

**EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY SPORTS UNION****MINIBUS POLICY****(REVISED 2009)****VERY IMPORTANT**

If you hire a minibus on the business of Napier Students' Association (NSA), you **MUST** display a SECTION 19 MINIBUS PERMIT (also known as a "Small Bus Permit"), permits are on display on all NSA owned vehicles but if using an external hire agency permits are obtainable from reception desk at the NSA a £10 returnable deposit is required.

Only authorised drivers over 21 with a category D1 (101) licence entitlement can drive minibuses.

Since 1st January 1997 drivers no longer receive an automatic category D1 entitlement when they pass a Category B car test. There is a restricted allowance for drivers who only hold a category B driving licence and have not passed a D1 (minibus) driving test for incidental driving under the following conditions:

- the driver is over 21 years of age/under 70
- the driver has held the category B driving licence for at least 2 years
- The driver receives no payment or consideration for driving the vehicle other than out-of- pocket expenses.
- The minibus has a gross weight not exceeding 3.5 tonnes (4.25 tonnes including any specialised equipment for carriage of disabled passengers). You need a special certificate to be able to carry disabled passengers.
- the minibus is being driven for social or educational purposes and the driver is driving under section 19 permit which is clearly displayed on the vehicle;
- The minibus has up to 14 passenger seats.

Please note that there are few minibuses that are in this category, for instance; a Ford 17 seater bus could not be driven as it exceeds the weight allowance, but a 14 seater would be suitable.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct vehicle license.

Sports Union minibus driver safety policy

The Edinburgh Napier University Sports Union requires that its minibus drivers meet an approved driving standard. Any driver who has not attended a theory session and passed the associated practical assessment will not be permitted to drive Sports Union minibuses, or hire minibuses on behalf of NSA, in the course of their duties.

The Sports Union has developed minibus tests in line with DVLA regulations to provide training and practical assessments. The cost of the minibus tests are provided by the NSA and drivers are required to submit their license to the NSA for photocopying at the beginning of the autumn academic trimester annually. If an individual has not taken a minibus test after 1st June 2009 they will be required to re-sit the test and there after every 3 years.

Sports Union Driver training requirements

Candidate driving licence requirements must be met before a practical assessment is arranged – i.e. drivers must be over 21 years old; an unendorsed UK car driving licence must have been held for 3 years or more; a theory session outlining the drivers legal responsibilities must be attended; a practical driving assessment must be taken and passed; those who fail must retake the practical assessment within one month; those who fail a retake will not be permitted to drive minibuses on Sports Union business; and training records must be kept by the Sports Union Office and by the NSA office.

For current up to date minibus legislation please click here to be redirected to DVLA web site at: www.dvla.gov.uk

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION MUST BE DISPLAYED IN ALL SPORTS UNION MINIBUSES

Minibus Driver's Check List

Before the Sports Union minibuses leave the NSA, a passenger list with full next of kin details and a damage check sheet must be submitted.

If you have not passed the approved Sports Union driving assessment course, contact the NSA receptionist immediately on (0131) 229 8791

The Driver is personally liable for each of the following if stopped by the Police, so check before you begin your journey:

Is the Road Tax Licence visible and valid?

Is the Small Bus Permit visible?

Is the First Aid Kit present and contents correct?

Is the Fire Extinguisher present and maintained?

Are lights working?

Has the fuel card

Do the tyres appear to be in good condition and are they inflated to correct pressure?

Are the aisles and doorways unobstructed?

Is the vehicle likely to be over the gross vehicle weight?

Children of 14 and under MUST wear seat belts if fitted.

Please note: leave side lights on when parked on the road at night.

Arrange for faults/deficiencies in any of the above, to be rectified before you go out on the road.

You should consider these items especially if you are going on a long journey:

- Taking a back-up driver
- Adequate breakdown assistance
- Oil
- Coolant
- Fuel
- Screen wash
- Brake/clutch fluid
- Jack (brace + handle)
- Mirrors
- Spare tyre

On the road, please remember the following:

The 2 second rule; to do a rolling brake test ASAP; speed limits for minibuses are: 30 mph in built up areas, 50 mph where the national speed limit is in force, 62 mph on dual carriageways and on motorways

When you have finished with the vehicle, please ensure that you report any damage or problems with the vehicle to the Sports Union President, if you fail to do so you will be liable for any repairs carried out.

General Driving Information

For a significant number of drivers, once the basic driving test has been passed, little thought is given to further development of driving skills. People who drive a minibus, with or without passengers aboard need to be sure that their driving skills are well up to the standard of the D.S.A. (Basic "L") test.

Braking: Many drivers don't appreciate the importance of proper use of brakes and the effect they have not only on the speed of the vehicle but on its stability and balance.

Rules for Braking:

- Brake firmly only when travelling in a straight line
- Brake in plenty of time

- Vary brake pressure according to the surface you are travelling on
- When descending steep winding hills brake firmly on straight and ease off on the bends
- Both hands should be holding the steering wheel

Steering:

- Hands should be placed at ten to two position
- Don't let the wheel spin back - feed it through the hands
- Gear changes should be made whilst travelling straight
- On slippery surface - delicate and gentle movements

Following Distances:

- Reasonable distance from vehicle in front - 2 second rule
- Reaction time has to be added to all braking distances
- In towns under 30mph it is possible to leave 1 second
- When stationary leave 6 feet between you and vehicle in front

Observation and Anticipation:

- Observation, together with concentration are the two skills that raise a driver above the normal.
- We have already looked at how far it takes a vehicle to stop even on a dry road.
- With observation you can anticipate the actions of other road users and become much earlier with your braking. You may find that in a lot of instances you will only need to decelerate and not brake at all.
- One way you can improve your observation and concentration is to talk to yourself about the road situation ahead.

Minibus Driving Technique

Instruction Manual

Sit down with the manual and familiarise yourself with the checks that need to be made: e.g. Engine oil, coolant, windscreen washer bottle, tyre pressures (including spare).

Layout of Vehicle

Get to know the layout of the vehicle:

- Pre-driving checks
- Make sure doors open and close securely
- Is there a first aid kit and fire extinguisher?
- Visual check for external damage

Seat and Visibility

The driving seat is higher than you may be used to and the vehicle generally bigger.

- Adjust the seat for comfort and access to controls
- Interior mirror may be of little use when driving (full of heads or windows steamed up)
- Door/wing mirrors assume greater importance
- Don't rely on mirrors to reverse in a confined space or where visibility is restricted - get assistance from someone who knows what they are doing (not a child). If on your own get out and walk around vehicle first.
- Check for obstructions on the ground (and at roof level), for pedestrians and children playing.

Height

Know the height of your vehicle (including roof rack) - this helps when confronted with car park height bars.

Familiarise Yourself

For anyone who has not driven anything larger than a private car it is essential to drive with an experienced driver until you feel confident enough to drive by yourself.

Width of Vehicle

- A minibus is wider than a car and you may find yourself touching the kerb sooner than expected.
- Foliage, traffic signs and shop awnings can present a hazard.
- Get used to using your mirror on the near side to judge the distance from obstruction on the near side. Always check it before moving off.

Length of Vehicle

- Because the minibus is longer it is necessary to be more careful with positioning.
- On left hand turns keep to the crown of the road checking your near side mirror, as you turn, for cyclists, etc., moving up the inside of you.

Minibus Brakes

- Minibus brakes are designed to cope with a full load. This makes them a little too powerful for the situation when the vehicle is empty, especially in damp or slippery conditions.
- You should do a static brake test before moving off and then test them again just after you have moved off (especially after a vehicle has been standing for a while)

Driving With A Load Up

Driving with a full load of passengers for the first time can be a real experience:

- The vehicle is much heavier - 17 people of average weight weigh over a ton
- The vehicle is slower to respond to acceleration (greater care must be taken with overtakes)
- You need to change gear more frequently to obtain maximum response from the engine
- Hill starts require more care and lower gear is needed on them
- On motorways and dual carriageways do not get caught in the offside lane on a rising gradient (lose momentum quickly)
- Cornering presents its own problems - centre of gravity on the average minibus is quite high and a full load does not help the situation - be prepared for roll corners
- Excessive zeal on corner will, at best, upset the passengers, at worst it can lead to loss of control in wet or icy conditions.

Braking Technique

Braking in a vehicle at or near its maximum weight always requires more care

- Avoid harsh or sudden braking as it only upsets the passengers
- Read traffic situations carefully - ease off prior to the possible need to brake e.g. approaching green traffic lights

- Do not get too close to the vehicle in front
- Keep your speed in check with your brakes, but be prepared to engage a lower gear before descending a long steep hill. (Avoid riding the brakes as this can cause "glazing" causing sudden loss of braking efficiency. Cadence braking may be a good idea).

Luggage

If you are taking luggage either on top or in a trailer careful planning is required.

- Luggage must be securely stowed both inside and outside the vehicle.
- Exits must not be blocked with luggage.
- If the vehicle has a luggage rack watch the stability of the vehicle. As we said the centre of gravity is high on these vehicle and luggage on the roof can substantially affect the handling and stability of the minibus.
- It all adds to more weight and acceleration will be even more sluggish.
- Heavy luggage should be put inside the vehicle whenever possible.

Fitness of the Driver

The vehicle may be fit to drive but, equally important, so must the driver.

- He/She should not be tired or rushed.
- Allow plenty of time for the journey - better to arrive earlier than expected after a leisurely drive.
- If your health is suffering for any reason don't allow the pressures of completing the journey to compromise safety in any way.
- Work out a route before you start and take map books with you.

Distractions From Passengers

- If children are being carried it is necessary to take along another adult to amuse and control them.
- Noisy children are the worst distraction for a driver.
- All passengers must be belted in for the whole of the journey. If they are allowed to move around the stability of the minibus is badly affected. In the case of sudden braking the movement of bodies inside the vehicle can have fatal consequences.
- Passengers like to talk to the driver but lengthy conversations should be discouraged.
- Noisy hand held radios won't aid the driver's concentration either.

Planning Your Journey

- Plan your journey to include stops. You should always consider the passengers and time should be allowed for meal breaks and toilet stops.
- When you stop passengers will emerge from the side and rear doors - don't park too near other vehicles and obstructions.
- You won't be too popular if passengers have to disembark into a large puddle either.
- Breaks enable you time to take stock of the situation.
- If undertaking a long journey consider whether you require a co-driver.
- As a maximum do not attempt to drive for more than 5.5 (five and a half) hours without a complete break from the vehicle.
- More than 10 hours driving a day is pushing the endurance of the most competent driver.

- The minibus will have a higher fuel consumption than the average car - so keep your eye on the gauge and plan pit stops.

Motorway Driving

- Motorway driving requires a high level of concentration - things happen very quickly on them.
- Be careful with overtakes as even a slight gradient can leave you stranded in lane 3.
- Speed itself may not be a killer but sudden deceleration can injure passengers who are not seated or are not strapped in.
- Always expect the unexpected.
- If you have to stop on the hard shoulder in an emergency remember that your responsibility does not end with bringing the vehicle to a halt.

Evacuation of the vehicle

Hurried or otherwise, it must be controlled and passengers supervised until they are clear of any moving traffic - or potential moving traffic. Clearly this is important when dealing with children or disabled people.

- Passengers who have been evacuated from the vehicle must be moved away from it and well onto the grass verge.
- The hard shoulder of the motorway is one of the most dangerous environments one can find.

Disabled Passengers

Disabled passengers require special treatment, not only when embarking and disembarking but also during the journey.

- Be aware of their problems, drive as smoothly as possible and be prepared to allow for extra and longer stops if required. Ensure wheelchairs are securely fixed during the journey.

Journeys End

At the end of any journey check the vehicle and note any defects- any damage caused such as hitting the kerb should be reported.