

Route planning and driving aboard



Taking the time to plan routes when workers are required to drive as part of their role (e.g. when visiting customers, delivering or collecting items or transporting between premises) can reduce journey times, fuel consumption and the likelihood of potentially expensive and embarrassing mishaps, such as bridge strikes and unintentional law-breaking in another country.

This document covers

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Route Planning

Route planning can also be beneficial for drivers' welfare since they may be able to avoid traffic jams that leave them stuck in their seat for an extended period with a limited supply of food and drink and perhaps no access to washroom facilities for the duration. Idle vehicles will also be consuming fuel, have a negative effect on productivity and may be giving off fumes that contribute to air pollution.

Key actions for effective route planning

- Ensure that large or high-sided vehicles, like car transporters, are fitted with proximity warning devices and that drivers check for locations that might be difficult to manoeuvre in, such as narrow country lanes, or impossible to pass through, due to obstacles like low bridges, before departing on any journey.
 - Even if it's a short journey and/or one done frequently, it's worth checking the route is clear of temporary problems, e.g. roadworks or a road traffic incident, as a diversion that isn't suitable for the vehicle might be in place.
 - Consider installing video data recorder (VDR) systems on vehicles to help drivers tackle tight lanes, bends and blind-spots if there is no alternative route available to them.
- Don't depend on in-vehicle satellite navigation systems ('sat navs'). Although they can be very useful, they shouldn't replace journey planning since the device(s) can lose signal, run out of power or malfunction or breakdown in some other way.
 - Drivers mustn't position sat nav devices in a way that restricts their field of vision (e.g. in the middle of the windscreen) and, during driver training, make sure the risks of configuring such a system while driving are understood. Configuration should only ever be done while the vehicle is parked.
 - Encourage drivers to keep an up-to-date road atlas in their vehicle at all times so that they can refer to it should the sat nav fail.

- Check traffic and weather reports, in addition to considering past experience of the density of traffic and pedestrians, to work out what the safest and most efficient route is.
- Educate drivers about the importance of taking regular breaks and keeping hydrated and nourished.
- Plan where to park and take rest-stops before beginning the journey, keeping in mind the likelihood of parking charges and restrictions and the risk level of vehicle theft.
- Make sure drivers have the correct documentation and the vehicle is suitably equipped for the differing driving laws if the route will take them across borders.
- Arrange the load, with the packages being delivered first, or that will need to be offloaded before other items, nearest the doors and those later on in the journey towards the back. Not only will this improve efficiency, it will reduce the likelihood of injuries as a result of manual handling or the load becoming unstable and collapsing.

Driving abroad

If your workers need to drive in a country outside the UK, both you and they need to be fully aware of differences in laws and driver and vehicle requirements in all countries that will or might be passed through.

Drivers will not need to carry a Green Card but will need to carry their UK driving licence with them. You also need an international driving permit (IDP) to drive in some European Union (EU) and European Economic Area (EEA) countries. Please check the UK Government's current advice on driving in the EU. If you are driving abroad with a trailer or caravan, you may need to register it before travelling. Full details can be found on the government website.

If you are bringing a vehicle into the UK, there are things you will need to do including notification, checks, registration, tax and insurance. If this isn't done, either by the driver, fleet operator, trader or a contracted importer can be prosecuted.

From 2 February 2022 anyone transporting goods between two points in the European Union (EU) will need to register the journey online. Further details can be accessed via the government website, including how to sign up for email alerts regarding future developments.

There is a [step-by-step guide to driving abroad on GOV.UK](#).