responsibilities are the same. Failure to discharge those responsibilities may:

- Endanger yourself or others
- Leave you open to prosecution and/or disciplinary action
- Cause the Council unnecessary expenditure

It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that the vehicle is in a roadworthy condition at all times, and that relevant legislation and

Council policies or Local Codes of Safe Working Practice (as set out below) are complied with. You should do this by:

- Possessing a current valid Driving Licence for the Class and Type of vehicle to be driven.
- Carrying out vehicle checks prior to using the vehicle.
- Reporting defects immediately.
- When requested, presenting your vehicle promptly for safety checks/servicing.
- Complying with all Regulations governing the use of goods and passenger vehicles in respect of loads and unloading.
- Complying with all Regulations in respect of Driver's Hours and the keeping of Driver's Hours work records.
- Have a good knowledge of current Driving Legislation and an understanding of Council policies and Local Codes of Safe Working Practice.
- Being mindful of Health and Safety at all times.
- Ensuring that equipment fitted to your vehicle is kept in good condition and that the inside of the cab, including windows, is kept clean and free from clutter.

**Remember!** - Vehicles provided for Council business must not be used for any purpose other than Council business. Drivers using vehicles for any other purpose will be deemed to be 'uninsured' and will be driving without the Council's consent.

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## SECTION 2

# THE COUNCIL'S TRANSPORT STRUCTURE

### 2.1 THE TRANSPORT SERVICE UNIT (TSU)

The Fleet Management section or the Transport Service Unit (TSU), based at Blackwall Transport Complex, is responsible for the provision, management and maintenance of the Council's vehicle fleet. The TSU holds the Council's Operator's Licence/s and is responsible for ensuring that the Council's vehicles are operated properly.

### 2.2 THE USER DEPARTMENTS

The User Departments, as employers of the drivers, are responsible for the day to day operation of the vehicles.

Therefore, Supervisors and Line Managers of User Departments are to ensure that their drivers comply with this Local Code of Safe Working Practice. (See Local Code of Practice for Supervisors and Line Managers)

***Remember!** - If any employee is in any doubt about any of the contents of this Local Code of Safe Working Practice, they should immediately contact their Supervisor or Line Manager for clarification without delay.*

### 2.3 VEHICLE OPERATOR'S LICENCE – 'O' LICENCE

In order to operate large vehicles, the Council must hold an Operator's Licence – 'O' Licence. In order to retain the 'O' Licence, we must all ensure that vehicles used on Council business are operated safely.

The local Traffic Commissioner can reduce the number of vehicles

allowed to be operated or remove the 'O' Licence altogether if serious breaches of proper operation occur. Breaches that could lead to a loss of 'O' Licence are:

- Poor maintenance (including driver's checks and records)
- Driver's Hours and Record Keeping infringements
- Overloading
- Speeding

***Remember!** - Removal of 'O' Licence could have a serious effect on some Council services and could lead to the Council not being able to operate them at all!*

### 2.4 ENSURING A SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

As part of its general responsibilities as an employer, the Council will undertake the following checks and procedures to ensure a safe working environment:

#### Drivers:

- All Drivers will be issued with a personal copy of this Local Code of Safe Working Practice.
- All Drivers will be required to have their national Driving Licence checked on a regular basis.
- All Drivers will be assessed on a regular basis and issued with a permit to drive Council vehicles.
- All Drivers will be required to have their eyesight checked on a regular basis.
- All Drivers may be subject to random checking for drug/alcohol traces or immediately where there is suspicion of drug/alcohol use.
- All Drivers' records and hours of work will be regularly checked.

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## Vehicles:

- All Vehicles will be subject to a programme of routine safety inspections.
- All Vehicles reported as defective, where it is considered that this affects the safe operation or road-worthiness, will be taken off the road until repaired.
- All Vehicle equipment will be subject to a programme of routine safety inspections.

## Journeys:

- Staff will not be required to undertake journeys that extend beyond their statutory driving limits.
- Staff will be given guidance regarding scheduling journeys to reduce tiredness.

## 2.5 CHECK LIST OF KEY COUNCIL DRIVING POLICIES

The following headings set out the Council's policies regarding driving related matters:

- **Accidents** - must be reported to Fleet Management as soon as practicable.
- **Authorised Use of vehicles** – Vehicles must only be used on authorised Council business.
- **Defect Reports** – If you consider that the vehicle or its equipment is unsafe, then a defect note should be completed and handed to your Line Manager.
- **Driver Breaks** – Drivers must take a minimum of 1/2 hr break after 4 1/2 hrs driving. Drivers operating under statutory driving hours' regulations must take their statutory breaks from driving.
- **Driver Rest** – Drivers operating under statutory driving regulations must take their statutory rest periods.
- **Driving Hours** – Drivers should not accept duties that take them

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beyond their statutory rest, driving or break periods, nor undertake journeys without taking statutory breaks.

- **Driving Licences** – Drivers must only drive vehicles for which they have the appropriate driving licence. Points and/or Disqualification must be notified to your Line Manager immediately.
- **Driving Records** – All Drivers must complete a Council Logbook unless other statutory record keeping is required. Drivers must complete and keep any statutory driving records as required. Copies must be handed to their Line Manager as required.
- **Drugs/Alcohol** – Drivers must not consume alcohol nor take non-prescribed drugs at any time whilst they are on duty. Drivers should be aware that alcohol/drugs previously taken stay in the system for several hours. Where non-prescribed "over the counter" medications are taken, then dosages must not be exceeded and any warnings noted.
- **Fines** – Drivers are responsible for parking or any other related driving fines. However, where drivers consider they have been issued with unreasonable fines, then their appeal will be supported by Line Managers and Supervisors if they consider they have a good cause for appeal.
- **Fuel** – Wherever possible, drivers are required to refuel the vehicle using the Fuel Card provided. Drivers should ensure they refuel at the cheapest garage available, obtain a receipt and provide mileage details to the garage kiosk when presenting the Card for payment. All vehicle petrol engines operate on normal unleaded petrol.
- **International Journeys** – All journeys to be made outside of the United Kingdom must be notified to Fleet Management prior to departure, in order to ensure appropriate insurance cover and vehicle documentation is available.
- **International Driving Licences** – International Driving Licences must be presented to Fleet Management to assess entitlement against the current Driver and Vehicle Licencing Agency (DVLA) guidelines.

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- **Medication** – If a driver is on medication this must be notified to their line manager prior to them driving.
- **Minibuses** – Drivers of minibuses will be required to undertake an enhanced assessment prior to issue of a Council Permit.
- **Mobile Phones** – Mobile Phones are not to be used whilst driving, not even hands-free or blue-tooth. They can only be used when the vehicle is safely and appropriately parked.
- **Parking** – Vehicles must not be left unattended without the ignition key being removed and all doors to the vehicle locked.
- **Protective Clothing** – must be worn when required to do so. Risk assessments will notify when safety clothing should be worn.
- **Smoking** – This is not permitted at any time on council vehicles.
- **Speed Limits** – are to be observed at all times.
- **Unauthorised Passengers** – No unauthorised person is allowed to travel in a vehicle used on Council business.
- **Vehicle Checks** – These must be undertaken and completed prior to any journey to ensure the vehicle is safe to drive.
- **Vehicle Cleanliness** – Drivers are responsible for the cleanliness, inside and out, of their vehicles at all times.
- **Vehicle Damage** – must be reported to your Line Manager and notified to Fleet Management.
- **Vehicle Equipment** – Drivers should not operate equipment without having received appropriate training and authorisation.
- **Vehicle Familiarisation** – Drivers should familiarise themselves with a vehicle prior to the commencement of a journey.
- **Vehicles taken home** – Vehicles can only be taken home if this is authorised by an appropriate line manager and notified to Fleet Management in advance.

***Remember!** - Failure to observe any of the above directives could result in Disciplinary Action being taken.*

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## SECTION 3

# BEFORE THE JOURNEY

### 3.1 IS YOUR JOURNEY AUTHORISED?

Council vehicles and other hired-in vehicles are only to be used on authorised Council business.

On no account are vehicles provided by the Council permitted to be taken to the driver's home and parked overnight, unless this has been notified to Fleet Management in advance and authorisation has been received in writing.

Neither may Council vehicles be used by drivers to go home for lunch or for any other personal use (i.e. shopping etc).

***Remember!** - You are not be insured if you use the vehicle for unauthorised journeys and you will be driving without the Council's consent!*

### 3.2 CAN YOU REDUCE THE IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT?

It is recognised that there is a risk that the exhaust gases from petrol and diesel engined vehicles can have a harmful effect upon the quality of the air that we breath and on the environment both locally and globally.

In order to minimise this risk it is essential that care and thought is given to reducing fuel consumption by the manner in which vehicle journeys are planned as well as how the vehicle is driven and operated.

When considering any journey, ask yourself:

- is the journey really necessary?
- can you share the vehicle?

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- can you use public transport?
- is the vehicle being fully utilised?
- can I use an alternatively fuelled vehicle?

Do not leave engines running whilst the vehicle is stationary and do not start vehicles up from cold and leave them running to warm up.

**Remember!** - Drive carefully and considerately to reduce pollution.

*The “greenest” engine is one that is switched off.*

### 3.3 WILL YOUR TRIP TAKE YOU OUTSIDE THE UK?

Vehicles being taken abroad will require additional insurance cover and vehicle documentation.

Drivers may need different Licence qualification to drive vehicles abroad.

**Remember!** - You must contact Fleet Management well in advance of any trip abroad to ensure appropriate insurance cover, vehicle documentation and confirmation that your Driving Licence allows you to drive the vehicle outside of the United Kingdom.

### 3.4 ARE YOU AUTHORISED TO DRIVE THE VEHICLE?

#### Council/School employees:

Before you can drive a vehicle on Council business, you must be authorised by the Fleet Management section.

#### Agency/Temporary drivers:

You may be authorised by the User Department if you hold a clean, appropriate licence.

#### Criteria for Authorisation:

- Show your driving licence for checking at least annually.

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- Declare any endorsements to Fleet Management section immediately they have been incurred.
- Declare any problems regarding driving licence entitlements immediately to Fleet Management section.
- Satisfy your Supervisor/Line Manager that you are competent to drive a Council vehicle where you have had a number of blameworthy accidents.
- Inform the Fleet Management section immediately about any medical condition or problem which may affect your driving entitlement or fitness to drive.
- Can show that their eyesight is in line with legal requirements.
- Not unreasonably declined to take a Drug/Alcohol test when requested.

**Remember!** - Authorised Drivers will be issued with a Council Driving Permit.

### 3.5 IS THE VEHICLE SUITABLE FOR THE JOURNEY/TASK?

Check that the vehicle is suitable for the journey/task.

- Does it have enough carrying capacity?
- Is it suitably designed to transport passengers or goods?
- Does it have any equipment needed to ease loading?
- Is it equipped with appropriate safety fittings/equipment?
- Does it have appropriate hazard signs?

**Remember!** - If you consider that the vehicle is not suitable, report to your Line Manager/Supervisor before commencing the journey/task.

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### 3.6 HAVE YOU THE RIGHT DRIVING LICENCE FOR THE VEHICLE?

All drivers on Council business must hold a current full driving licence applicable to the type of vehicle that they drive. The licence must be available for inspection at any time.

Drivers must ensure that they hold the appropriate class of licence for the vehicle being driven and the type of work or journey being undertaken.

The class of driving licence required to enable a person to drive a Passenger Carrying Vehicle is dependent upon the number of passenger seats that the vehicle is designed to accommodate and the type of work or journey being undertaken i.e. hire & reward. Additionally, the class of driving licence required to enable a person to drive a light van coupled with a trailer is dependent upon the overall weight of the vehicle and trailer.

Drivers of minibuses must have received the Council's "Minibus Driver's Assessment".

***Remember!** - Any driver disqualified from driving or incurring penalty points must report this matter immediately to their Line Manager or Supervisor.*

For licence qualifications please see your Line Manager or Supervisor.

### 3.7 ARE YOU THE RIGHT AGE TO DRIVE THE VEHICLE?

Your Line Manager or Supervisor will have current Minimum Age Limits. However, these age limits are subject to our Insurer's approval.

### 3.8 ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THE VEHICLE?

If a Driver has not driven a similar vehicle (where the vehicle is larger or has different controls or equipment than they normally drive or operate) for a period of two months, they should undergo a short induction and a mentored drive of the vehicle, prior to commencing a journey.

***Remember!** - Become familiar with your vehicle before driving it.*

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### 3.9 HAVE YOU THE APPROPRIATE PROTECTIVE CLOTHING?

The employer and their representatives (i.e. Supervisors and Line Managers) have a legal responsibility to enforce the wearing and use of protective clothing and equipment where required.

Drivers working around vehicles close to the proximity of moving vehicles should wear high-visibility coats or waistcoats.

Employees have a responsibility to check that their uniform/protective clothing and equipment issue is in good condition and if not, to inform their Supervisor or Line Manager without delay.

***Remember!** - The employee has a responsibility (and a requirement in law) to wear protective clothing and use safety equipment on all occasions when required.*

### 3.10 CHECK YOU ARE NOT IMPAIRED BY ALCOHOL OR DRUGS

Drivers must not consume alcohol or take non-prescribed drugs (other than "over the counter" medicines) at any time whilst they are on duty or within 12 hours prior to commencing duty. Drivers should be aware that any alcohol/drugs taken remain within the body system for at least a 24-hour period. Therefore, although a number of hours could have elapsed during the period between having taken alcohol or drugs, the driver's ability may still be affected.

When taking "over the counter" medicines, staff should not exceed the dosages and take heed of any warnings given on any leaflets or packaging accompanying the medicine. Where there is any doubt, drivers should consult their Supervisor before driving.

***Remember!** - Attempting to, or driving a vehicle on Council business whilst under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, will result in disciplinary action being taken, which could lead to summary dismissal.*

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**Remember!** - Drivers must always inform their Supervisor if they are advised by a doctor that they should not drive whilst taking prescribed drugs or medication.

### **3.11 HAVE YOU DRIVEN FOR SOMEONE ELSE?**

If you drive for more than one employer, you must inform the Council of the name and address of the other employer.

Secondary employment can impact on your main job. If your work with the Council is subject to UK Domestic driving hours legislation and you have spent any time in that week driving under EC driving hours legislation, then for that week, you must abide by EC rules on rest periods.

**Remember!** - You have a legal responsibility to inform the Council if you have driven in that week for another employer.

### **3.12 CHECK THAT YOU HAVE ENOUGH DRIVING HOURS**

Drivers of light vehicles (i.e., cars, light vans, trucks, tippers and minibuses) do not fall within Drivers' Hours Regulations when used within the UK. However, whilst driving on Council business, drivers should comply with the maximum Duty and Driving Hours as applicable for Domestic Regulations. Your Line Manager or Supervisor has these details.

Drivers of Heavy Goods Vehicles and Passenger Carrying Vehicles are regulated under the Road Traffic Act 1968 and EU Regulations. These Regulations are complex, with hours of duty available dependent upon the type of journey undertaken. Your Line Manager or Supervisor has these details.

**Remember!** - Regulations governing drivers' Hours of Work and Driving Hours, where applicable, are to be strictly observed at all times.

**Remember!** - Any driver must, before undertaking a journey, ensure that they are aware of, and understand the limits of,

driving and duty hours. They must seek clarification from their Supervisor or Line Manager if they are in any doubt.

### **3.13 CHECK THAT YOU CAN RECORD YOUR DRIVING HOURS**

The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that drivers record their 'Drivers Hours' whilst they are at work.

The Council must also be able to identify to the Police, if they so request, details of the person driving a vehicle at a specific time and date that they may allege that a road traffic incident took place involving a Council vehicle.

## SECTION 4

# TAKING CONTROL

### 4.1 GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

When driving vehicles on behalf of the Council, drivers should at all times comply with the requirements of any current Road Traffic Acts and Regulations and with the advice and guidance given in the latest Highway Code.

Drivers must bear in mind at all times that they are in charge of the vehicle and must not assume that because they are driving a vehicle on behalf of the Council that they are exempt from traffic regulations, irrespective of the job they are doing.

Drivers should ensure that the vehicle under their control shall at all times be driven, parked and operated in a manner which will not cause concern or damage to themselves, their passengers, their colleagues or any other members of the public or to property.

Drivers are responsible for taking all reasonable precautions for the safe keeping and security of their vehicles, passengers, and any load carried in or on the vehicle or trailer whilst it is on the road or away from the depot.

***Remember!** - You are responsible whilst in control of the vehicle.*

### 4.2 VEHICLE CONDITION CHECKS:

Drivers are responsible to ensure that the exterior and interior of the vehicle they are driving is kept in a clean and tidy condition at all times. All vehicles must be cleaned and washed on a regular basis (at least fortnightly during the summer months and more frequently in winter months).

Drivers must ensure that where Tower Hamlets Council logos and vehicle fleet numbers are displayed on the vehicle they are in good

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condition and clean. This also applies to the vehicle registration plates. Know the fuel the vehicle is using.

Know the side of the vehicle the fuel cap is situated.

***Remember!** - The driver of a vehicle has a responsibility to ensure that the vehicle that they are driving is in a safe and roadworthy condition at all times.*

### 4.3 DAILY VEHICLE CHECKS:

The daily driver's vehicle checks are essential to the safe operation of vehicles and are a condition of the Council's Vehicle Operator's Licence.

Before commencing daily driving, drivers must check to ensure that their vehicle is in a safe and roadworthy condition. A list of routine checks to be made by drivers is held by your Line Manager or Supervisor.

***Remember!** - Caution and Care must be taken when checking in the engine compartment as the engine, exhaust or radiator may be hot!*

***Remember!** - If any damage/defect is found that the driver considers may affect the safe operation or road-worthiness of the vehicle, the damage must be reported immediately to a Supervisor or Line Manager where a Defect Note should be completed.*

### 4.4 DAILY EQUIPMENT CHECKS:

All equipment fitted to the vehicle should be checked for security and safety. Your Supervisor or Line-manager will provide you with appropriate safety checklists that cover the equipment fitted to your vehicle.

***Remember!** - A check of equipment is just as important as that of the vehicle itself. If any damage/defect is found that the driver*

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*considers may affect the safe operation of the equipment or the safe operation of the vehicle it must be reported immediately to a Supervisor or Line Manager and a written defect report completed.*

#### **4.5 AIR BRAKES:**

Drivers of vehicles with air operated brakes should not move off until the air gauge indicates the correct operating pressure. Drivers must not interfere with the air pressure warning device.

*Remember! - Should air pressure drop below the safe operating pressure as indicated by the pressure gauge or warning device, the vehicle must be stopped immediately.*

#### **4.6 REPORTING DEFECTS:**

Drivers should ensure that all defects are recorded in an official Vehicle Defect Sheet.

*Remember! - Report all defects.*

#### **4.7 UNAUTHORISED PASSENGERS:**

No unauthorised persons are permitted to travel in vehicles being used on Council business. It is strictly forbidden to offer lifts to Non-council employees unless they are working on behalf of the Council. (i.e. agency staff)

Unauthorised persons are not allowed to drive vehicles used on Council business.

*Remember! - Unauthorised persons will not be insured.*

#### **4.8 SEAT BELTS:**

All passengers and drivers must occupy a seat constructed for that purpose. Where a seat belt is fitted, the vehicle driver and all passengers must wear a seat belt at all times the vehicle is in motion. It is the responsibility of the driver to ensure that all passengers wear

their seat belts.

*Remember! - Seat belts must be worn at all times.*

#### **4.9 NO SMOKING ON VEHICLES:**

Tower Hamlets operates a "No Smoking in the Workplace Policy". Smoking is not permitted in any vehicle used on Council business at any time. Drivers should make sure that passengers are acquainted with the 'No Smoking' notices.

*Remember! - Vehicles are "No Smoking" zones.*

#### **4.10 FINES/DRIVING OFFENCES:**

Any driver whose vehicle receives a Parking Fixed Penalty Notice or is fined for committing a driving offence will be liable for payment of the full cost incurred.

Any representations against the issue of a Notice must be made by the driver. They will not be pursued by the Council on behalf of any employee. However, in certain circumstances determined by your Line Manager or Supervisor, the Council may support a driver in their appeal. If an appeal is not successful then the Driver must pay the fine.

The driver of a vehicle is responsible for the payment of any Fee and/or Fine occasioned against that vehicle as a result of offences recorded by camera, i.e., speeding, bus lane, yellow box, or any other road traffic offences committed whilst they are in charge of that vehicle.

*Remember! - You are responsible whilst in control of the vehicle.*

#### **4.11 CONGESTION CHARGES:**

Most Council vehicles are registered for the Congestion Charge and the Council is billed direct. Short term hires and replacement vehicles will not be registered unless specifically requested of Fleet Management.

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**Remember!** - Where the driver has not checked that the vehicle is registered before entering the Zone, then they will be responsible for payment of the charge or any subsequent Penalty Charges.

#### **4.12 MOBILE PHONES/RADIOS:**

The practice of using mobile phones or other wireless transmitting or receiving devices whilst the vehicle is in motion is unsafe and, in the case of holding a mobile phone in the hand, is illegal. Drivers must ensure that in the event of receiving a call whilst the vehicle is in motion, that they stop the vehicle in a safe manner before answering the call. Under no circumstances should the call be answered whilst the vehicle is in motion.

**Remember!** - Do not use a mobile telephone unless the vehicle is parked correctly in a safe place.

#### **4.13 OVERNIGHT PARKING OF VEHICLES:**

At the end of each day's work the vehicle is to be parked in its allocated parking space and securely locked, with the vehicle alarm set. All ignition keys are to be left with the appropriate Supervisor or Line Manager or placed in the Key Box provided. Drivers of vehicles fitted with a battery isolator should turn the isolator off.

On no account are vehicles provided by the Council permitted to be taken to the driver's home and parked overnight unless authorised in writing and notified to Fleet Management in advance.

**'O' Licence vehicles:** These vehicles must only be parked overnight in designated locations that are signified on the Council's 'O' Licence. Contact Fleet Management section for further information.

**Remember!** - Make sure the vehicle is securely parked and the keys are locked away.

**Remember!** - Get permission before parking the vehicle overnight away from its usual depot.

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#### **4.14 REPORTING AT THE END OF A JOURNEY:**

Any heavy blows to tyres, vehicle grounding, during a journey must be reported to your Supervisor or Line Manager in order that proper inspection of the vehicle may be carried out to ensure there is no hidden damage.

**Remember!** - Report all incidents at the end of the journey.



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## SECTION 5

# ON THE ROAD

### 5.1 GO EASY ON THE “GAS”

Drive at all times in a considerate manner. Avoid harsh acceleration and braking, This will result in a significant reduction in collisions, as well as a reduction in fuel consumption and wear and tear on the vehicle. It will also bring about a reduction in air-borne particles of rubber from the tyres and dust from the brake linings.

The accelerator pedal controls the amount of fuel that the engine uses. Depress the accelerator pedal gently allowing the vehicle's speed to build up gradually.

Report any fuel leaks from your vehicle immediately to your Supervisor or Line Manager.

*Remember! - Drive carefully and considerately.*

### 5.2 REDUCE THE RISKS OF ACCIDENTS AND COLLISIONS:

Vehicle accidents and collisions are expensive for the Council. They can also be dangerous for employees.

Firstly, they add to the Council's overall claim record against its Insurance Company and thus increase the premiums paid by the Council.

Secondly, they add to the Department's costs through the increased premiums as well as the cost of any replacement vehicle supplied whilst the vehicle is off the road for repair.

Thirdly, a driver having an accident/collision could be seriously injured.

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Fourthly, all blameworthy accidents and collisions negate driver nomination for the ROSPA safety award scheme.

Regularly update yourself through visiting the:



[www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk](http://www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk)

**Plan your journey** – know where you are going before you set off. This avoids distractions en-route trying to find the right road or location.

**Give yourself time** – allow enough time for the journey to avoid having to rush.

**Give yourself time to decide** – allow enough space between you and the car in front to react and stop in time.

**Drive to the conditions** – if the weather is bad, reduce your speed.

Take regular breaks – if you are feeling tired or ill, stop driving, take a break, and some water.

**Don't get wound up** – if you are in congested traffic, keep relaxed, investigate alternatives and let someone know you are running late.

**Don't react to drivers around you** – if another driver/road user shows signs of abuse, either verbal or physical, keep calm. Remain in the vehicle. If violence is threatened and is considered imminent, contact your supervisor immediately.

**Don't get distracted** – don't eat, drink, read a map, smoke or hold an intense conversation whilst driving.

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### 5.3 VEHICLE HEIGHTS/WIDTHS:

Drivers should be aware of the height or width of their vehicle and be cautious when approaching low bridges, suspended cables, overhanging tree branches or width restrictions.

### 5.4 VEHICLE LOADING:

Drivers must:

- know the weight and capacity limits for their vehicle
- ensure that they do not load their vehicle in excess of those limits
- Load the vehicle evenly and secure the load to ensure that goods cannot move during transit.
- Ensure that loose loads on open vehicles are covered to stop wind-blown rubbish arising from them. This is not only a litter hazard but also a danger to other road users.

**Remember!** - *Although the vehicle may not be overloaded as a whole, the vehicle could still be overloaded on one of the axles.*

**Remember!** – *Know your maximum vehicle weight and check your weight limit before crossing “weak bridges”.*

### 5.5 DO NOT OVERLOAD!!

Find out the weight/capacity of the load before you put it on the vehicle. Where this is not possible, then use “common sense” to determine whether the load looks suitable for the vehicle.

Where you are undertaking collections, continually check the weight of the vehicle. If in doubt, empty the vehicle and then continue with the collection round.

**Remember!** - *Overloading is a serious offence. Drivers are liable to prosecution and fine if they drive an overloaded vehicle.*

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### 5.6 STORAGE OF GOODS/EQUIPMENT/PERSONAL ITEMS:

Where goods or tools are carried in or on the vehicle or trailer, drivers must ensure that there are adequate numbers of restraints, ropes or straps employed to secure the load in a safe manner.

Drivers are to ensure that there are no loose items on the floor of the vehicle that could roll or move about whilst the vehicle is in motion. These could interfere with the drivers controls i.e., drink cans under the foot brake pedal.

Loose personal items, such as mobile phones, bottles, sweet packets, lighters, keys etc. should be stored in the appropriate glove box or compartment provided for the purpose so as to prevent them from moving around inside the vehicle.

No large packages, bags or any other loose items should be carried in the passenger compartment where they might fly around in the event of heavy braking or lateral movement of the vehicle.

All goods and equipment should be stored and secured in the goods compartment of the vehicle. They should be secured in such a manner that they do not slide around inside the vehicle.

Where items are stored on the roof of a vehicle they should be securely tied down to a roof rack, fitted for the purpose by the Council’s workshop. Where items are stored on a trailer, they should be tied down and secure.

Any loose load carried must be constrained within the body of the vehicle or upon the trailer by a net or sheet securely tied down.

**Remember!** - *Loose items moving around inside the vehicle could distract the driver or get under the pedals or driver’s heels.*

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## 5.7 TRANSPORTING FLAMMABLE MATERIALS:

Vehicles carrying flammable materials must carry an appropriate extinguisher (at least 2kg) and you, as the driver, must be trained in its use. The vehicle must have appropriate hazard warning plates or signs fitted. Vehicles must also carry a spillage kit and personal protective equipment.

Vehicles carrying gas bottles, batteries or other materials that could give off fumes, must have ventilated compartments for their storage in order to prevent an accumulation of gas in the event of a leak. The vehicle must have the appropriate hazard warning plates and signs fitted.

Fuel must be contained in appropriate containers. Containers must be clearly marked and must be restrained securely in transit in an upright position with straps or rope whilst in transit.

Maximum limits:     Petrol: 3 x 5 litre containers  
                              Diesel: 5 x 5 litre containers

***Remember!** - Specific advice on handling and transporting flammable material is available from your Directorate Health and Safety Advisor.*

*Remember! - Check with Fleet Management section before carrying flammable materials.*

## 5.8 CHECK THE BRAKES:

Immediately after moving off, check that the brakes are effective.

***Remember!** - Additional pedal pressure will be required to stop a vehicle in the event of engine failure on vehicles fitted with servo assisted brakes.*

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## 5.9 DRIVE TO THE CONDITIONS:

Statutory speed limits are to be observed at all times and should be used for guidance only. Drivers should drive according to road conditions and with due regard, first and foremost, to the consideration of other road users and pedestrians. Therefore, conditions may require drivers to travel at a much less speed than the statutory level set for the road they are driving on.

When driving within the confines of schools, housing estates, depots or other Council establishments, safe speed limits are to be strictly observed.

***Remember!** - Blanket speed limits do not apply to all vehicles – some vehicles have lower speed limits.*

Your Line Manager or Supervisor has details.

## 5.10 PARKING OF VEHICLES:

When parking their vehicle, drivers must ensure that the vehicle is parked correctly and in a safe and legal manner. The driver must, if required, ensure that an appropriate payment is made for parking in that location, or that a valid parking permit, authorising the vehicle to park at that place, is on display.

Drivers must not leave their vehicles unattended unless the parking brake is accurately applied and the gear lever is in the neutral position (park position on vehicles fitted with automatic transmission), all windows are closed and all doors locked. Alarms, where fitted to vehicles, should be activated.

Drivers must not leave their vehicles unattended with the engine running unless this is strictly required to operate essential ancillary equipment, which would not work without the use of the vehicle engine. In any event, a person must be placed on the vehicle or near to the driver's door so as to prevent the vehicle being stolen.

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Local Authority vehicles can be exempt from waiting or loading restrictions when used in pursuance of certain statutory powers or duties provided that in all such circumstances it is reasonably necessary in the performance of such duties for the vehicle to wait in the place in which it is waiting. If, however, the driver is instructed by a Police Officer or another authorised person to move their vehicle, they must do so without argument.

Parking of vehicles on footpaths and other pedestrian areas can cause nuisance and damage to pedestrians who may be sight-impaired, frail or pushing buggies or wheelchairs.

Signs and lines are many and varied. Your Line Manager or Supervisor has more information regarding signs and lines.

***Remember!** - Park with consideration.*

## **5.11 REVERSING:**

Drivers when reversing their vehicles are responsible for ensuring that there are no obstructions or other vehicles in its path. Particular attention should be paid to pedestrians, especially young children and elderly, infirm or disabled persons. When called upon to reverse their vehicle whilst carrying passengers or towing a trailer, drivers should ensure that they can do so safely or ensure that a responsible person assists in guiding the trailer and/or vehicle whilst it is reversing.

Most Council vehicles have reversing alarms, which will operate automatically when reverse gear is selected.

***Remember!** - If the reverse alarm is not working, report this as a defect.*

## **5.12 REFUELLING:**

All Council vehicles are issued with their individual Fuel Card. Most garages in the UK will accept it. However, drivers should be aware of

the requirement to obtain best value when purchasing fuel and should purchase fuel from the cheapest outlets.

All receipts for purchase provided to the driver should be returned to his/her Line Manager or Supervisor as soon as practicably possible.

Engines, mobile phones and radio communications systems are to be switched off when re-fuelling.

Smoking is not allowed within 15m of a re-fuelling point.

Before fuelling the vehicle, confirm whether it requires petrol, diesel or LPG. All petrol vehicles should be filled with "unleaded" not "super unleaded".

Do not re-fuel vehicles with LPG if you have not received appropriate training.

After fuelling the vehicle, note the mileage and lock the vehicle securely, unless another authorised person is remaining with it. Go to the kiosk, present the card, and give the mileage of the vehicle.

## **Filling containers with Fuel:**

Petroleum spirit can only be carried in approved containers up to a maximum of 15 litres. (3 x 5 litre cans).

Diesel fuel can only be carried in approved containers up to a maximum of 25 litres. (1 x 25 litre metal gerry can or 5 x 5 litre fuel cans).

***Remember!** - When refueling your vehicle use care and avoid spillage of fuel.*

***Remember!** - You must use the cheapest garage available to you.*

*You must give the mileage reading to the cashier in the kiosk.*

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You must obtain a receipt and hand this to your Line Manager or Supervisor.

**Remember!** - The Council's Financial Regulations do not allow staff to gain personal reward through the acceptance of "points" when purchasing fuel for vehicles used on Council business.

### 5.13 FOOTWEAR

Drivers should ensure that the soles of their footwear are clean of mud, grease or wetness prior to driving. This will avoid a foot slipping off a pedal.

**Remember!** – Check your footwear to prevent slip from pedals.



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## SECTION 6

# SPECIALIST VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT

### 6.1 TAIL LIFTS

The driver should ensure that the tail-lift is operating correctly and that the toe guard and handrail are correctly positioned.

**Remember!** - Where tail-lifts are operated then protective shoes and gloves should be worn.

### 6.2 CARRIAGE OF WHEELCHAIRS/BUGGIES:

The wheelchair must be loaded and unloaded from the vehicle by the use of a tail-lift or ramp. The wheelchair should be correctly located upon the tail-lift platform and the wheelchair brake fully applied before the lift platform is operated. The "Safe Working Load" of the tail lift must not be exceeded. Any ramp used should not be at such an angle that places strain on the person pushing the wheelchair up the ramp or would make them lose control when riding down the ramp. Where a ramp angle is considered excessive for manual loading then a winch should be used to assist.

Where passengers in wheelchairs are carried, drivers must ensure that there are adequate numbers of wheel clamps, of the correct design, and/or straps for each wheelchair and that they are in good working order.

The method to be used for the securing of passengers in wheelchairs carried in vehicles, is to anchor the wheelchair to the floor tracking in a forward or rearward facing position using clamps or webbing straps. The occupant is then to be restrained with a seat belt type or harness

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independently attached to the vehicle floor tracking.

Any seat that has to be removed from its usual position and is to be stored on the vehicle, or any items carried within the vehicle, must be secured and must not obstruct any emergency exit.

**Remember!** - *Passengers must not be seated or carried in a side facing position.*

### **6.3 CLAMPS:**

The teeth on the clamps should be checked for wear and should effectively engage the ratchet mechanism; webbing straps should be checked for chafe, splits or other damage. Any worn or defective clamps or straps should be taken out of service immediately and returned to a Supervisor or Line Manager. Clamps should be removed from the tracking immediately the wheelchair is removed and kept in the relevant storage compartment (where provided).

**Remember!** - *Clamps should not be left in the tracking as they present a tripping hazard.*

**Remember!** - *Where clamps are used then protective shoes should be worn.*

### **6.4 REFUSE/CLEANSING AND SEWER VEHICLES:**

The drivers of refuse compaction or mechanical sweeper vehicles must ensure that they are competent to operate the vehicle, that the vehicle is operating correctly and that all safety emergency stop buttons are operating correctly. The operational equipment must be in good mechanical condition, correctly lubricated and in a clean and tidy condition with no visual oil leaks. Bin lifting equipment must be used correctly in accordance with the method and manner laid down by the manufacturer and the "Safe Working Load" of the bin lift must not be exceeded.

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The body interiors, hoppers, bin lifts, filter screens, suction nozzles, fan housings, trunking and ancillary equipment of all refuse collection, street sweeping, jetter and sewer vehicles must be washed down at the end of each working day.

**Remember!** - *Familiarise yourself with the vehicle controls and apparatus before driving the vehicle and operating the equipment.*

### **6.5 ELECTRIC VEHICLES:**

The Council operates some electric vehicles. Staff should not drive these vehicles unless they have been on a familiarisation training course.

**Remember!** - *Familiarise yourself with the vehicle before driving it!*

### **6.6 LPG VEHICLES:**

The Council may operate some LPG fuelled vehicles. Staff should not drive these vehicles unless they have been on a familiarization-training course.

**Remember!** - *Familiarise yourself with the vehicle before driving it!*

### **6.7 VEHICLES WITH EMINOX / ADASTRA EXHAUSTS:**

The Council operates some vehicles that are fitted with Eminox or Adastra low emission exhaust technology. Staff should note that no special knowledge nor training is required to use vehicles fitted with this technology. Staff will have identified to them, before taking control, the warning light on the dashboard associated with the Adastra exhaust and should follow appropriate advice if the light appears. At no time should drivers attempt to top up the fuel additive reservoir associated with the Adastra system.

**Remember!** - *Familiarise yourself with the vehicle before driving it! Do not top up the Adastra additive reservoir.*

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## SECTION 7

# DEALING WITH ACCIDENTS/ COLLISIONS

### 7.1 IMMEDIATE ACTION:

- Stop the vehicle in a safe position, lock it and put hazard-warning lights on.
- Keep yourself safe. If dark, put on reflective jacket/waistcoat.
- If any persons are injured seek immediate assistance and request an ambulance and the police to attend. This can be done by dialing 999 and asking for the appropriate emergency service(s).
- Try to obtain witnesses and get their names and addresses. Notify your Supervisor or Line Manager or a responsible person immediately (reversing the call charges if necessary).

***Remember!** - You need to provide them with exact details of the location, damage to your vehicle, if anyone is injured and if a third party is involved. Arrangements may be needed to recover the vehicle and/or to arrange onward transport for any passengers.*

### 7.2 GET PARTICULARS:

If a third party is involved, you are required to exchange the following particulars with the driver of any other vehicle involved (but under no circumstances admit liability), i.e.

- a) the name and address of the driver of the vehicle
- b) the vehicle owner's name and address, if the driver is not the owner
- c) the registration number of the vehicle, its type and colour

- d) the name and address of the relevant insurance company.
- e) note the damage to both vehicles.

***Remember!** - If the third party looks as though they could get abusive or threatening, remain calm, appear understanding, and put them in touch with your Supervisor/Line Manager for them to explain how the situation will be dealt with. Your Supervisor/Line Manager may call the police if they consider it appropriate.*

If the other vehicle fails to stop or there is no person available to exchange particulars with, the accident must be reported to the first available police station. Failure to report the accident may lead to criminal proceedings being taken by the police.

***Remember!-** Any accident, no matter how minor, must be reported to the Fleet Management section.*

### 7.3 DEAL WITH THE SITUATION:

- You must not leave the vehicle whilst awaiting assistance or recovery.
- You should be given an estimated time of arrival.
- Check on this at regular intervals.
- Keep in contact with your Supervisor or Line Manager.
- If passengers are on board make sure they are comfortable and are kept safe.
- If you are carrying vulnerable people and you are concerned regarding their well being or safety – if no other assistance available contact the Police.

### 7.4 FILL IN AN ACCIDENT REPORT:

Upon return to the depot an accident form must be completed and the following information will have to be supplied (in addition to the above):

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- a) the extent of the damage sustained
- b) the time the accident occurred
- c) where the accident occurred, i.e.
  - 1) the locality
  - 2) the names of adjacent streets and roads
  - 3) the positions of the vehicles at the time of the accident
  - 4) the visibility at the time of the accident.
  - 5) the prevailing weather conditions at the time of the accident.
- d) the cause of the accident (including any information on whether any signals were given)
- e) a rough sketch to emphasise the general situation.
- f) Names, addresses and contact telephone numbers of any witnesses.

### 7.5 INSURANCE COMPANY DETAILS:

The Council's insurance company and policy details are:

Insurance Company: **Zurich Municipal**  
 Policy Number: QLA-01E229-0273  
 Policy Holder: London Borough of Tower Hamlets  
 1 Silvocea Way  
 London E14 0JJ

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## SECTION 8

# DEALING WITH BREAKDOWNS/PUNCTURES

### 8.1 IMMEDIATE ACTION:

- Park the vehicle in a safe position and put hazard-warning lights on. Lock the vehicle before leaving it parked.
- Keep yourself safe. If dark, put on reflective jacket/waistcoat.
- On roads where the traffic is fast moving, do not stay inside the vehicle.
- Find safe refuge in sight of the vehicle.

### 8.2 REPORT THE PROBLEM:

#### DURING NORMAL WORKING HOURS:

(8.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday):

In the first instance contact Transport Services at the Blackwall Transport Complex, Leamouth Road, E14 0JG on 0207 364 1060

#### OUTSIDE NORMAL WORKING HOURS:

Your Line Manager or Supervisor will have these details.

### 8.3 DEAL WITH THE SITUATION:

- You must not leave the vehicle whilst awaiting assistance or recovery.
- You should be given an estimated time of arrival.
- Check on this at regular intervals.
- Keep in contact with your Supervisor or Line Manager.
- If passengers are on board make sure they are comfortable and are

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kept safe.

- If you are carrying vulnerable people and you are concerned regarding their well being or safety – if no other assistance available contact the Police.





**Designed by CTR**  
for the Transport Service Unit of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets