

# Driver Safety Guide



## Acknowledgements

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- Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety Queensland (CARRS-Q)
- QFleet
- Worksafe Victoria, and
- Victorian Transport Accident Commission (TAC).

## Introduction

Many Departmental staff are required to drive as part of their role. For some staff, this is infrequent, and for others it is a regular part of work over long periods of time and in remote areas.

This guideline has been developed to assist employees to better manage their work-related driving tasks to eliminate or reduce risks as far as is reasonably practicable.

## Workplace health and safety legislation and driver safety

In Queensland, driver safety in the workplace is covered by the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (WHS Act 2011)* and *Transport Operations Act 1995* legislation and regulations (that include licensing and road rules).

Under the *WHS Act 2011*, the Department of Education (DoE) has a duty to ensure so far as reasonably practicable the health and safety of workers and others in the workplace. To do this, DoE must understand the risks involved: identify hazards, assess the likelihood and consequences of hazards and manage them.

In the context of work related driver safety this would include:

- information about safety features of the vehicle and how to use them
- knowledge about factors that influence driver behaviour (e.g. the causes and effects of fatigue)
- knowledge about and implementing strategies to manage a varied range of road/travel conditions
- information about safely driving the vehicle
- information about the safe maintenance of the vehicle.

Both the department and its employees have duties to each other and to others who might be affected by the work they undertake. In the case of work-related driving, passengers and other road users can be affected by the driver's behaviour and practices.

Department employees also have a duty to cooperate with the measures that an employer has developed to eliminate or reduce risks. Applied to work-related driving, the employee duties would include:

- holding a current and valid driver's licence
- abiding by all road rules including speed limits, drug and alcohol laws and use of seatbelts
- refraining from driving if impaired by tiredness or medication
- reporting any incidents, near misses and hazards in the MyHR Workplace Health and Safety system
- undertaking the relevant pre and post drive vehicle checks.

## Traffic offences

DoE employees who commit a traffic offence such as speeding, failing to obey traffic signs and signals, using a mobile telephone or failing a drug or blood alcohol test whilst driving in a Queensland Government owned vehicle are responsible for any penalties incurred as a result of the offence. If a penalty results in the loss of driver's licence then Fleet management must be notified so that vehicles are no longer able to be allocated to the suspended driver.

## What is risk management?

Driving causes a large number of fatalities and serious injuries every year. Although work related injury rates are low in DoE, it is still one of the highest risk activities regularly undertaken in the workplace. We all have a responsibility to take care of ourselves and respect others on the road. Before using a vehicle for any work purpose you need to ensure you undertake a risk assessment, so that hazards can be identified and managed.

In the context of health and safety, 'hazard' means anything that can cause harm. 'Risk' is the chance (low, medium, high or extreme), that someone will be harmed by the hazard in combination with the consequences of that hazard (e.g. how serious will the outcome be?).

The risk management process is:

- Identify risks
- Assess risks
- Manage risks
- Review and monitor controls and risk.

## Risk Management Matrix

The risk matrix is a commonly used tool to assist assessing risk levels. To use the matrix, simply consider the activity in terms of the likelihood of an incident happening, in conjunction with the consequence (or injury) if the incident did occur. The result of these two considerations is a risk level: low, medium, high, or extreme.

Likelihood	Consequence				
	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Critical
Almost Certain	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme
Likely	Low	Medium	High	High	Extreme
Possible	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High
Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
Rare	Low	Low	Low	Low	Medium

RISK LEVEL	CONSEQUENCE	LIKELIHOOD
<b>Low:</b> Little chance of incurring any injury	Insignificant: No injury requiring treatment	<b>Rare:</b> Probably would never happen
<b>Medium:</b> Some chance of incurring a minor injury	<b>Minor:</b> Minor injury; first aid	<b>Unlikely:</b> Would not expect to happen
<b>High:</b> Likely that an injury requiring medical attention could occur	<b>Moderate:</b> Injury requiring medical treatment	<b>Possible:</b> May happen, but you would expect not
<b>Extreme:</b> Likely that a serious injury could occur	<b>Major:</b> Serious injury requiring specialist medical treatment or hospitalisation	<b>Likely:</b> Expect to happen at some time
	<b>Critical:</b> Loss of life; permanent disability or injury	<b>Almost Certain:</b> Probably would happen given the number of times the activity is done

## How to do a risk assessment for driving

Work-related driving should be assessed considering the identified risks. This guide identifies and outlines the high risks associated with driving. Any travel that is deemed as high risk should have an appropriate travel plan which has been approved by the driver's manager. The travel plan template provided in this guide can be used to document a risk management process.

## Departmental management of safe driving

There are three major elements of driver safety for DoE:

- the role and duties of the Department in providing policy direction and accountability regarding driver safety through procedures and processes
- the role and duties of fleet management in procuring and managing vehicles
- the role and duties of employees in managing driver safety behaviours and practices.

## Fleet management

The majority of the Department's vehicles are leased through QFleet, who are responsible for procuring, leasing and providing maintenance and support to Queensland Government agencies. Each vehicle has a QFleet Driver Companion booklet which outlines instructions and requirements in the following areas:

- Looking after your vehicle
- Environmental Care
- Servicing and Repairs
- Common Repair Items
- Breakdown Assistance
- Emergency/Accident Procedure
- Insurance Claims Procedure
- Driver Safety

### Fleet management - what driver safety looks like

- Vehicles are chosen against criteria covering active and passive safety features
- Employees and their representatives are consulted regarding the needs of the business in terms of vehicle selection
- There is a safe driving and vehicle selection policy
- All new staff are required to drive undertake an induction which includes driver and vehicle safety
- Regular vehicle services and checks are undertaken and documented
- Drivers are provided with information about hazards, such as adverse conditions
- Senior management/owner responsibilities are defined along with everyone involved in the driving task
- All vehicles are maintained to manufacturer's service requirements.
- All vehicles have emergency contact numbers.
- Records of fleet and driver license details are kept and used to improve performance.
- The inclusion of safety equipment such as first aid kits and fire extinguishers can be determined through a risk assessment process.

## Safe driving practices

There are three key areas that must be considered when managing driver safety. These are the driver, the vehicle and the journey.

The driver section includes information about driver training and competency, identification of risks associated with distraction, fatigue and also other driver behaviours such as controlling speed, alcohol and drug use and managing issues such as road rage.

The vehicle section includes information about ensuring that the vehicle is in a safe condition, well maintained and suitable for the purpose.

The journey section includes information about considering the length of the journey, the time period allocated for the journey, the location and road conditions (e.g. remote) and communications.

All of these elements can be documented in a [Travel plan](#).

## The driver

Driving tasks including driver behaviour makes up a significant part of the risk of driving for work. This section looks at some of the elements of driving identified as a risk, and outlines things that the driver should consider which may control that risk. You may identify more hazards than are listed here.

### Before you get in the car:

- Driver competency and fitness to drive – has your driver's licence been checked by fleet management recently? Ensure that you have provided the most up to date information to fleet management.
- If driving is a requirement for a role, it is good practice to consider this in recruitment and selection processes.
- Informing and supervising drivers – part of normal induction training for new employees that may undertake work related driving is to cover DoE driver and vehicle safety procedures. This would include covering legal requirements, pre-start checks, emergency/crash procedure, understanding road conditions and the effects of fatigue.

### Risks associated with driving:

There are a number of risk factors and behaviours that should be considered while you are driving.

#### Speed

Speeding is one of the greatest risk factors in driving. Speeding does not just mean driving faster than the posted speed limit, it also means driving too fast for the conditions such as weather, traffic and road conditions. Speeding is dangerous because it affects reaction time, stopping distance and the consequences of speeding accidents can result in fatalities.

Drivers can manage speed through:

- observing the speed limit
- driving at the speed appropriate for conditions. If the conditions are poor, travel at a speed lower than the posted speed limit
- if you are slowing down from a high speed, check your speedometer, speed can be difficult to judge after travelling at high speed for a period of time
- increasing distance between the vehicle ahead of you if travelling at higher speeds
- reducing speed where pedestrian activity is high
- reducing speed when the vehicle is heavily loaded or towing a trailer
- responding to speed warning alerts
- adjusting arrival or departure times to compensate for delays
- planning trips taking into account timeframes and speed limits and possible delays (e.g. heavy traffic or road works)

### Drugs and alcohol

It is illegal to drive under the influence of drugs and alcohol. Drugs and alcohol impair a driver's ability to drive safely. They affect things like reaction time, thought processes, attention span and vision. Some prescription medications may affect your ability to drive. Many of these are labelled accordingly. Check with your physician if you are unsure if prescription medications will affect your ability to drive.

Drivers can manage this through:

- avoiding alcohol consumption prior to driving
- using transport alternatives at functions with alcohol
- taking into account the influence of prescribed and other medications before driving

### Fatigue

Fatigue is one of the most important factors contributing to work-related road crashes.

Effects of fatigue on driving are:

- impaired performance, judgement and attentiveness
- slower reaction time
- drowsiness and tiredness and an increased probability of falling asleep at the wheel

Fatigue occurs because driving involves long periods of concentration, long periods of time remaining awake, monotony and other environmental causes such as temperature, airflow, etc.

Basic signs of fatigue are:

- drifting in the lane or travelling over lane lines
- changes in speed – especially slowing down without reason
- nodding
- yawning
- lapses in concentration (for example, not remembering parts of the journey)



Drivers can manage this by:

- having sufficient sleep before driving and not driving when feeling tired
- taking 15 minute breaks with exercise after every two hours of driving
- sharing the driving. If there is more than one driver, swapping every hour helps to manage fatigue
- not driving in the hours when normally asleep e.g. midnight to dawn
- not starting a long trip after a full day's work
- avoiding driving long distances after consuming a large meal
- not using the vehicle's heater because it can induce drowsiness
- not using the recycled air setting in vehicles, as this can affect air quality over long periods of time
- keeping the cabin well ventilated and at a comfortable temperature
- keeping the mind active e.g. listening to the car radio
- not getting too comfortable; use wind, noise and an upright seating position to remain alert
- stopping to have a sleep if required
- avoiding medications which cause drowsiness
- breaking up the journey with an overnight stop, if appropriate.

### Use of mobile phones

Drivers should be aware of the Queensland road rules in relation to mobile phone usage whilst driving. Advice from Queensland Police Service in relation to the *Transport Operations Act 1995* is that:

- holding a mobile phone whilst driving or stationary in traffic (i.e. traffic lights) is prohibited
- mobile phones mounted in cradles are acceptable but only to receive or end a call. This means that you are only able to press one button. The only way to make outgoing calls is to pull over and dial the number or use voice activation if your phone is capable.

Using mobile phones distracts drivers in a number of ways such as through sound, sight, the need to physically respond to the phone (i.e. the need to take your hand off the wheel to answer it) and by distracting attention from the primary task of driving.

Drivers can manage this by:

- allowing calls to go to message bank
- leaving a message on voicemail advising incoming callers that you are driving and cannot take calls
- answering calls only after the vehicle is pulled over to the side of the road.

### Further driver behaviour information and resources

DoE has information and resources organised into toolbox talks developed by CARRS-Q (Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety Queensland). These are available on a number of driver safety topics including:

- reversing
- road rage
- tail-gating
- low speed manoeuvres and parking.

Contact Organisational Health or your Regional Health and Safety Consultant to find out more about this information.

## In the event of a crash/incident

### Immediate actions

Attend to injured person(s)

- Apply first aid and do not move seriously injured person(s). Prevent contact with blood and other bodily fluids by using protective gloves.
- Ensure the injured person(s) is/are as comfortable as possible.

Ensure the safety of others

- Isolate the site where the incident occurred (try not to disturb the area in case police investigation is required)
- Remove from the site all people who are not directly involved

Call triple zero (000) for emergency services, or if using a mobile phone and 000 does not work, dial 112. These are free calls.

Immediately report the crash to the police if:

- the vehicle requires towing
- all drivers do not provide personal details
- any persons are injured or killed
- damage to the vehicle or property is over \$2500.

All drivers involved are required to exchange the following details:

- full name and address – QFleet should also be noted as the owner of the vehicle
- workplace details including contact number and registration number
- make and model of the vehicles involved.

Report the crash to your Officer in Charge. If towing is required of a Qfleet vehicle, contact RACQ 24 hour Road Service on 1800 648 058 and quote vehicle registration and QFleet membership number: 14472621.

### Follow up actions

- Notify relevant stakeholders.
- Report the incident as per DoE procedure [Health, safety and wellbeing incident management](#).

## The vehicle

The management of health and safety is everybody's business. The health and safety points to consider in a risk assessment process regarding vehicles are outlined below. Some of these risk considerations will be the responsibility of fleet management to control. These have been noted in the Fleet Management section of this guide. However, drivers are often in the best position to identify issues with those vehicles. It is expected that they inform fleet/admin of any issues as they become aware of them. Other points will be the responsibility of the driver to manage.



## Suitability

- Was vehicle suitability considered at the time of procurement of new vehicles?
- Have safety standards such as the Australasian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP) Safety Rating been considered at the time of procurement of new vehicles?
- Is the vehicle suitable for the immediate driving task for which it is required?

## Condition – including safety equipment

- Are drivers undertaking basic safety checks?
- Is the vehicle maintained and in a safe and fit condition?
- Has the vehicle been filled with a sufficient amount of fuel to commence the journey? (Vehicles are to be returned with a minimum of half a tank of fuel.)
- Are maintenance arrangements in place, and how are maintenance standards ensured?
- Is safety equipment appropriate and in good working order?
- Are the seatbelts fitted correctly and do they function properly?
- Are you familiar with variables such as handbrake operation (some vehicles have a foot operated 'handbrake') and mirror adjustment controls?

## Ergonomic considerations.

- Is the vehicle parked in a place where it is easy to load/unload equipment or luggage?
- Is the seat adjusted so that the driver has good posture?

## Conditionally registered vehicles

Conditional registration is a registration scheme for non-standard vehicles that previously were exempt or unable to be registered. Conditional registration gives you the benefit of compulsory third party insurance in the event of a crash occurring on a road causing personal injury.

Any vehicle that does not comply with the standard regulations for registration but requires access to roads to fulfil operational tasks should have conditional registration. This will affect agricultural, construction and recreational vehicles including:

- Forklifts
- Tractors
- Graders
- Harvesters
- Ride on lawnmowers
- Two- three- or four-wheeled recreational vehicles.

For further information on conditionally registered vehicles please refer to the [Conditional Registration of Vehicles fact sheet](#)

## Use of personal vehicles

Workers who use their private vehicle to undertake official duties are to be paid a motor vehicle allowance (Public Service Directive – Motor Vehicle Allowances). Staff are entitled to claim a kilometric allowance in accordance with this directive and departmental policy. Staff should obtain written approval from their manager to claim a Kilometric Allowance when they are using their vehicle for work related duties

<https://intranet.qed.qld.gov.au/Services/Finance/ForSchools/Schoolaccountingmanual/Expenditure/Pages/KilometricAllowance.aspx>

Before getting this authorisation staff should:

- Ensure that the vehicle is covered by either a comprehensive motor vehicle insurance policy or a third party property damage insurance policy; and
- Produce evidence that the insurance policy has been endorsed to indemnify the Queensland Government against certain liabilities at law. This is a standard endorsement available on request from all insurance companies. You are also required to provide a Certificate of Currency for your motor vehicle insurance policy.

Your insurance company may charge a fee to supply this endorsement. The Public Service directive [20/16 - Motor Vehicle Allowances](#) also states that the department should refund any endorsement fees that might be charged by an insurance company.

Staff should seek advice from their own insurer regarding the type and amount of cover in their current insurance policies, e.g. whether:

- Their policies cover use of their personal vehicle for work purposes
- The effect an accident would have on any no claim bonus
- The extent of cover if the vehicle is involved in an incident while being used for work; and/or
- The extent of cover if items (e.g. fuel) being transported explode or burst into flames.

### Breakdown Assistance

- If you require assistance in case of a breakdown, contact *RACQ 24 hour Road Service – Call 1800 648 058 or 13 11 11*
- *Quote vehicle registration and QFleet membership number: 14472621*
- All QFleet vehicles are covered by RACQ's 24 hour Road Service
- For further information, please contact Fleet Management.
- If a breakdown, flat tyre or other unexpected incident occurs, the driver is required to immediately advise the contact officer of the event, their location and proposed actions.

Following an incident in a Departmental vehicle, an incident report form should be completed as outlined in the accordance with the departments Health and Safety Incident Management Procedure.

For all QFleet vehicles Page 12 of the QFleet Driver Companion outlines the insurance claims procedure, please record all the details outlined in the accident details form on page 13 of the Qfleet Driver Companion.

When you return to your workplace you will also be required to complete the *QFleet Motor Vehicle Accident Claim Form*.

## The journey

- Have you planned the route you will take on the journey?
- Is the route appropriate for the vehicle undertaking the journey? Is the quality of the road a factor in the journey? Does the vehicle require 4WD to undertake the journey?
- Are schedules realistic? Do journey times take account of road types and conditions, and allow for rest breaks?
- Is there a sufficient account of periods when drivers are most likely to feel fatigue when planning work schedules?
- Has the length of work day been considered when employees are asked to drive? Remember that sometimes employees will start a journey from home.
- Can drivers make an overnight stay rather than complete a long road journey at the end of the day?
- Are staff advised about the dangers of fatigue during driving?
- Can long journeys be eliminated or reduced with other methods of transport?
- Is consideration given to adverse weather conditions such as rain, high winds and flash flooding when planning journeys?
- Can journey times and routes be rescheduled to take account of adverse weather conditions?
- Are drivers not pressured to complete journeys where weather conditions are difficult?

### Driving in rural and remote areas

No employee is to travel into a remote or isolated area without having reasonable means of communication with their contact point and/or other emergency contact points. Consideration should be given to how the employee might be supported prior to travel such as advising police or local authorities of the proposed visit, agreeing on check in times and procedures to be taken in an emergency. All rural travel should be considered high risk and have a risk assessment and travel plan.

Risk factors include:

- unfamiliar driving conditions
- driver inexperience
- excessive speed for the road conditions
- narrow and unsealed roads and differing/inconsistent road surfaces
- farm machinery and other slow moving vehicles on the road
- animals on the road
- riskier overtaking
- restricted communication networks
- limited ambulance and medical services
- longer response times by emergency services in the event of a crash.

Drivers can manage this by:

- planning the journey in detail
- selecting an appropriate vehicle, and checking safety and serviceability before departure including inflation pressure of tyres and having a spare
- allowing adequate travel time
- obtaining a map and taking it with you
- checking weather forecasts
- pre-planning refuelling stops
- ensuring the vehicle has a jack and wheel brace. Practice wheel changing if possible.

**Transporting hazardous chemicals and dangerous goods**

DoE employees should obtain written approval of, or direction, from their manager to transport dangerous goods. This will provide documentation confirming both the work activity and the transport method. Similar to any other work task, should an injury occur during this activity the DoE employees will be afforded protection under the department's worker's compensation policy. Any transport involving dangerous goods should be considered high risk and have an appropriate, approved travel plan.

Please refer to the *Guideline for Managing Risks with Chemicals in Department Workplaces* for further information.

The Australian Dangerous Goods Code published by the National Transport Commission is also available for further information. The code is available at: <https://www.ntc.gov.au/heavy-vehicles/safety/australian-dangerous-goods-code/>

**Travel planning – travel assessed as high risk**

A contact officer/s is to be nominated for each travel plan. The contact officer is to receive check-ins and monitor the travel. The manager must be advised once a check-in is missed and take control when activation of emergency procedures is necessary.

A map of the intended route for the trip may be requested and should be provided to the manager with the travel plan. Alterations to, or deviations from the plan are to be communicated as soon as possible to the manager or contact officer.

Please refer to the [Pre-drive checklist and travel plan](#) for assistance in developing a Travel Plan.

Any work-related travel assessed as high risk is to have a travel plan detailing the intended route and expected timings for departure, arrival at destination, rest breaks, refuelling and refreshment stops and agreed communications check in schedule.

Some examples of high risk travel include:

- Travel to remote areas
- Travel at dusk/dawn and at night
- Travel involving transport of dangerous goods
- Travel involving adverse weather conditions.