TRANSPORT & MINIBUS EVACUATION POLICY

POLICY: TRANSPORT AND MINIBUS EVACUATION

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Related Policies:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Volunteering Policy
- Load Management and Service User Handling
- Smoking Policy
- Drug & Alcohol Policy
- Diversity & Equality Policy

Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all areas of Age UK North Tyneside, all staff, volunteers, trainees who drive Age UK North Tyneside transport or use their own vehicles to transport service users.

This Policy covers:

- Health and Safety
- General Safety of Service Users
- Licence Agreements
- Vehicle Maintenance and Safety – Use of Tail Lift
- Emergency Transport for Service Users
- Driving Safely
- Insurance Arrangements
- Accidents and Incidents
- Fire Extinguishers and First Aid Boxes
- Manual Handling Safety
- Mobile Phones
- Wheelchair Safety
- Use of Taxis
- Log Books, Records and Other Documentation
- Hire of Vehicles for Age UK North Tyneside
- No Reply Procedures
- Compliance with Code of Practice
- Minibus Evacuation Procedure

Authorised by:

[Signature]

Alma Caldwell
Group Chief Executive

The Group strives to ensure equality of opportunity for all, both as an employer and a provider of services. This policy has therefore been equality impact assessed by the Head of Corporate Support to ensure fairness and consistency for all those covered by it regardless of their individual differences.
1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This Code of Practice is primarily aimed at drivers and volunteers who drive for Age UK North Tyneside. It also contains guidance which should be followed by other Age UK North Tyneside staff who use their own vehicles to transport customers who periodically drive Age UK North Tyneside vehicles or hire vehicles to transport customers. It is recognised that beyond Age UK North Tyneside’s own transport there will be certain situations where it will not be possible to enforce all the requirements within this Code of Practice. However, the spirit of this Code of Practice with its emphasis on the safety and welfare of Age UK North Tyneside’s service users should be of paramount concern to all staff and volunteers at all times.

1.2 The purpose of the Code of Practice is to provide ensure that all and volunteers driving as part of their work activities demonstrate safe driving and other good road safety habits whilst using Age UK North Tyneside’s vehicles or individuals own vehicles.

2. **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

2.1 Senior Managers and Project Managers/Senior Care Officers/Team Leaders are legally obliged to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees under their control, and of other persons affected by such activities; this includes customers and members of the general public.

2.2 Employees must ensure, when driving on company business that they comply with all road traffic legislation/guidelines, are conscious of road safety, road conditions and other road users, and apply defensive driving techniques at all times.

2.3 By following this Code of Practice the risks to the health and safety of Age UK North Tyneside employees, volunteers, customers and others that may be affected by our transport operations, should be minimised. The legal health and safety requirements of Age UK North Tyneside employees as mentioned above should be fulfilled by compliance with
this Code of Practice, which forms part of the health and safety arrangements of Age UK North Tyneside.

2.4 There is a no smoking policy on all Age UK North Tyneside’s transport.

2.5 It is recommended that people using pedal cycles during the course of their duties, wear protective clothing, e.g. a protective helmet, knee and elbow pads.

3. GENERAL SAFETY OF SERVICE USERS

3.1 The safety and welfare of the customers being transported by Age UK North Tyneside is the responsibility of the driver during the journey.

3.2 It is the responsibility of the drivers to ensure that a First Aid box and fire fighting equipment are kept on the vehicle and regularly maintained. Drivers are given fire and evacuation training and must hold a current first aid certificate.

3.3 When picking up from home the driver/escort should ensure, where appropriate, that the service user has a key to gain entry on their return.

3.4 Customers must only be collected from their own home and returned to their own home. Never drop customers at any other location except by express written arrangements with the Project Manager or Senior Care Officer/Team Leader.

3.5 When picking up customers who may be confused, etc. and who live alone, a check should be made before leaving the house to ensure that gas or electric fires, gas cookers, etc are turned off and the house is secure.

3.6 If the customers is frail or has mobility difficulty the escort/driver must give appropriate assistance required to get them to and from the vehicle safely without putting their own safety at risk. When boarding/alighting the vehicle the escort/driver must ensure that the customers has a proper foothold on any steps and ensure all manual & handling procedures are followed correctly when customers are using disability aids.
3.7 The driver must ensure all customers are seated and secure before moving off. The law now requires seat belts to be used if they are available. It is a **compulsory** requirement for the driver and escort to wear their own seat belts at all times and ensure all passengers use their seat belts. Any customers who is unable to wear a seat belt for medical reasons must apply for an exemption through his/her GP.

3.8 In the event of a customer becoming ‘disruptive’ during the journey, you must abandon any further pick up or drop offs and get the person either to their day centre/lunch club or directly back to their own home. The Project Manager or Senior Care Officer/Team Leader must be informed immediately of your action. **NEVER PUT ANY** customer **OFF THE VEHICLE TO MAKE THEIR OWN WAY HOME.**

3.9 If a customer takes ill during the course of a journey take similar action as in (3.8). If it is considered that they need urgent medical attention take them to the nearest hospital accident and emergency department or use the mobile phone to call for an emergency ambulance as necessary. Inform the Project Manager or Senior Care Officer/Team Leader (as indicated above) immediately as Age UK North Tyneside will need to notify any relatives, etc., of the action taken.

3.10 Any important information relating to sections 3.8 and 3.9 will be made available to drivers. It is the Project Manager’s/Senior Care Officer/Team Leader’s responsibility to ensure that this information is updated and circulated for the drivers. It is the driver’s responsibility to ensure this information is at hand for reference and to make it available to escorts at their discretion.

3.11 Should the risk assessment identify that two people are required to give assistance to the user, provision for another member of the day care team will be arranged. On occasions due to inclement weather (e.g. slippery pavements) an extra person may be required to give assistance. This can also be arranged in advance.

3.12 If the vehicle is left unattended while collecting another customer the driver must ensure every reasonable sensible
precaution is taken for the safety of the passengers and vehicles. Always remove keys and carry the mobile phone.

3.13 A list of key/emergency contacts will be held by all Project Managers and be updated regularly.

4. LICENCE AGREEMENTS

4.1 All drivers employed full-time or part-time by Age UK North Tyneside will receive training.

4.2 All pool car drivers or employees/volunteers whose primary role is driving must produce relevant documentation such as but not limited to a full driving license for the class of vehicle they are driving, proof of business insurance, a valid MOT and servicing records at the commencement of employment or placement, or before permission to use a vehicle is first given. HR will advise which documentation is required. Thereafter, your driving licence must be produced at regular intervals, as notified by us. These adhoc requests could be applicable to all staff or volunteers that use a vehicle for work purposes.

4.3 Any type of driving conviction or summons, which may lead to your conviction, are to be reported immediately to your Project Manager or Senior Care Officer/Team Leader.

4.4 Age UK North Tyneside vehicles are licensed welfare vehicles and operate under a Small Bus Permit and are subject to the requirements of this licensing regime which includes regular PSV safety checks. Full records of maintenance and safety checks are held on file at each project.

5. VEHICLE MAINTENANCE AND SAFETY – USE OF TAIL LIFT

5.1 At no time are AUKNT buses to be used to transport office furniture, household furniture or large pieces of equipment. The buses and the tail lift are not designed or equipped to transport such items safely and securely.

5.2 Only the driver or trained escort should operate the lift. Passengers must not be allowed to operate the lift. In this
position the escort will also be able to ensure the safety bars on the end of the tail lift have been raised. The tail lift control should always be lifted out of its holder for use as this enables the person using it to position him/herself most usefully.

5.2 Before raising or lowering a tail lift, the wheelchair brake must be firmly applied and electric wheelchairs must be checked to ensure that the power and drive are disconnected.

5.3 Before lifting any load, ensure it is stable and does not overhang the platform. Do not attempt to raise or lower loads when there is a danger of them slipping off the platform. Wheeled loads must not be free to move. The tail lift should be on a level surface and tail lift instructions need to be followed at all times.

5.4 Ensure no passenger attempts to leave the tail lift before it is on the ground.

5.5 Keep the area on and around the tail lift free from obstruction. Do not allow persons to stand in the area of movement.

5.6 Do not exceed the maximum Safe Working Load.

NOTE: If a maximum load is applied it must be uniformly distributed on the platform.

5.7 Do not move the vehicle with a load on the tail lift or when the platform is not properly stowed.

5.8 Do not drop any heavy loads on the tail lift.

5.9 Do not rest the back edge of an elevated tail lift on a loading dock to act as a bridge between a loading dock and the vehicle.

5.10 If a defect affecting, or likely to affect safety, develops in the tail lift, it should be reported and taken out of use until the fault has been rectified.
5.11 Every tail lift or similar transport lifting appliance should be thoroughly examined by a competent person at least once every six months and weight tested every twelve months and a report of the result of every such examination should be made and signed by the person making the examination. A copy of these reports are kept on the transport files.

6. **EMERGENCY TRANSPORT FOR CUSTOMERS**

6.1 All Age UK North Tyneside’s permanent drivers hold current emergency first aid certificates and it is his/her responsibility to notify his/her Project Manager or Senior Care Officer/Team Leader in good time when renewal is required.

6.2 If a customer/driver or escort becomes ill or has an accident while using Age UK North Tyneside’s transport it is the responsibility of the driver or escort to assess the situation whilst remaining calm and in control.

6.3 If the customers are in transit the vehicle should be pulled up as soon as a safe stopping point has been identified.

6.4 The course of action that the driver must take depends on his/her assessment of the seriousness of the injury/illness. The following options are available:

- Call for the emergency services.
- Drive to the nearest accident and emergency department. (Inform Project Manager to arrange for someone to meet the customer at A&E if there are still customers to transport home.
- Take the customer home and arrange for a visit by the GP.

6.5 The driver’s responsibility for the emergency is over when the customer has been handed to the care of a doctor, nurse or another appropriate person.

6.6 The emergency situation should be reported verbally as soon as is practicable to the Project Manager or Senior Care Officer/Team Leader. The emergency contacts sheet number is provided for all staff to use.
6.7 A written report of the incident should be made and filed with the Project Manager/Team Leader/Senior Care Officer within 2 days of the incident on a Motor Vehicle Incident Report Form.

6.8 If applicable the Project Manager will begin the procedure for accident reporting.

7. **DRIVING SAFELY**

7.1 These rules apply to all drivers.

7.2 If you are driving a vehicle you must, at all times, abide by the relevant, appropriate statutory regulations.

7.3 Statutory and Employer’s regulations regarding the recording of daily mileage, journeys undertaken and actual driving hours must be complied with.

7.4 Before taking a vehicle onto the road each day you must check that the vehicle is roadworthy.

- Check that all lights are working (especially the rear brake lights).
  Check brakes are fully functioning.

- Check the mirrors and adjust them so that your vision on either side of the vehicle is clear at all times.

- Check your tyres, they should be undamaged, have enough tread and be at the correct pressure. **REMEMBER** low tyre pressure can cause loss of control especially when cornering and braking.

- Check round the bodywork to ensure that there are no parts which may cause injury to others. Windscreen and rear windows should be undamaged.

- Make obvious service checks i.e. battery, oil, coolant, screenwash and water etc.

- Ensure you are familiar with the controls, horn, lights, indicators, heaters etc. and tail lift is fitted. Ensure lights, indicators and parking cameras are clean and working.
• Check reversing warning buzzer and lights are working.
• Check washers and wipers are working
• Final checks could include ensuring the mirrors are correctly positioned, all occupants are using seatbelts correctly, head restraints are correct positioned and any loads are secured.

7.5 Having passed your driving test it is assumed that you are fully aware of the rules of the Highway Code which obviously must be complied with at all times.

7.6 Ensure your driving is smooth. Sudden application of the brakes or jerky clutch movements when changing gear make the ride uncomfortable for passengers. IT DOES NOT CREATE CONFIDENCE IN THE DRIVER. Always ensure that you are in the correct gear for the conditions. Make use of the gearbox when going up hills and change gear early so you do not let the engine labour. On a steep descent change to a lower gear to assist braking.

7.7 Always reduce speed early for corners, especially when fully loaded. The stability of the vehicle can be seriously affected when cornering fast. Remember more of Age UK’s passengers will not have quick reactions to vehicle movement while travelling.

7.8 Use your mirror before signalling, remember M-S-M. MIRROR-SIGNAL-MANOEUVRE. Make regular mirror checks so that you are aware of vehicles behind you and their intentions to overtake, etc. Remember that overtaking takes longer in a larger vehicle than with a car. Pull over in a safe manner after overtaking, checking the near side mirror to ensure you are clear of the vehicle you have overtaken.

7.9 When reversing always ensure the escort guides you from the rear of the vehicle.

7.10 It is the drivers responsibility to adhere to speed limits, if a speeding ticket is incurred it is the drivers responsibility to pay the fine and follow legislative procedures related to their driving license.
7.11 You should ensure you safely plan your work journeys including the advised frequency of breaks (commonly 15-minute breaks every two hours but this may change depending on the driving conditions. Staff and volunteers might be advised to use public transport where possible as this is far safer statistically than driving.

8. **INSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

8.1 Public liability and employer's liability insurance covers Age UK North Tyneside's employees, customers and volunteers. All insurance arrangements are made by the Deputy Chief Executive under the direction of Age UK North Tyneside’s Board of Trustees.

8.2 It is recommended that when private vehicles are being used, that the owner informs their insurance company that they are transporting customers as part of their employment or placement.

8.3 Notification of any accident or incident involving a vehicle, which may possibly or potentially give rise to a claim, must be reported to the Project Manager or Senior Care Officer/Team Leader immediately. A full, honest and written report must be submitted, whether or not personal injury or vehicle damage occurs.

8.4 Age UK North Tyneside's insurance does not allow for the hire of vehicles to other organisations.

9. **ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS**

9.1 In the case of any work related accident including damage-only incidents and significant near-misses the following action should be taken.

- If anyone involved in the accident suffers an injury the Police should be notified and the Project Manager or Senior Care Officer/Team Leader immediately. Obviously it may also be necessary to call an ambulance.

- Following a road traffic accident an Accident Report Form is to be completed.
• At the time of the accident the driver should try to obtain all the following information:

The name and address of the driver(s) of any other vehicle involved.

The insurance company’s name and address covering the other vehicles.

Names and addresses of any witnesses.

• If the accident involved a third party, owner of a wall, verge, etc.

• Any motor traffic accident involving a dog should be reported to the Police immediately.

• No liability should be admitted either by word of mouth or in writing.

9.2 In the case of any other kind of accident (i.e. other than a RTA) a telephone notification should be made by the driver to the Project Manager or Senior Care Officer/Team Leader. This applies for all accidents to staff, volunteers and service users.

9.3 In the case of an out of hours incident, breakdown or emergency, drivers are required to refer to the Emergency Contacts Sheet, assess the situation and take appropriate action. They must report this to their manager as soon as possible, e.g. ring at home after 5.30 p.m.

9.4 In the case of the driver being injured or unable to contact their manager then this would be the responsibility of the escort.

9.5 Drivers who have received penalty points, or been cautioned, summoned or convicted of driving offences (even if not at work) are required to report this to their line manager.

10. FIRE EXTINGUISHERS AND FIRST AID BOXES

10.1 On buses, including minibuses, at least one fire extinguisher suitable for use on a vehicle (and complying with BS5423,
C1977, 1980 and 1986) should be carried at all times. These will be checked annually.

10.2 On buses, including minibuses, a first aid box will be carried and these will be checked annually.

11. MANUAL HANDLING SAFETY

No employee, volunteer or trainee should undertake any moving and handling of customers and equipment without Moving and Handling training. Where the transporting of customers involves employees, volunteers and trainees in moving and handling, training will be given. If in doubt do not undertake moving and handling.

12. MOBILE PHONES

12.1 Mobile phones are the responsibility of the drivers. They are to be used in emergency/essential situations only and in line with the Mobile Phone Policy. Volunteers must not use the mobile phones unless explicitly instructed to by the driver.

13. WHEELCHAIR SAFETY

13.1. Wheelchair Restraints

- Drivers have a legal obligation to ensure that passengers using wheelchairs are adequately secured throughout their journey. This means providing a restraint system for both the wheelchair and the passenger.

- Wheelchair brakes must be applied as soon as the wheelchair is suitably located within the vehicle.

- Avoid over-tightening the four-point webbing restraint system as this can damage the wheelchair.

- All four straps must be attached to the wheelchair throughout the journey.

- Although the four-point webbing restraint takes more time and floorspace to use, it is an excellent way of securing wheelchairs, as it pulls outwards as well as downwards. This has the added benefit of reducing lateral movement.
of the wheelchair, increasing passenger comfort and confidence.

13.2. Passenger Restraints

- In the interests of safety, any customers, where mobility allows, must always transfer to a seat.

- For passengers in wheelchairs, restraints should always be worn. Each vehicle carries a supply of double inertia reel harnesses. This harness forms a lap to diagonal restraint for the wheel chair occupant with clamps or webbing.

13.3. Wheelchair Servicing

- It is the responsibility of the NHS to service all wheelchairs issued on loan using local contractors. Privately purchased wheelchairs requiring attention will need to be discussed and negotiated with individual customers.

- Project Managers/Team Leaders/Senior Care Officers will arrange servicing or repair should this be required.

- Wheelchair users must use their own waist belt. If a waist belt is not available drivers must inform the Project Manager or Senior Care Officer/Team Leader so that arrangements can be made to obtain one.

- Occasional users of wheelchairs (i.e. for the transfer of customers from Day Centre to transport) will be advised on safe usage by drivers on the day.

14. USE OF TAXIS

14.1 All taxis are booked centrally by the Project Manager or Senior Care Officer/Team Leader.

14.2 It is the responsibility of the project manager to complete a risk assessment on the individual customer and to forward this to the relevant taxi company prior to a customer being transported. Copy to be kept in customers file
14.3 The use of taxis to transport customers is at the discretion of the Project Manager/Team Leader/Senior Care Officer.

14.4 In emergency situations, i.e. transport breakdown, it may be necessary for customers to travel in taxis. Drivers will assess whether customers are able to manage without assistance into their own home. If they are unable to do so then the driver will arrange to support the customer into their home.

15. **LOG BOOKS, RECORDS AND OTHER DOCUMENTATION**

15.1 It is the responsibility of the Project Manager/Team Leader to oversee the document and record keeping requirements for transport. All vehicle records are held at the Project.

15.2 It is the responsibility of the Project Managers/Team Leaders to ensure a daily transport list is issued to drivers working within Day Care.

15.3 It is also the responsibility of the drivers to carry with them the most up to date information about transport routes, users information, Code of Practice and emergency information in their transport file.

15.4 It is the driver’s responsibility to complete the transport log book record on a daily basis and to submit this to the Project Manager on a weekly basis.

16. **HIRE OF VEHICLES FOR AGE UK NORTH TYNESIDE**

16.1 The hire of vehicles is undertaken by the Project Manager/Team Leader who is responsible for ensuring that the vehicle is appropriate to its planned use. All hired vehicles by Age UK North Tyneside must be fitted with an audible reversing alarm.

17. **NO REPLY PROCEDURE**

If you arrive at a customers home and cannot get a reply:
• Try the door, if it is open, enter the house, preferably with someone else, calling out the person’s name and knocking on doors before you enter.

• If you find someone you suspect may be dead, call the emergency services immediately.

It is not your responsibility to inform the next of kin. Contact the Project Manager or Team Leader/Senior Care Officer.

• If you find someone injured or ill and are trained to administer first aid, please do so.

• If the door is locked, look through the windows and call through the letterbox.

• If there is a response and someone is injured or ill, call the emergency services and inform the Project Manager/Team Leader.

• If there is no response at all, note the time, look for curtains not drawn, milk on the doorstep, or letters on the mat and contact the Project Manager/Team Leader immediately.

• Do not give any information to neighbours or passers by.

18. **COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF PRACTICE ON TRANSPORT**

Failure to observe the rules and requirements set within this Code of Practice by any staff member may result in disciplinary action.

19. **GENERAL**

19.1 Use of Age UK North Tyneside’s vehicles by employees requires express approval by the appropriate manager.

19.2 On approved use of a vehicle, you **must** ensure that the vehicle is kept clean and tidy and in a roadworthy condition, and all normal engine and vehicle inspections are carried out on a daily basis.
19.3 Unauthorised passengers must not be carried, nor may vehicles be used for personal gain.

19.4 Employees who are responsible for the vehicles must be aware of the Drug & Alcohol Policy and follow the guidelines at all times.
MINIBUS EVACUATION PROCEDURE

1. INTRODUCTION

According to statistics there is a 1 in a 1,000 chance of a minibus being involved in an incident involving fire each year.

A car fire is obviously serious enough, but a fire in a minibus, particularly where passengers with mobility difficulties are being carried, is a far greater problem. Minibuses carry up to four times these number of passengers, yet have only half the number of exits!

It is essential, therefore, that good working procedures are observed at all times, and that you follow the guidelines in order to make any minibus evacuation as successful as possible.

We are obviously unable to offer a “blueprint” for every minibus evacuation as there are too many variables involved; including type of vehicle, number of passengers and their mobility and reason for evacuation.

YOUR PRIORITY TO GET PASSENGERS OUT

There are important reasons for this.

- Drivers need to take control of the situation
- It takes time to access the fire extinguisher and to discharge it.
- It is very unlikely that you will be able to completely extinguish a fire on a minibus.
- If you fail to put the fire out you will have wasted valuable time, time that would have been spent getting the passengers off the vehicle and to a place of safety.
- You may be spraying an oxygen-inhibiting chemical at a time when your passengers need oxygen most.
If you decide to use the fire extinguisher, you should remember the following points:

- Only use the extinguisher once passengers have been evacuated from the vehicle.
- Only use the extinguisher if you can do so without endangering yourself or other.
- Ensure that the extinguisher is of a suitable type for the fire.
- Ensure that you understand how to operate the extinguisher.
- Stay upward of the fire to avoid heat, smoke inhalation and the lack of visibility.
- Always test the extinguisher before approaching the fire.
- Adopt a crouched position and be prepared to retreat quickly if necessary.
- Never let the fire block your escape route.
- Aim the extinguisher at the base of the fire.
- A standard minibus extinguisher will only last between 10-15 seconds.

4. **Hazards Associated with Fire**

Heat, smoke and fumes generated by a fire lead to the second rule:

**THE FIRST RULES IS: DON’T PUT YOURSELF AT RISK**

Heat:

A vehicle fire can generate temperatures of over 1,000 degrees centigrade.

Smoke/Fumes:

There will be choking and highly toxic fumes in smoke from a vehicle fire – PVC can break down to a cyanide based gas.

The lack of visibility makes it very disorientating – perceptions of size, direction and distance alter and a normally familiar vehicle will suddenly become very strange.
5. **Types of Vehicle Fire**

Home Office statistics cite the main causes of vehicle fires as arson (31%), electrical wiring (27%) and engine exhaust (16%). Reasons for a vehicle fire igniting include:

**Electrics:** Wiring, starter motor, alternator, ignition circuit, sparks, and circuits protected by wrongly rated fuses.

**Direct Heat:** Exhaust pipe, turbocharger, catalytic convertor, naked flame, cigarettes and friction.

These sources of ignition can start a fire with some of the many things support combustion on modern minibuses.

**Liquids:** Fuel (petrol/diesel), oil, brake fluid, hydraulic fluids for passenger lift and power steering, grease, battery acid and de-icers etc.

**Solids:** Tyres, seats, upholstery, trim, flooring (wood), floorcovering, fibreglass, paint, insulation materials, wiring (inc wiring to auxiliaries – passenger lift, saloon heater, lighting etc) and personal belongings.

6. **Reducing the Risks**

**THE SECOND RULE IS:**

There are a variety of simple things that you can do to reduce the risks:

- Be aware! – these things don’t only happen to other people
- Never block exists or gangways – maintain two 12" gangways and keep exits clear.
- Familiarise yourself with the vehicle you are driving
- Ensure regular maintenance and safety inspections are carried out.
- Enforce a no smoking ban.
• Unlock all doors when carrying passengers. RISK ASSESSMENT REQUIRED FOR CUSTOMERS AT RISK DUE TO IMPAIRED MENTAL CAPACITY
• Switch off passenger lift, lights and heaters etc. when not in use.
• Don’t carry dangerous substances unless absolutely necessary.
• Specify safety features when ordering new vehicles.

7. Equipment

It is important that you are fully familiar with the access and safety equipment of any vehicle that you are using, including the operation of:

Door handles, locks and catches, seat belts and passenger restraints, passenger lift (including manual override system) or ramp and wheelchair anchorage clamps or straps.

8. Principles of Evacuation

THE THIRD RULE IS:

DON’T PANIC

If you panic your passengers will panic. Panic must be avoided if the evacuation is to be controlled and efficient. One way to avoid panic is:

TAKE CONTROL

If passengers are able to identify someone in charge of the situation, they are more likely to listen, and less likely to panic.

The next rule is a simple and useful way of promoting an efficient evacuation.

GIVE CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS

These should be clear, concise and avoid using alarming language.
Once the evacuation from the vehicle is complete it is important that you follow the next rule

**PROTECT YOUR PASSENGERS**

As passengers may be anxious, confused and disorientated it is important that once they are off the vehicle they should remain in a place of safety until instructed to move. They should be supervised, if possible, to reduce the likelihood of them returning to the vehicle or wandering into the road.

The “place of safety” will depend on the situation, but wherever possible, should be:

- Upwind of the vehicle to avoid smoke/fume inhalation and to maintain visibility
- At least 25 metres away to protect from heat and explosion risk.
- Away from hazards such as bends.
- Behind any motorway or dual carriageway crash barrier.

9. **General Guidelines**

There are a number of other guidelines that should be observed when evacuating a minibus:

- Make sure that the vehicle is in as safe a place as possible.
- Immobilise the vehicle by switching off the engine, applying the handbrake and leaving it in gear.
- Evacuate as many passengers as you can in as short a time as possible starting with those passengers that can be evacuated quickest.
- Leave personal belongings.
- Alert the emergency services as soon as possible – you can always cancel. (Give your exact location and remember to mention that it is a “minibus” and not a “van”).
- Check your passenger list to ensure that no one is left on the vehicle.
- If possible, alert other road users using hazard warning lights, warning triangle etc.
10. **Techniques for Evacuating Passengers**

The most appropriate method of evacuating passengers will be dictated by the circumstances and you will have to be guided by your judgement. In the event of a fire, however, passengers must be removed from the vehicle provided that you can do so without putting yourself at an unacceptable level of risk.

The ideal, and most likely situation, is for you to follow the guidelines and rules and either direct passengers to walk off the vehicle, or provide them with whatever assistance is necessary for them to make a controlled and conventional exit.

In certain circumstances such as when a passenger has lost consciousness, or when the situation dictates urgency, conventional assistance may not be appropriate and dragging/lifting the passenger from the vehicle might need to be considered. Use your judgement – adopt a method appropriate for the situation.

You should always be aware of your own limitations however and remember that lifting a passenger in a confined space can be a difficult and complicated procedure often requiring two people.

Where a vehicle is fitted with a passenger lift you could consider leaving it in a half raised position. It can then be treated as a large step if there is not enough time to employ standard procedures.