



Canine Partners

Driving and vehicle usage

Policy

Name of policy holder: Kathy Russell, Facilities Manager on behalf of the Health and Safety Committee

Approved by:

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1) Policy Statement

Driving a motor vehicle is the single most dangerous activity that staff and volunteers face during their employment and Canine Partners is committed to reducing the associated risks. This policy defines the key points that all staff and volunteers (hence forth referred to as 'staff') must adhere to whenever they are driving for work or on behalf of the charity.

2) Scope

This policy applies to all staff who drive any motor vehicle in the course of their work or volunteering activities. All staff should read the policy in full, alongside the relevant sections of the Highway Code before driving for work and carefully follow the guidelines provided, at all times.

3) Policy Detail

It is the driver's responsibility for all aspects related to the safe operation and legality of the vehicle, at all times.

Clause 1

Vehicle maintenance

Charity owned / fleet vehicles

Before every use the driver should inspect the vehicle and satisfy themselves that it is in a roadworthy and legal condition.

This includes checking items such as

- cleanliness / visibility and functioning of lights and number plates
- cleanliness of windscreen, rear and side windows
- tyre pressure and condition
- integrity of body work
- damage

Vehicle damage and defects

A record should be made in the vehicle logbook (appendix 1) of any damage, including the kerbing of tyres, scratches and bumps from parking mishaps etc. that has occurred, including the date and time of the damage occurred or was first noticed -refer also to collisions below

Any defects or damage **MUST** be reported, as soon as practicable, to the site maintenance officer in the case of a vehicle based at the NTC or to the Facilities manager in the case of all other vehicles. The failure to report damage to a charity vehicle is a disciplinary matter.

Driving a defective or damaged vehicle may endanger the safety of the driver, passenger and other road users and leave the driver liable to prosecution. No one should drive a vehicle that they believe to have a defect until this has been inspected by an approved person.

Routine maintenance

For vehicles based at the NTC the site maintenance officer, or a person designated by them, will complete regular vehicle checks including maintenance and will oversee the statutory servicing and MOT of these vehicles.

The routine inspection and maintenance, along with statutory annual checks of fleet vehicles not based at NTC will be the responsibility of the driver under the guidance of the Facilities manager / site maintenance officer.

Staff owned vehicles

Where staff use their own vehicles in association with charity business, including for the purposes of commuting, they must ensure that they regularly inspect their vehicle to ensure that it is roadworthy, safe and legal.

Clause 2

Driving licences and driver training

All staff driving charity vehicles are required to provide their driving licence details and a check code (appendix 2). These will initially be collected by HR as part of the induction process, or by the Volunteer manager when registering new volunteers and are then required annually at the request of the facilities manager or a person appointed by them.

It is the responsibility of individuals to ensure that they provide the required information in a timely manner

Staff are also required to inform the Facilities manager or Director of Finance and Resources if they obtain any points or other restrictions on their licence.

Staff driving for the charity will be entitled to 'in house' training and familiarisation to allow them to safely drive the range of vehicles appropriate to their role. All new staff will receive an introduction to the charity fleet and this policy as part of their induction.

It is the responsibility of staff to identify their own additional training needs and make these known to the Facilities manager who will arrange appropriate training.

Clause 3

MOT, insurance, tax

Canine Partners holds the responsibility to ensure that all their owned and leased vehicles are correctly insured, taxed and have an appropriate MOT certificate.

The use of any vehicle in the Canine Partners fleet for private use is prohibited. Any such use will void the insurance on the vehicle and may leave the driver subject to both disciplinary procedure and prosecution.

Staff should ensure that their own private vehicles are appropriately taxed, insured and have a valid MOT. Where volunteers (ie; puppy parents, fosterers and fundraising volunteers) undertake journeys in their own vehicle in the course of their duty to Canine partners eg; carrying dogs, colleagues or equipment, then they must check with their own insurance company that they are fully covered for these activities. Should they wish to claim expenses with respect to such journeys they must have business insurance and provide evidence of this to the Finance team.

Clause 4

Road traffic Collisions (RTC)

In the event of an RTC ensure that you remain safe – do not put yourself in a position where you may become involved in, or cause another, RTC

It is a legal requirement that any driver(s) involved in a RTC, however minor, stop and exchange their personal details with any person having reasonable cause to require them. In most cases this will be the drivers of other vehicles involved in the incident.

- Ensure that you receive from the other driver(s) details of their name, contact details and the details of their vehicle including make, model and registration number.
- Take notes of what has happened and, if possible, photographs of the location, situation of the relevant vehicles and damage to the vehicles
- If there are witnesses record their contact details

For the avoidance of doubt the above applies to all public areas including but not limited to, all classes of roads and car parks.

As soon as it is safe to do so report the accident to the facilities manager or in their absence the site maintenance officer or Director of Finance and resources.

Remember you must not drive a defective vehicle – if your vehicle is not safe to drive after an RTC you will need to arrange recovery for the vehicle - details of how to do this are included in the logbook in each vehicle, you can also obtain support / advice from the Facilities manager or site maintenance officer.

The above applies to all vehicles including those privately owned by staff.

Clause 5

Mobile phones and other devices

It's illegal to hold and use a phone, sat nav, tablet, or any device that can send or receive data, while driving or riding a motorcycle.

This means you must not use a device in your hand for any reason, whether online or offline.

For example, you must not text, make calls, take photos or videos, or browse the web.

The law still applies to you if you're:

- *stopped at traffic lights*
- *queuing in traffic*
- *supervising a learner driver*
- *driving a car that turns off the engine when you stop moving*
- *holding and using a device that's offline or in 'flight' mode*

Exceptions

You can use a device held in your hand if:

- *you need to call 999 or 112 in an emergency and it's unsafe or impractical to stop*
- *you're safely parked*
- *you're making a contactless payment in a vehicle that is not moving, for example at a drive-through restaurant*
- *you're using the device to park your vehicle remotely*

Using devices hands-free

You can use devices with hands-free access, so long as you do not hold them at any time during usage.

The device must not block your view of the road and traffic ahead.

Canine Partners recommend that you limit your hands-free use of a mobile phone to receiving incoming urgent calls only i.e.; if a colleague from work is trying to contact you and you believe that the call may be pertinent to the purposes of your journey.

You should control this call by answering stating '..... speaking, I'm driving' and ensuring that the call length is kept to the minimum required to pass the necessary information.

If you require to make a call, alter your sat nav or in any way interact with your phone, or other device you must first find a safe place to park.

Staying in full control of your vehicle

You must stay in full control of your vehicle at all times. The police can stop you if they think you're not in control because you're distracted, and you can be prosecuted

Clause 6

Alcohol, drugs and medical conditions

You must not drive any Canine Partners vehicle or your own vehicle for any purpose in connection with Canine Partners if you have consumed any alcohol or recreational drugs – doing so would be regarded as gross misconduct and could lead to your dismissal.

Staff who use prescription medications for any reason are responsible for ensuring that these do not impair their ability to drive.

Any staff member suffering from a medical condition or injury that may impair their ability to safely operate a motor vehicle should discuss this with their direct manager so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Clause 7

Carrying loads, including transporting of dogs and puppies

The driver of a motor vehicle is responsible, at all times, for any load carried in or on the vehicle, this includes Passengers, goods and equipment and dogs and puppies.

Passengers – the driver of the vehicle is responsible for the safety of passengers including ensuring that all passengers wear an appropriate seatbelt.

In the case of our partnerships this may necessitate the need for them to transfer into a fixed travelling seat or travel in a suitable wheelchair with a fixed head rest. When travelling in their own wheelchair it must be secured in the correct manner considering the design / construction of both the wheelchair and the WAV – staff transporting partnerships should ensure that they receive appropriate training.

When transporting multi partnerships consideration should be given to having both a driver and a chaperone in the vehicle to avoid the potential risk of partnerships distracting the driver.

Loads – all inanimate loads e.g.; training equipment, mobility aids, merchandise etc. should be transported in an appropriate vehicle considering the quantity and nature of the load to be moved. Items should be secured to ensure that the load cannot move and cause a distraction or danger to the driver, passengers or any dogs travelling in the vehicle.

Dogs – adult dogs should be secured either within the load area of a vehicle which has been equipped with an appropriate tailgate and dog guards or in an appropriate-sized and secured crate, or with a correctly fitted harness and tether in the rear seats of the vehicle.

Where multiple dogs are transported in the same vehicle it is recommended that a chaperone accompanies the driver.

Puppies – the transportation of puppies should be carefully planned, and drivers should be mindful that transporting this unpredictable 'live load' is as distracting as using a mobile phone.

When possible, it is recommended that puppies are accompanied by a chaperone in addition to the driver.

Puppies should be appropriately crated, with the crate being secured.

Clause 8

Driving hours and journey plans

Journeys should be planned to allow adequate time for the distance to be covered, road and weather conditions, the requirement to remain within the legal speed limit and physical limitations of the driver.

When driving for work staff should drive for no more than 2hrs before taking a break of 15 minutes or changing drivers.

Driving time in excess of your normal commute time should be included in your working hours.

A minimum of 10hrs rest time must be allowed between each working day, when these include more than 2hrs driving time.

You must not drive if you are sleepy or fatigued, Canine Partners support the use of overnight stays to mitigate risk. When planning journeys staff should discuss this with their direct manager so that appropriate plans can be put in place. If an overnight stay is not possible / appropriate than the use of a 2nd driver should be considered.

During periods of extreme weather e.g.; storms or snow consideration should be given as to whether the planned journey can be delayed or rescheduled. If the journey is cancelled staff are responsible for informing their direct manager and any affected stakeholders.

Where a journey during extreme weather is deemed essential than extra mitigations may be required such as allowing extra time and carrying additional equipment, spare clothing, hot food and drinks. Staff should discuss their plans with their direct manager or the Facilities manager before departing.

Clause 9

Leaving dogs and puppies in cars

Canine partners policy states that dogs and puppies should not be left in cars, however the safety of all road users is highest priority. In order to adhere to this driving and vehicle usage policy, drivers are required to take rest periods as stated above.

Where possible on journeys requiring one or more breaks the driver should be accompanied by a chaperone thus allowing one person to remain with the vehicle at all times. When this is not practicable the driver should take necessary precautions to ensure the safety of the dog(s) or puppy(ies) this may include but is not limited to, opening windows for ventilation whilst using the facilities or refuelling and minimising the time they leave the vehicle.

Staff transporting dog(s) or puppy(ies) should make arrangements to carry sufficient food and drinks for themselves for the journey.

Clause 10

After your journey

All vehicles

Refuel the vehicle ready for the next person / journey – all vehicles must be left at least ¼ full

Check for any damage or defects that has occurred and report this as above

Fill in the logbook / mileage sheets

In addition, if you've been using a pool vehicle

Remove all your personal belongings, rubbish and any equipment that you have used in the vehicle i.e.; dog beds, towels etc – leave the vehicle how you would like to find it

If you have been eating in the vehicle, make sure you wipe over all the surfaces you have touched to ensure you leave no contamination (allergy) risk

Return the keys to the designated place

If you used the vehicle for less time than you booked it out for amend the calendar to show it as available

Final thought

When driving a vehicle with Canine Partners livery, drivers should be aware that they are easily identifiable and remember that their standard of driving and presentation of the vehicle is an advertisement for the charity.

This means that their standard of driving should be exemplary to avoid complaints, in addition, they should remain aware of other road users at all times, to avoid 'crash for cash' type incidents.

Following the details in this policy, attending training and seeking advice when required will assist staff in maintaining the highest safety standards when driving.

4) Appendices

1, Vehicle logbook [Note for mileage book A5.docx](#)

2. How to get your driving licence check code

[How to get your driving licence check code](#)

You will need

Your Driving Licence for the Driver Number and post code shown on your licence

Your National Insurance Number.

Go to

<https://www.gov.uk/view-driving-licence>

Enter the information requested being mindful that it is case sensitive

Your driving licence number starts with the first 5 letters of your surname – you do not enter the last 2 numbers that are separate from the main string of letters and numbers

Once you've entered the details and ticked the data protection box select 'view now' – the page will display your licence details, click 'get code' – make a careful note of this code recording it exactly – again it is case sensitive

Provide this code along with a copy of your licence to the person requesting this information – please note the code is only valid for 21 days

3. Mileage sheets - to be added

5) Definitions

Collision – RTC – road traffic collision – if, owing to the presence of a motor vehicle on a road or public place, damage occurs to any vehicle or property, any person suffers any injury or any prescribed animal is injured, then a Road Traffic Collision has occurred.

Site maintenance officer – currently Jack Russell 07565932272

WAV – wheelchair accessible vehicle

Chaperone – a person (staff member or volunteer) in addition to the driver of the vehicle who is responsible for the welfare of the partnerships, dogs or puppies being transported. The chaperone could also act as a 2nd driver for longer journeys.

Pool vehicle – any vehicle used by multiple staff

Approved person - this may be our own site maintenance officer if the vehicle is in reach of site, or a local mechanic, garage, tyre centre or recovery agent as appropriate.

6) References

Mobile phone usage – <https://www.gov.uk/using-mobile-phones-when-driving-the-law>

Highway Code <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code>

Version Changes:

Version	Changes Made	Changes authorised by	Date published
2	To clause 3 to reflect that volunteers who do not claim expenses may not require business insurance and should check with their own insurance company	Kathy Russell	3 rd January 2024