

Guidelines when driving for Dementia Active, including transporting our members

This page/PDF has been adapted from the RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) booklet. The guidelines it contains apply to you whether you are driving for Dementia Active as a paid member of staff or as a volunteer.

As a voluntary organisation we have a duty of care under health and safety law where driving is concerned to ensure the safety of our staff, volunteers, passengers and anyone else (e.g. other road users) who may be affected by our activities. When anyone drives as part of their duties with us, including people who do so as volunteers, both Dementia Active and the individual employee or volunteer share the responsibility of making sure that the risks are properly identified and managed.

This page/PDF is designed to help you play your part in avoiding accidents and injuries to you, your passengers and other people on the road, and to make you aware of our policies on driving practices.

Although this page/PDF is aimed primarily at drivers carrying members in their cars, the guidance and policies also apply to those driving, or cycling, on business without service users, e.g. travelling to a meeting.

The Legal Bits

Dementia Active needs to know that you are:

- Legally entitled to drive the vehicle you are using
- Using a vehicle that is safe and roadworthy
- Competent to drive it safely
- Using it for suitable purposes.

Even though you are using your own vehicle, Dementia Active is required to ensure that it is safe and adequately insured when it is being used as part of your paid or volunteer role with us.

We are required to check the following with you annually:

- MOT certificate
- Driving licence
- Insurance certificate
- Tax status

These documents will initially be reviewed when you first take up driving duties and then each year on a date to be announced. For staff this means ensuring your insurance covers you to drive in connection with your employer's business. Note: If you are a member of staff and have an accident while driving on work-related business and do not have this level of insurance, your insurance will not cover you. You should not normally be charged an additional premium for this cover.

For volunteers this means ensuring your insurance covers you to undertake voluntary driving for which a mileage allowance is paid. A form for you to send to your insurance company can be found at the end of this page/PDF. During the annual check you will be asked to complete an online form to confirm that you have advised your insurance company of your volunteer driving.

If you have any concerns or queries about the insurance cover you require, please raise these with Dementia Active in the first instance.

Your Responsibility

As a driver you must play your part by ensuring that you are properly licensed, insured to drive for work, fit to drive, plan your journey safely and comply with road traffic laws when driving. As an employee, you must understand and follow Dementia Active's driving for work policies and procedures.

Motoring Offences

We have a duty of care to ensure you are safe and competent to drive on our behalf. Therefore, any motoring offences including speeding and driving without due care and attention, be they cautions, summonses or convictions, should be reported to Dementia Active.

Fitness to Drive

A person's fitness to drive can be affected by a medical condition, by temporary illness and by the environment in which they work, drive and live. Health impairments, including stress, sleep disturbance, migraine, flu, severe colds and hay fever can lead to unsafe driving. Sometimes, the treatment for these conditions can also impair someone's driving.

Dementia Active needs to know that you are fit to drive at all times:

- Do not drive when affected by alcohol, drugs or medicines
- Do not drive when affected by illness
- Do not drive when you are too tired to do so safely.

You should inform Dementia Active about any health issues or personal circumstances that may affect your driving. You are also legally required to inform DVLA if you develop a notifiable medical condition, eg stroke.

See www.gov.uk/driving-medical-conditions for further information.

Eyesight

The minimum legal eyesight standard for driving is that you can read a new-style number plate (e.g. AB 123 ABC) at a distance of 20 metres (around 65 feet or 5 car lengths), or an old-style number plate (e.g. A 123 ABC) at a distance of 20.5 metres (67 feet). If you are advised to wear glasses or contact lenses to enable you to do this, then they must be worn each time you drive.

It is strongly recommended that you have your eyesight checked regularly (at least every two years, or more often if your optician recommends it).

Alcohol

Avoid drinking alcohol in the hours before you will be driving (for example at lunchtime). It can take several hours for alcohol to leave your body and you may still be over the limit or affected by alcohol the morning after you have been drinking.

Alcohol impairs judgement, making drivers over-confident and more likely to take risks. It slows reactions, increases stopping distances, impairs judgement of speed and distance and affects vision. Even a small amount, well below the legal limit, seriously affects the ability to drive safely. Staff and volunteers should have no alcohol in their blood when driving on behalf of the organisation.

Drugs

Do not drive if you have taken any illegal drugs. They can affect your decision making and driving skills as well as your physical and mental condition and behaviour.

Medicines

Check with your GP or pharmacist whether any over the counter or prescribed medicines (including those described as being for use by children) are likely to affect your driving (for example by causing drowsiness). If so, ask for an alternative that will not; if there is no alternative, avoid driving. Some medication requires you to inform the DVLA that you are taking it - if this is the case you should also inform Dementia Active immediately. See www.gov.uk/drug-driving-law for more information

Illness

Illness can also affect your ability to drive. It can often be tempting to 'soldier' on, when in fact it would be safer for everyone concerned if you do not drive until you are feeling better. In particular, you would need to avoid driving clients if you have diarrhoea and vomiting or you have a bad cold or flu like symptoms.

If you start to feel ill while driving, stop the vehicle somewhere safe. If the condition is not serious, you may feel well enough to continue after a short break or taking some medication. But if you find your concentration is affected, make other arrangements to continue your journey. If you have members in the car, telephone Dementia Active immediately so that other arrangements can be made for them.

Memory difficulties

People may experience memory difficulties as they get older which may affect their judgement or abilities to remember routes. If you experience any difficulties of this kind please discuss them with Dementia Active so the best course of action can be assessed.

Discuss any other concerns or problems with Dementia Active

Driving Safely

Vehicle safety

You should ensure that your vehicle is serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications.

Before any journey you should check the roadworthiness of your vehicle. For example (but not limited to) you should check that:

- Oil, coolant and windscreen wash levels are correct
- Tyres are undamaged and have sufficient tread
- Mirrors are positioned correctly
- Washers and wipers are working
- All occupants are using their seat belts, and that head restraints are adjusted correctly
- Child locks, where necessary, are on.

If you are in doubt about how to check any of the above you should refer to your vehicle's handbook or seek advice.

Speed

Always stay within speed limits (including variable limits and temporary limits at roadworks) even if you think the limit is too low. Make sure that you know the speed limit of the roads you are using and give yourself plenty of time for the journey so that you do not end up rushing and going over the speed limit.

Mobile phones

It is illegal to use a hand-held mobile phone while driving (this includes any activity that involves holding the phone such as dialling a number or writing a text message).

It is also advisable not to use a hands-free phone while driving. (Using a hands free phone while driving does not significantly reduce the risks; the problems are caused mainly by the mental distraction and divided attention of taking part in a phone conversation at the same time as driving).

If you need to use your mobile phone while 'on the road' you should stop in a safe place before doing so.

Other equipment

An increasing number of vehicles are being fitted with various devices designed to help the driver, with satellite navigation systems being the most common. While these devices can, if used properly, reduce the risk of accidents, they can also increase the risk (e.g. by distracting the driver) if not used properly.

If you use any technology, such as a Sat Nav, in your car you should ensure that you know how to use it safely. In particular, you should not adjust or operate devices while actually driving (e.g. routes in the Sat Nav should be set before the journey starts). If it is necessary to make adjustments or to input new information, only do so when stopped in a safe place.

Guidelines for driving members in your care on behalf of Dementia Active

Before you start

As stated earlier, you must have informed your insurance company and Dementia Active that you are using your car for this purpose.

Carrying members in your car (this applies to members with or without dementia)

- Please apply safe manual handling practices at all times. You should not attempt to load a wheelchair into your car without first receiving appropriate training.
- Please see details about parking and the Blue Badge Scheme below.

- On first contact with the member and/or carer(s) identify yourself and explain your role within Dementia Active.
- You may need to remind the person of the reason you are there and where you are taking them and for what purpose.
- If the member lives on their own, please check that they have their door keys, that heating appliances are turned off, the back door is locked and all looks safe etc.
- Should anyone refuse to attend, not be dressed ready to go, or not reply to your calling, please inform Dementia Active (phone from the house if possible). Neighbours can be helpful in some cases; if the person is not answering the door, a neighbour may know where they are. It is important to let Dementia Active know, especially if there is someone else waiting for you to transport them.
- Be aware of any physical difficulties a person may have getting in and out of your car. Dementia Active will give you information about the physical needs of any newly referred people. Training for managing people safely is provided. You will be provided with any aids to assist you.
- All passengers must use seat belts while travelling in your car, unless they have an exemption certificate on medical grounds.
- In some cases the child lock on rear doors of the car may need to be in operation to prevent someone opening the door before the vehicle has stopped. Dementia Active will discuss this with you where necessary.

Sharing concerns

- Whether you are driving someone on a voluntary basis or as part of paid work with us, there will always be a member of staff at Dementia Active responsible for your work and who will always be willing to discuss any difficulties or concerns you may have.

- Any complaints about the service should be passed on to Dementia Active to be investigated and recorded.

In an emergency

Should a member become critically ill while they are out with you, call 999.

If a member does not feel well when you take them home please let Dementia Active know, particularly if this person lives on their own, or the carer is not there on your arrival. You may also need to contact their GP.

- If you are involved in a car accident, make contact with Dementia Active as quickly as possible. We will send someone to take over the care of your passenger(s) so that you can manage the car accident process. Until we arrive, you will need to stay with your passenger(s). In the event that you need admission to hospital, there will be a police presence to whom you can delegate responsibility.

Driving a service user who has dementia

- Before picking someone up for the first time, make sure that you check with Dementia Active in case there is important information you need to know to

ensure the safety of the service user and yourself.

- Please operate locks while in transit. If the member must be left alone in the car for any length of time, lock the car doors to ensure their safety. Do not leave the car unattended if you feel it is not safe to do so.

- People with a dementia often find the start and end of the day quite difficult and may be anxious if they can't quite remember where they're going, if they're expected etc, so you may need to offer appropriate reassurance.

- During the journey it helps if you mention where you are taking the person, pointing out the route as you go; short-term memory problems may mean that previous information has slipped their mind. They need your ongoing reassurance.

Guidance for use of disabled parking permit

The rules for use of the parking permit are as follows:

- The clock disc can only be used with a valid Blue Badge
- Set clock disc at time of arrival
- Ensure clock disc and permit are both clearly displayed on dashboard the correct way up, i.e. photograph side down (if you display the wrong side up you are liable to be fined)
- A Blue Badge can only be used when you are transporting a person with mobility difficulties - you cannot use it for your own convenience
- Check any local street parking restrictions before you leave the car
- The Blue Badge is not a licence to park anywhere. If you park where it would cause an obstruction or danger to other road users you could be fined or receive a Penalty Charge Notice or have your vehicle removed.
- Check the badge is in date.

The Blue Badge allows you to park:

- At a parking meter and 'pay and display' on-street parking free of charge and beyond the maximum time limit. Note: certain car parks require blue badge holders to pay parking charges.
- For as long as you wish, where other vehicles may park for a specified time only
 - On solid single or double yellow lines for up to three hours.

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The Blue Badge does NOT allow you to park:

- Where there is a ban on loading or unloading in force (indicated by yellow stripe(s) on kerb and a 'no loading' sign)

- In a loading bay
- Where there are double white lines in the centre of the road even if one of the lines is broken
- In a bus lane during its hours of operation
- In a cycle lane
- On a pedestrian crossing
- In parking places reserved for residents parking, permit holders, taxis or cycles
- In suspended meter bays or when use of the meter is prohibited
- Where temporary restrictions are in force, e.g. as indicated by 'no waiting' cones
- On school 'keep clear' markings during the hours shown on the yellow 'no stopping' plate
- Where to do so would cause an obstruction.

Please ensure that you abide by these conditions as Dementia Active will not meet the cost of a parking fine if you do not.