



Minibus Drivers' Advice Sheet

This advice sheet has been produced as a **summary guide of good practice** for those who are driving minibuses for OU Walking Club. The club appreciates that you have all passed the University Minibus Course, but we ask you to read and adhere to these guidelines.

You should Contact the hire Company **immediately** if there is a problem with the minibus – please see page 2 for more details, or ask the Trip Leader(s), who have access to more information on break-down procedures.

Remember, it is **your responsibility**:

- to tell everyone to fasten their **seatbelts**, (although you do not have to ensure that they then wear them)
- to check & ensure the **roadworthiness** of the minibus, e.g.: the lights & brakes, before you start driving, including when you first collect the bus.
- to ensure that the minibus is not **overloaded** and that all the **exits** are clear of luggage and unlocked whilst moving.
- to ensure that the **section 19 permit disc** is in the window of the minibus, or you will be driving illegally, without insurance, and could face a £1000 fine
- to ensure no-one is carrying open containers of alcohol, or any flammable liquids.
- to ensure the **security of the vehicle**, so, as well as locking doors when you park, make sure windows are shut etc.

The club insists that minibus/weekend trips involving a single journey of more than two hours should have **at least two minibus drivers**, so that drivers don't become too tired.

Remember that you are typically driving around between 10 and 14 other people. Therefore **do not take any risks** that you may have taken if you were driving alone. It is now a club rule that you may not consume any **alcohol** on the days on which you are driving. While you may be under the legal limit, any amount of alcohol affects driver response time, particularly when tired also, and the safety of your passengers must be paramount. Also be aware of the amount of alcohol you consume on the evening before driving - excess alcohol may still be present in your blood (and have an effect on your driving ability) the morning after a heavy night!

Remember that the **performance** of a minibus is very different to that of a car. Try to handle the minibus gently, and think about how the people in the back will feel!

Remember that the **stopping distance** is much longer for a minibus than for a car. Leave about 4 seconds rather than 2 seconds between you and the vehicle in front in good weather and at least twice that in wet conditions, and still further on icy roads. Always be able to stop comfortably on your own side of the road within the distance you can see to be clear.

Remember that **speed limits** for a minibus are: 30mph – built up areas (some urban areas may be 20mph)

50mph – single-carriageway roads

60mph – dual-carriageway roads

62 mph – motorways (must not use the 'fast' lane of 3-lane motorways)

To enforce the 62 mph rule, minibuses are now fitted with speed limiters

Remember that you are much **wider** than a car, particularly in a 17-seater minibus. When you are manoeuvring the vehicle in tight spaces always ask someone to get out and help you. Don't feel embarrassed about asking for help when manoeuvring the vehicle.

Before you set off, discuss the route with the Trip Leader and make sure that you are happy with it. Remember that you are likely to do some driving in narrow country lanes where there are animals, horse-riders and fellow walkers. Please drive with care and remember that you can **use the horn** when you are going round a sharp bend! If you are unhappy with the route, or there are parts of the route during which you would prefer a more experienced driver to drive, let the trip leader know. Also note that you may legally drive the minibus in any **bus lane** not designated as "local".

Remember to **take breaks**, especially after the walk. Current recommendations are that, **after 2 hours** of driving, you should take a break of at least 20 minutes or swap drivers and Trip Leaders are told to enforce this, so please follow their advice. Make liberal use of service stations and never feel pressurised into carrying on if you are tired - it is better that people arrive back much later than for an accident to occur due to driver tiredness.

Finally, although you are the driver, the Trip Leader has responsibility for all aspects of safety on the trip. If the Trip Leader asks you to stop where it is safe to do, to slow down or to take a break, then they will be fulfilling their duty of care so **please take it with good grace!** If you are troubled by an incident on the road you can talk to the Trip Leader in confidence. Likewise, should the Trip Leader be concerned they will let you know at an appropriate time – we do not wish to find fault with your driving, only to make the journey as safe as possible!

If you have any queries related to minibus driving for the club please contact the Secretary- secretary@ouwc.org.

We have a copy of the highway code (also available online at www.highwaycode.gov.uk) and *Roadcraft, the Police Drivers' Handbook*. If you would like to borrow either, please contact us!

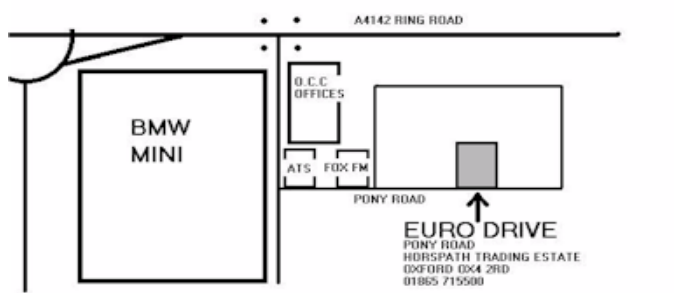


Collecting and Returning the minibus:

The Club normally hires minibuses from Hotsons Eurodrive. Occasionally we might hire minibuses from Target Vehicle Rentals, in this case the Secretary will provide more information.

Hotsons Eurodrive

Pony Road, Horspath Trading Estate, Cowley,



Getting there: The 10A bus from the town centre goes to Horspath Road. Alternatively, you could cycle there.

Collection times:

Weekend trips (1/2 day hire) - from 1pm Friday
Saturday minibus trips - from 7.30am
Sunday minibus trips - 8.00am – 9.30am

Emergencies:

Eurodrive have a pay-as-you-go breakdown cover contract with the AA and Green Flag.

You can also phone them for advice on:

01865 715500 office hours plus an answerphone giving contact details for outside office hours

07770 442814 / 07770 442812 outside office hours and emergency

Return: You may return the minibus outside of office hours. The **key to Eurodrive** is on the key ring with the minibus key – you should unlock the padlock on the gate, park the minibus inside Eurodrive's premises, and then post the keys through Eurodrive's letterbox. On the way out, you should lock the gate with the padlock. If the compound is too full to get the minibus in (or your car out!), phone the Eurodrive number (**01865 715500**) and you should get diverted to the manager's mobile, and someone will be sent out to move vehicles for you.

What to do in the event of a road traffic accident

In the unlikely event of an accident please don't panic, there are procedures in place to help you. In general you should, together with the Trip Leader(s):

1. Check for injured persons
2. Exchange details with other parties, including witnesses. You should try to obtain:
 - Driver Name and Address
 - Vehicle Owner Name and Address
 - Vehicle Registration Number
 - Insurer Name and Policy Number
3. **Do not** admit responsibility for the accident or discuss fault
4. Sketch a map of the accident, noting nearby landmarks
5. **If anyone has been injured**, contact the police as soon as possible
6. If you need assistance on the motorway, wait a safe distance from the road. **Do not sit in the vehicle on the hard shoulder.**

If the vehicle is involved in an accident or sustains damage, it must be reported **at the earliest opportunity** to The Hire Company (in accordance with the hire agreement) and written details must be provided when the vehicle is returned. (If returning to Eurodrive when the office is closed, a note should be left through the letterbox with the vehicle keys.)

The Clubs Committee Office (tel. **01865 246505**) or Proctors' Office (tel. **01865 (2)70090**) must also be informed immediately on return to Oxford so that arrangements can be made for you to complete the Accident Report Form required by the Road traffic Acts and the University's insurers. The Principal Trip Leader will help you with this.



Insurance

When you drive for the club, you are doing so under the “**section 19 permit scheme**” and the permit **must** be displayed in the front windscreen of the minibus. You are insured by the University of Oxford’s policy with Royal and Sun Alliance. You are covered for all except gross negligence or stupidity (e.g. if the driver told passengers that “your property is quite safe to leave in the ‘bus” and then failed to lock the vehicle, insurers would not be keen to pay out). You are also covered against the insurance excess.

Insurance Policy Number: RMM940762

Important Notes:

(i) Regardless of the hire company, you will need to take the following with you (provided by the Trip Leader) when you collect the minibus:

- Booking reference number
- **The driving licences (card AND counterpart if applicable) of all those who will drive the minibus on the trip.** There is **no limit** to how many people you can have on the insurance as it is the university insurance not that of the hire company.
- Cheque to cover the hire cost of the minibus. If the total cost is more than expected then you should remind Hotsons Eurodrive that the club operates under the cheap University insurance scheme.

(ii) On collection of the minibus, a member of Hotsons Eurodrive’s staff will look around the minibus marking off any **damage** on a form. You should accompany the member of staff and point out any damage that is not being marked off – this way the club will not get charged for damage that was already there. Forms (hire agreement and damage report) should be given to the Principal Trip Leader. On collection of the minibus, it is essential that you also check that the **section 19 permit disc** is present on the windscreen (ask a member of staff if you’re not sure).

(iii) When returning the minibus you must ensure that the minibus has a **full tank of diesel** – Tesco (at the intersection of Cowley Road and the ring-road) and Texaco (on Cowley Road) are open 24 hours a day – if this process is not carried out, then the club will be heavily fined.

(iv) It is possible to cycle back from Eurodrive if you have left your bike there before the trip, or to catch a bus. However, if it is late then you are welcome to catch a **taxi** if you would prefer this, and claim the cost back from the club. The number of ABC Taxis is 01865 770 077.

(v) Under 'duty of disclosure' obligations to the University’s insurers, you **must inform the Secretary** (secretary@ouwc.org) if you have any **endorsements** (i.e. penalty points) on your licence. This does not necessarily mean that you can not drive a minibus, but it must be cleared by the University’s insurers in advance. Failure to do so may result in the criminal offence of "driving whilst uninsured".

Claiming back expenses:

Contact the Principal Trip Leader if you need to claim back the cost of catching a bus to Eurodrive, a bus or a taxi back from Eurodrive and to claim back any other expenses such as petrol.

THANK YOU FOR DRIVING FOR US!