

Code of Minimum Standards

All Members are required to demonstrate 100% compliance with the following standards, both as a condition of joining the Guild and in order to remain a Member:

A) Customer Service Standards

Enquiries & bookings

Descriptions of coaches used on your web-site, in quotations, contracts, brochures etc are open, honest and explicit and are of actual vehicles in your current fleet.

You provide a point of booking for customers which is open during normal business hours and is staffed by persons competent to deal with coach-hire enquiries.

Where it is not possible to provide immediate quotes, you reply by the next working day, and you confirm quotes in writing or by e-mail no later than the next working day after enquiry.

You confirm all bookings in writing or by e-mail no later than the next working day after being made.

Once accepted and confirmed by the hirer, you will never cancel a booking (except in case of non-payment and then only in accordance with your terms & conditions).

The journey

The driver's instructions for a journey are an accurate reflection of the detailed itinerary supplied to and agreed with the client.

At any time a coach is on the road, you have a 24-hour back-up system and are able to contact drivers. Clients are provided with a 24-hour emergency number for a company contact who has full responsibility and authority to take whatever action is appropriate.

You train and instruct drivers and couriers to make appropriate safety and customer service announcements at the commencement of any hire, once all passengers have boarded.

Terms and Conditions

You publish your terms and conditions and make them available to hirers on request in advance of booking.

You have an effective complaints procedure and a nominated senior manager who takes responsibility for dealing with complaints.

You acknowledge complaints no later than the end of the next working day after being made and provide a full reply within 14 days (except where it is not possible to reply that quickly due to the actions of 3rd parties).

Learning points are identified and procedures changed where necessary.

Your Conditions of Hire guarantee the following points to clients:

- Punctual pick up
- A fully functional coach
- 24 hour emergency back-up
- Courtesy and a prompt reply to enquiries
- Concise terms of hiring in writing
- Written or e-mailed confirmation of bookings
- Once accepted, bookings will not be cancelled (except in case of non-payment or other breach)
- Uniformed drivers
- Waiver/refund of one day's hire charge for any coach delayed for more than one hour by mechanical defect.

These comprise the "Guild Charter"

B) Employee Investment

Training and competence

You have a formal written commitment to training and procedures which aim to ensure that the highest standards are maintained.

This will include:

- An annual training needs analysis for the business
- A planned training programme, reviewed annually
- Evidence of training that has been undertaken since the last audit (or within the last 2 years for new applicants).

As a result of training, examination and experience (including induction training and on-going assessment by managers and supervisors) coach drivers are only allocated to work for which they have the necessary knowledge and competence to undertake in a safe and professional manner

You vet new drivers through a recruitment process which includes induction training

You maintain a register of drivers who have been cleared through DBS checks for use on work where such checks are required

You employ sufficient staff to enable you to resource your operations and demonstrate a structured chain of command, evidenced by a structure chart identifying roles and number of staff at each level.

Presentation

You have a documented dress code which requires all staff employed directly in coach operations with regular face to face contact with clients [ie drivers, couriers] to be fully uniformed, and other staff with regular customer contact to either be uniformed or to wear business attire [ie travel office staff etc].

Procedures

You have a written Company Handbook which is reviewed/updated at least annually, is accessible to all staff and which incorporates at least the minimum standards defined in this document.

You demonstrate that your policies and procedures are communicated to staff at all levels.

C) Fleet Standards

Management control

The CPC Holder(s) nominated on your 'O' licence(s) is employed full-time in the business in a managerial capacity.

The CPC Holder(s) nominated on your 'O' licence is familiar with and abides by the guidelines of the Guild Code of Minimum Standards & Charter.

Engineering standards

You ensure that a daily walk-round visual check is made before a coach is first used each day, by a driver or engineer and a written or electronic report is made.

Those walk-round checks include the correct functioning of any facilities specified by the client as listed on the work ticket or driver instructions.

You have a documented process whereby walk-round checks are regularly subjected to recorded quality assurance checks either internally or by a third-party.

You have a documented system for drivers to report any damage or defect which becomes apparent on any vehicle they drive and for reported matters to be rectified as appropriate before a vehicle is returned to service.

The CPC Holder(s) undertakes random audit checks on maintenance records covering at least 10% of the fleet per month or reviews the outcome of any such checks undertaken by third-parties.

All engineering staff are either themselves competent by training, examination or experience to do the tasks to which they are assigned, or are supervised by such a person.

Full engineering safety inspections take place at maximum of six-weekly intervals to a regular, pre-planned timetable in accordance with the principles in the *Guide to Maintaining Roadworthiness*. Those inspections will include a rolling-road brake test (conducted as a minimum at every second inspection).

All vehicle registration marks are recorded on the O Licence record with the Traffic Commissioner and those records are kept up to date.

You achieve and maintain an OCRS score for Roadworthiness of Blue, Green or Amber

You achieve a first time MoT pass rate of at least 90%.

The reason for any failure to pass an annual test as presented is the subject of investigation by senior management to prevent repetition. That investigation includes a written root cause analysis.

You have a formal target of nil prohibitions at spot-checks. In the event of any prohibition notice being issued, an immediate investigation is undertaken by senior management. That investigation includes a written root cause analysis. The number and type of prohibitions issued in the past 2 years will be recorded in the audit report.

Vehicle presentation

In the event of a vehicle shortfall, substitute vehicles are to at least the same standard as contracted for by the client (with the sole exception of the case of the emergency recovery of passengers following a breakdown or incident). If you sub-contract work to another operator, you inform the client before the hire commences.

You have a documented policy and demonstrable system in place to ensure that all coaches are cleaned and presented in first-class condition for every hire, with any facilities specified by the client in working order.

You will demonstrate to the auditor that you have the necessary cleaning facilities and equipment. That system is evidenced by recorded quality assurance checks on a random selection of 10% of hires per month.

D) Management of Road Risk and Safety

You have a documented, comprehensive Road Risk Management risk assessment and policy which is reviewed at least annually.

On recruitment and then at least 3 times a year, you check all drivers' licences directly against the DVLA record [either by yourselves or via a third-party checking service] with a maximum interval of 6 months between checks.

Where licence checks reveal penalty points, you review these to establish the driver's continued fitness to drive company vehicles in accordance with your company policy.

You have a process in place to ensure drivers without valid entitlements do not drive any company vehicles for which they are not licenced.

Your contracts of employment require drivers to notify you within 24-hours of conviction of any motoring offence, or of any other offence affecting their suitability to drive PCVs, or the diagnosis of any medical condition which could affect their suitability to drive passenger-carrying vehicles.

You maintain a register of such notifications or endorse details on a copy of the driver's licence record held on your files.

Eyesight tests are conducted on all drivers at least annually, to ensure they meet the minimum legal standard for driving.

[a simple "read the number-plate" check as per the driving test standard is acceptable, not a formal check at an opticians]

You keep a record of all road-related accidents, insurance claims and reported near misses. You investigate all accidents to identify the root cause(s) and your overall company record is reviewed at least annually by senior management to identify patterns. You take action to mitigate the risks identified by the investigation of individual incidents and the overall company record.

Within one month of recruitment and then at least every 2 years, your coach drivers complete and pass a test to measure their understanding of the EU drivers' hours regulations.

Any serious shortcomings are rectified by advice, tuition and re-testing as appropriate, within 30-days of a test failure.

On permanent appointment and then at least every 2 years, your managers and supervisors responsible for coach drivers complete and pass a test to measure their understanding of road transport law including EU drivers' hours regulations.

Any serious shortcomings are rectified by advice, tuition and re-testing as appropriate, within 30-days of a test failure.

You have a process in place to record who is driving company vehicles at any time.

You have a documented drugs and alcohol policy which applies to all drivers of company vehicles, covering:

- a formal requirement to be alcohol free and not impaired by drugs whilst driving

["alcohol free" to be defined as not more than a BAC of 0.08, ie the setting on an Alcolock];

- random alcohol testing of a minimum of 10% of staff per month and for all "with cause" situations;

- random drug testing of a minimum of 10% of staff per month and for all "with cause" situations.

You have a documented policy on the use of mobile phones and other distractive in-cab technology, which is enforced effectively.

Where tachograph records are legally required, 100% of all charts and digital records are subject to analysis using appropriate specialist software or by a third-party specialist firm, in either case using a system that produces management reports. You review those reports and follow up infringements by the issue of appropriate letters and/or disciplinary action.

Total infringements recorded by tachograph analysis systems must not exceed x per 100,000 kms.
[precise definitions and limit to be determined after more research, following discussions with software suppliers and publication of DVSA requirements for the "Earned Recognition" scheme]

All your coaches are fitted with seat belts (except for "heritage" vehicles where their use is specifically disclosed to the hirer in advance).

E) Community and Regulatory Standards

Regulatory compliance

You hold and produce evidence of a valid Operator's Licence and Insurances (vehicle, public liability and employers liability).

You have an effective system in place to ensure vehicles used on the road have the appropriate Vehicle Excise Duty.

If you sell holidays or other similar products covered by the Package Travel Regulations*, you provide evidence that the required bonding or trust fund arrangements are in place.

You have held a full PSV Operator's Licence for a minimum of 5 years.

No regulatory action involving the curtailment or revocation of your Operator's Licence, or the disqualification of your Transport Manager(s) or directors, has been taken by a Traffic Commissioner within the last 5 years.

[note that the rule specifically refers to curtailment, revocation and disqualification. Formal warnings and undertakings do not of themselves constitute non-compliance]

You maintain full membership of CPT as the industry's trade representative body.

Health & Safety

You provide a clean, safe and professional environment consistent with Health and Safety regulations at all times for staff and customers.

A copy of your Health and Safety Policy Statement is available to customers on request.

Environment

You has a written Environmental Policy in line with current legislation and which covers specific aspects of coach operation, including the disposal of litter, oil and other fluids, the discharge of chemical toilets and minimising the running of engines when parked.

You maintain a system to record, monitor and manage fuel and tyre usage.

Continuous Improvement

Senior management review your policies and procedures for transport operation at least annually, with a commitment to update those policies to reflect emerging best practice in the industry.

Financial Stability

You maintain a Net Worth (Capital & Reserves) of at least double the minimum statutory requirement for the number of vehicles authorised on your O Licence.

[to be measured on the balance sheet, not bank balances, based on latest annual accounts]

You have achieved a positive Net Profit Before Tax in at least 3 of the last 5 full accounting years.

Your latest annual accounts are not qualified or subject to a "matter of emphasis" clause [eg where there are doubts about the going concern status].