



Driving Practices and Patient Safety Policy

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This policy was created for Re-Pat Ltd by the HLTH Group

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Introduction

Re-Pat Ltd is committed to promoting and establishing high standards of health, safety and welfare for its employees, including contractors and volunteers, as well as patients, their families and carers, and members of the public.

The aim of this procedure is to ensure that all staff for whom driving is an aspect of their job role understand the risks associated with driving, and to describe the processes, actions and assurances which should be followed to promote safety for staff, patients and the public.

The objectives of this policy are:

- To ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff, patients, passengers and other road users
- To provide all drivers with a thorough working knowledge of driving policies, procedures and the law through this document
- To eliminate or minimise the incidents and harm caused by driving and provide instruction and guidance to managers and employees on all aspects of driving for and on behalf of Re-Pat Ltd
- To ensure that drivers of Re-Pat Ltd vehicles adhere to the level of training and standards commensurate with their role

Scope

This procedure applies to all authorised drivers of Re-Pat Ltd.'s vehicles. Vehicles include those that are owned, hired, leased or borrowed.

Roles and Responsibilities

Transport Team

- Ensure the safe and respectful transport of patients in accordance with DVSA and NHS patient transport standards
- Drive in accordance with the Highway Code and company procedures, always maintaining patient comfort and safety
- Communicate clearly and professionally with patients, carers, and clinical staff
- Report any incidents, near misses, or vehicle faults immediately using the appropriate company reporting procedures

Management Team

- Allocate journeys with consideration of patient needs, vehicle suitability, and driver compliance with working hours and rest breaks

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- Ensure all vehicles and drivers are compliant with relevant legislation (e.g., MOT, insurance, licensing, DBS checks)
- Monitor journey times and feedback to improve service performance and patient safety
- Investigate any vehicle-related incidents and implement corrective actions
- Conduct risk assessments for patient transfers, especially for vulnerable or high-risk individuals
- Liaise with clinical teams where appropriate to ensure safe patient handling and transport
- Review incident reports, audit outcomes, and policy compliance regularly to identify trends or risks

Maintaining Standards

Any member of staff that has three or more vehicle collisions in any twelve-month rolling period will be subject to a review of their driving competency. The staff member will be required to complete a driving examination with an external driving company.

A driver will immediately be restricted from driving if involved in a Collision that involves:

- Fatality
- Significant harm/injury
- Significant damage to a vehicle
- Significant damage to property
- A collision which results in an allegation of Dangerous, Reckless or Careless Driving occasioning in possible Police prosecution

The above list is not exhaustive and if there is any doubt, assurance should be sought from the management team.

Any driver involved in a collision that causes a fatality or hospitalising injury or causes significant damage to property or a vehicle rendering it either unfit for task or un-roadworthy will immediately be withdrawn from driving duties until an incident investigation has been completed. This will be monitored by the Registered Manager who will ensure that all investigations are conducted as soon as is practicable.

Driving Behaviours

All drivers must drive in a manner which is professional and appropriate and takes into consideration the characteristics of the vehicle and environmental conditions that they are driving in and the training they have undertaken. Re-Pat Ltd has an obligation to report any incident where the law is broken, to the Police.

Staff must uphold the highest standards of conduct when driving on behalf of Re-Pat Ltd regardless of the type of driving being undertaken. The overriding responsibility in any situation is to drive safely and professionally.

Reporting Incidents and Collisions

The Driver, or, in their absence the line manager should:

- Contact the management team and inform them of the incident. The person reporting the collision will need vehicle and driver details, third party vehicle and driver details including a contact number, location of the incident and relevant information for the follow up collision/incident report
- Where it is not possible, safe and/or practicable to report the collision from the scene of the collision, RTC documentation should be completed as soon as possible thereafter, and ideally before the end of the driver's shift
- Drivers should not admit liability or inform the third party that a representative will contact them. The third party should contact their own insurer who will progress the matter
- Once the driver has completed the RTC documentation and incident form, this will be forwarded to the individuals line manager for investigation. To facilitate a timely response from Re-Pat Ltd.'s insurers, forms should not be held waiting for the manager input

Safety Considerations

Seatbelts

- The driver of the vehicle has ultimate responsibility for the safety of all passengers
- The driver of the vehicle should not commence any journey unless the passengers are secured except where a passenger has a medical exemption
- Journeys undertaken where passengers were not restrained with a seatbelt, should be documented via the incident reporting system

The law for wearing seatbelts for ambulances purposes has recently been amended (March 2015) to permit removal of a seat belt for ambulance personnel, travelling in the rear of the ambulance, to administer a medical or health intervention if the nature of such treatment or the medical situation of the patient dictates that it cannot be delayed.

- Staff who make the decision to remove their seat belt during a journey must be able to justify their decision if required. The decision to remove a seatbelt to facilitate clinical management or to deal with some other matter that poses a serious and imminent danger, is the responsibility of the individual following a dynamic risk assessment
- If the decision is made to remove a seatbelt, the lack of restraint must be communicated to the driver who must consider this fact when creating and delivering their driving plans e.g. reduction of speed
- Whilst unrestrained and where appropriate, staff must make full use of available handrails or consider lowering their centre of gravity to increase personal stability

- When active clinical or other patient related management necessitating the removal of a seatbelt is complete, the seatbelt MUST be reapplied to reduce the risk of injury as soon as possible

Additional circumstances where a seatbelt is not legally required to be worn are very rare and would only be:

- If you are driving a vehicle and are carrying out a manoeuvre which includes reversing
- If you have a valid medical exemption certificate verified by Re-Pat Ltd
- If your seat belt has become defective on your journey and you are on route to have it repaired

The responsibility for wearing a seat belt rests with each individual if over the age of 14. It is the driver's legal responsibility to ensure that any child between the age of 12 and 13 or over 1.35 metres tall wears a seat belt, and any child under that age or height wears the appropriate child restraint. Failure to do so could result in a prosecution of the driver.

Care should be taken when alighting from a vehicle that the seat belt has returned and it is not causing obstruction, or tripping hazard.

When transporting a child, appropriate child restraints must be used.

Child Lock Systems and Security

Children 4 years and over will be securely transported in the vehicle as they will be restrained via seatbelts. Children will also be secured within the harness system on the stretcher or by using a car seat/booster.

The windows are not easily accessible for children to access, and the back doors of the vehicle open from the outside, ensuring that children are safe during transport.

Equipment

- All equipment that could act as a projectile in the event of a collision and cause injury must be adequately secured or stored within the vehicle. If this is not possible the equipment cannot be transported

Securing Patients During Transport

All patients must be secured using the appropriate restraints:

- Wheelchairs locked and secured using tie-down systems
- Stretcher patients strapped using 3- or 5-point harnesses
- Head supports and cushions used as needed for stability and comfort

General Driving Procedures

Driving Licenses

All staff must hold a valid and current licence appropriate to the vehicle being driven. Re-Pat Ltd will complete regular checks on licence validity and any penalty points/convictions/endorsements held. If there are any changes throughout the year it is the staff members' responsibility to inform their line manager as soon as practicably possible.

Re-Pat Ltd will check driving licenses 6 monthly via a driving license checking service which will notify the staff member and management of any changes or renewals to the license. It is also the staff member's responsibility to ensure their licence is renewed on time and any medical requirements are actioned.

Driver Competencies

All members of staff who are required to drive as an essential part of their duties must hold an in date, current and valid driving licence. For staff who own a photocard, this must also be up to date and valid. Each licence (where relevant) must be appropriate for the type and category of vehicle being driven and must comply with the legal obligations stipulated by the DVLA.

It is the responsibility of the driver to familiarise themselves with the controls of the vehicle before any journey.

Use of Communications Equipment whilst Driving

The Road Traffic Act 1988 (section 41D) states the following regarding the use of mobile telephones

No person shall drive or cause or permit to be driven a motor vehicle on a road if the driver is using:

- a hand-held mobile telephone, or
- a hand-held device, other than a two-way radio, which performs an interactive communication function by transmitting and receiving data (including sending or receiving voice or text messages, fax, pictures and videos and internet use).

Exceptions

- to call the emergency services on 999 or 111 in response to a genuine emergency if it is unsafe or impracticable to stop driving
- two-way radios (dual use devices which can also operate on mobile telephone frequencies are not exempt even when being used as a two-way radio)

A phone or other device mounted in a cradle is permitted providing it can be operated without holding it (the driver can still operate the buttons without holding device), however if the driver is distracted when operating the device the following offences may be considered – failing to have or maintain proper control of the vehicle or careless/dangerous driving.

Re-Pat Ltd insists that the above is adhered to and in addition offers the following advice:

- Handheld mobile telephones. The vehicle is to be parked in an appropriate place, the engine switched off and ignition keys removed before the device can be used for any purpose other than to call the emergency services on 999 or 111 in response to a genuine emergency if it is unsafe or impracticable to stop driving.
- Hands free mobile telephones. Whilst Re-Pat Ltd provides and installs hands free car kits for its vehicle, the use of these devices by the driver **MUST ONLY** occur when safe to do so and be kept to an absolute minimum. They **MUST NOT** be used at any point whilst driving if they distract the driver. Records relating to the use of the equipment prior to a road traffic collision or reported incident are likely to be investigated internally and possibly by the Police. If usage is confirmed the appropriate action and / or charges considered. Re-Pat Ltd may consider any breaches of the above standpoint as serious misconduct, which may lead to disciplinary action.
- Entertainment radio. Where fitted, the entertainment radio may be used when engaged on non-emergency driving. It **MUST NOT** be used at a level that could prevent the driver from absorbing information around them.

Reversing and Manoeuvring

Any person who is required to drive a Re-Pat Ltd vehicle when reversing or manoeuvring especially when in confined spaces must, wherever possible, be guided by a second person outside the vehicle with due regard to their own safety. There may be operational exceptions when a second person is unavailable. If there is doubt in the driver's mind about the situation they are manoeuvring into, the driver must stop and alight from the vehicle and assess the situation before proceeding.

Fines and Charges

- Speeding Fines: All costs associated with speeding fines incurred whilst on duty, including travelling to and from work, in either an employee's own vehicle or a Re-Pat Ltd vehicle, are the responsibility of that employee. Statutory exemptions may apply where relevant
- Parking Fines: All costs associated with parking fines incurred whilst on duty, in either an employee's own vehicle or a Re-Pat Ltd vehicle, are the responsibility of that employee. Statutory exemptions may apply in relevant circumstances

Fitness to Drive- Health Issues

- Any person who drives on behalf of Re-Pat Ltd, on recruitment must satisfy Re-Pat Ltd there are no medical restrictions on their driving licence that would impede them from carrying out their role

- Any employee or volunteer undertaking driving activities on behalf of Re-Pat Ltd must inform Re-Pat Ltd immediately of any health change, symptoms, eyesight problem or other condition, which could impair their ability to drive safely
- Employees responsible for transporting patients must inform Re-Pat Ltd if they develop any of the medical conditions outlined in the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) Group 2 Standards, which precludes them from driving. They must also follow any instructions given by a doctor or medial specialist around driving, related to the taking of prescribed medications and adhere to any advice given to them. The driver must ensure that they are fit to drive, whilst taking any prescribed medication

Vision

All drivers must ensure that their vision meets with the legal requirement at all times. This is specified in the Highway Code (Rule 92) and drivers are strongly encouraged to have regular eyesight tests (every two years at least) to help maintain this requirement. Drivers who need to wear spectacles or contact lenses for driving must do so at all times when driving and should carry a spare pair of spectacles when on duty.

In accordance with Rule 94 of the Highway Code, sunglasses/tinted spectacles may only be worn during bright sunlight. The wearing of such spectacles could be dangerous in other conditions, due to the reduction of vision and subsequent risk of not observing another road user, for example, a pedestrian or bicycle.

Emergency Driving Procedures/Exemptions

Vehicles responding to an emergency and that have activated their lights and sirens are exempt from obeying the following traffic regulations. If the vehicle does not have lights and sirens, the driver of the vehicle must follow the same traffic laws as any other road user (please refer to the Non-Emergency Driving Procedures section).

Speed limits/emergency driving

The driver of a vehicle being used for ambulance purposes may exceed any statutory speed limit if observance of the limit would hinder the use of the vehicle for its official purpose on that occasion. The exemption could be claimed when travelling to an emergency call but on the journey to hospital it would not normally be relevant unless the patient's condition justifies the exemption. The vehicle should always be driven at a speed compatible with the patient's condition.

Vehicle Statutory Speed Limit	Re-Pat Ltd.'s Advisory Limit
20 mph	30mph
30 mph	35 mph
40 mph	45 mph
50 mph	55 mph
60mph	65mph
70 mph	75mph

These speeds **MUST** be regarded as absolute limits and are dependent on all other road, traffic, weather and visibility conditions having been fully assessed and being in the drivers favour. Whilst an exemption from adhering to speed limits exists when engaged on emergency driving, there still remains a statutory requirement to maintain safety margins at all times, under no circumstances can a vehicle be driven at a speed or in a manner which would amount to driving dangerously or carelessly.

Traffic control signals

In reference to the Traffic Sign Regulations and General Directions 1994 Regulation 33, states that if vehicles are responding to an emergency and have activated their lights and sirens then they are exempt from obeying traffic lights. However, drivers must not enter unless they slow down, proceed with caution and ensuring it is safe.

When approaching a red traffic signal it must be treated as a 'GIVE WAY' sign and no attempt should be made to proceed unless the driver is certain the way is clear. Only when the driver, is certain that all the other road users have reacted in the appropriate and required manner can the driver proceed safely onto the junction. Progress onto and through the junction should be carried out with extreme caution and at a speed appropriate to the prevailing road, traffic and weather conditions.

Temporary traffic signals and pedestrian crossings

Temporary traffic signals - these have exactly the same legal standing as fixed traffic signals. You must be absolutely certain that you are able to negotiate the hazard without causing danger to any other road user. Whilst operatives at roadworks may be signalling you through, it is you the driver who must be satisfied it is safe to proceed.

Pedestrian crossings- Owing to the nature and use of these crossings extreme caution **MUST** be exercised at all times on the approach and negotiation of these crossings. You **MUST NOT** proceed until you are completely satisfied that any pedestrians have observed your approach and you have elicited the appropriate response, enabling you to negotiate the hazard safely.

Refuge area- Passing on the offside (keep left/right signs)

There are occasions when because of traffic or an obstruction, it becomes necessary for a vehicle to pass on the offside of a refuge to avoid delay when engaged on an emergency journey. In these circumstances, the greatest care **MUST BE** exercised; for ensuring that there is no possibility of a collision or of causing harm rests with the driver.

Use of bus lanes

Road Traffic Law permits ambulance service vehicles to use bus lanes when engaged upon emergency calls only. It is at the discretion of the local council, and by written agreement that local bus lanes can be used for any other journey by vehicles. If you are not sure, do not use the bus lane. Drivers exercising this exemption **MUST** comply

with the direction of bus flow lane at all times. If claimed, extreme caution **MUST** be applied on entering and / or leaving.

Clearways

vehicles are permitted to stop and park on clearways subject to it being necessary to carry out essential duties that could not be done if the vehicle were to be parked elsewhere.

No driver is exempt from leaving the vehicle in a dangerous position and it is the responsibility of the driver to ensure that the vehicle is not left in such a manner, position or circumstances as would be likely to present a danger to other road users. All precautionary means (e.g. hazard warning lights) should be considered when stopping in potentially hazardous situations.

Parking within restricted areas surrounding pedestrian crossings

Ambulance vehicles are permitted to park within a controlled area and on the crossing; subject to the vehicle not remaining longer than is necessary and/or it could not be parked as effectively elsewhere. This exemption is to allow ambulance personnel to deal with an emergency and would not be justified for routine non-emergency duties. Justification **MUST** be absolute, as dangerous parking could be a strong consideration in these instances.

Double white or yellow lines

Parking at or near to double white or yellow lines is permitted subject to the previous section.

Stopping the engine whilst parked

Stopping the engine whilst stationary is not necessary if there are good grounds for not doing so. This should only take place where the crew is working in close proximity to the vehicle.

Other Exemptions

- Parking on the offside of the road at night
- Parking on footway/verge/central reservation
- Using audible warnings at night
- Entering a pedestrian precinct
- Motorway regulations

Non-Exemptions

There are no other exemptions for the driver of an emergency vehicle except for those described and listed above.

The list below are examples of actions where a legal exemption does not exist:

- Careless Driving

- Crossing or straddling a solid white line nearest to you in the centre of the road (other than those occasions listed in the Highway Code rule 129)
- Dangerous Driving
- Reckless Driving
- Dangerous parking
- Driving without wearing a seat belt (see also 'wearing of seat belts' section)
- Using a mobile phone (or similar device) whilst driving or in control of a vehicle
- Failing to obey traffic lights controlling a railway crossing or fire station
- Failing to obey a 'STOP' or 'GIVE WAY' sign. Note: Unless instructed to by a police officer or traffic warden in uniform.
- Failing to obey a "NO ENTRY" sign. Note: Unless instructed to by a police officer or traffic warden in uniform.
- Failing to obey a "ONE WAY TRAFFIC" sign
- Failing to stop if involved in a road traffic incident

If drivers are found to have carried out any of the above actions, this needs to be reported as an incident to the registered manager immediately, and disciplinary action may be taken.

Emergency Driving Training Requirements

Only staff who have undertaken and passed approved emergency response driving courses are authorised to operate vehicles under emergency conditions.

Mandatory Training:

- Defensive Driving and Collision Avoidance
- Vehicle Dynamics and Handling at Speed
- Advanced Observation and Risk Assessment Techniques
- Legal Responsibilities and Use of Exemptions
- Night Driving and Adverse Weather Response
- Emergency Vehicle Manoeuvres and Emergency Stops

Drivers must:

- Hold a full UK manual driving licence
- Complete refresher training every 3 years
- Be reassessed after any incident or concern

Training must be delivered by DVSA-recognised or NHS-accredited instructors, qualified to deliver CERAD or equivalent.

Non- Emergency Driving Procedures

- Re-Pat Ltd will use its best endeavours to ensure that everyone who drives on behalf of Re-Pat Ltd will be licensed and authorised to undertake driving

associated with their role. Where specific or specialist roles are needed training/assessments will be provided.

- All members of staff who are required to drive as part of their duties must hold a valid and current driving licence for their role, appropriate for the type and category of vehicle.
- The driver retains ultimate legal responsibility for the roadworthiness of the vehicle whilst the vehicle is in their charge and ensure Vehicle Daily Inspections (VDI's) are completed (please refer to the Vehicle Safety policy for further information).

Speed Limits

Re-Pat Ltd vehicles MUST, at all times, be driven at a speed compatible with safety, passenger comfort and with reasonable consideration for other road users. Re-Pat Ltd drivers are governed by the same regulations as other drivers using the road.

Bus Lanes

The only exemption non-emergency transport vehicles are permitted to claim relates to the use of the bus lanes and would normally only be claimed should any of their passengers' condition deteriorate and not to claim the exemption may have a detrimental effect on the well-being of the patient.

There may be localised differences regarding this subject and therefore advice should be sought.

Traffic Lights

Re-Pat Ltd drivers are governed by the same regulations as other drivers using the road.

Operational Non-Emergency Drivers and Training Requirements

All operational employees, or those working on our behalf but employed by another agency, that are required to drive patient carrying vehicles under non-emergency conditions are required to hold a valid driving licence with a C1 entitlement and to undertake the IHCD D1 course or L2 Patient Transport Services or equivalent.

Regular assessments for staff will be completed every five years by an accredited driving assessor to ensure competency is maintained, or following a recommendation made from an untoward incident or accident investigation. The employers of those who work on behalf of Re-Pat Ltd but are employed by another agency must ensure that their staff are competent to drive for these conditions and that their competence to drive is documented.

Training

All staff involved in patient transport must receive appropriate and ongoing training, including:

Induction Training:

- Company policies and procedures
- Patient dignity, confidentiality, and safeguarding
- Manual handling and First Aid Training
- Infection prevention and control

Driver-Specific Training:

- Defensive driving and road risk awareness
- Vehicle safety checks and maintenance reporting
- Use of mobility aids and securing passengers safely
- Managing patient behaviour and communication

Ongoing Training and Refresher Courses:

- Annual updates on patient safety procedures
- Changes in legal or regulatory requirements
- Incident response and emergency protocols

Training records will be maintained and reviewed regularly by management. Refresher training is mandatory and may be increased following incidents or identified gaps.

Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed at six months or sooner if new legislation, codes of practice or national standards are introduced

Related Policies and Procedures

- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Infection Prevention and Control Policy
- Incident Management Policy
- Vehicle Maintenance Policy

Legislation and Guidance

[Road Traffic Act 1991](#)

[Road Safety Act 2006](#)

[Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984](#)

[The Highway Code \(2025\)](#)

[Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 \(HASAWA\)](#)

[The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 \(MOHASR\)](#)

[Employers- driving and riding safely for work](#)

[The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 1994](#)

