

Volunteer Driver Pack

Information for
Volunteer Drivers

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Welcome

Welcome to Guide Dogs and thank you for offering to provide valuable support for our work.

Our volunteers can transform the lives of people living with sight loss, whether it is raising our puppies, sighted guiding, driving, collecting funds or cheering on our event participants.

We know that without our volunteers, our charity could not continue its life changing work.

This handbook provides you with dedicated additional information for volunteer drivers.

It supplements the:

- Volunteer role descriptions
- Volunteer Handbook
- Volunteer driver training

We recommend that you keep this document in a safe place so it can be used as a reference in the future. However, if you need more detailed information about any aspect of your volunteering role, or anything contained in this document, please do not hesitate to get in touch with your main Guide Dogs contact (you'll have noted their details on page four).

Key contacts

We've added this information so that you can quickly find the right name and contact details when you need assistance or advice regarding your role as a **volunteer driver**. If you volunteer in more than one role with us, this may differ from who you contact regarding your other role(s).

If you have any general questions or concerns about your driver roles your initial contact should be:

Name: [volunteer name]
Job Role: Volunteer Driver Coordinator
Email: [volunteer name]@guidedogs.org.uk

Or

Name: [volunteer coordinators name]
Job Role: Volunteering Coordinator
Telephone: [volunteer coordinators mobile]
Email: [volunteer coordinators name]@guidedogs.org.uk

Guide Dogs Information Line: 0800 781 1444
Out of hours telephone: 0345 143 0217

Send completed driver expense forms to your Volunteering Coordinator, see contact details above. Expense forms and guidance can be downloaded from the VIP or contact your Volunteering Coordinator for further information.

External Fleet Management Company:

Applied Driving Techniques (ADT)

If you need assistance with completion of the process or have any queries, please contact ADT directly

Email guidedogsdriversupport@applied-driving.com

Tel: 01489 663788.

Driver roles

We have 3 key driver roles:

- **Dog Driver** - transport puppies and adult dogs between Guide Dogs sites, specialist vet visits and hospitals as well as from clients and volunteers' homes.
- **People Driver** - provide transport to our service users, staff and fellow volunteers to a variety of locations
- **Equipment Driver** - transporting a range of essential equipment to a variety of locations and events in the local community

Each role will require different checks and training due the nature of the tasks they will be asked to complete for that role.

We have created an interactive training workshop that all drivers need to attend where we will cover all key information for Drivers, give you an opportunity to ask questions, learn about local ways of working, and cover relevant health and safety aspects of the Driving role.

We will also provide a health and safety factsheets on 'Working Alone', 'Manual Handling' as well as 'Driving Posture and Seat Set-up' to all drivers.

Drivers - general rules

- Drivers must read and abide by the guidelines contained in this document and relevant policies.
- Drivers must hold a full UK driving licence. A clean driving license is preferred, although minor driving convictions may not necessarily preclude a person from volunteering. Each case will be taken on its own merit, please contact Guide Dogs for more information.
- Drivers must notify any conviction and/or license endorsement to their line manager immediately.
- All drivers are required to complete Guide Dogs' authorization to drive process. This is administered on our behalf by ADT (Applied Driving Techniques).
- Drivers must comply with all Road and Health and Safety Legislation and follow Guide Dogs Health and Safety and Fleet guidelines.
- Drivers must ensure that their motor vehicle insurance covers them for their volunteering activities in their private vehicle.
- Drivers must ensure that their vehicle is maintained in good condition and road worthy.
- Drivers must ensure that the vehicle is registered, has a current MOT (if applicable), and is taxed.
- Drivers will be responsible for any fines or any other penalties for illegal parking, speeding, late payment of congestion charge or similar breaches of any road legislation within their personal vehicle or a Guide Dogs' vehicle.
- Drivers must report all motor vehicle incidents that occur while driving on behalf of Guide Dogs to their key contact.
- Drivers using privately owned vehicles are responsible for recording the business mileage of their vehicles on a monthly basis and following the expenses procedure to claim reimbursement.
- Where a change of vehicle may be occasional, for example when using a courtesy or hire car, it is the volunteer's responsibility to ensure that vehicle is in a roadworthy condition, is taxed and insured prior to its use on Guide Dogs business.
- Drivers must inform their main Guide Dogs contact immediately in respect of the following:
 - any change in circumstance regarding their driving license, for example, penalties or bans imposed.

- if, at any time, their Driving License, Certificate of Motor Insurance, MOT Certificate or Tax become invalid, and they can no longer drive on behalf of Guide Dogs.
- if they have concerns over the roadworthiness of their vehicle.
- any deterioration to their health that may impact upon their ability to drive
- any accidents/incidents which occur whilst driving for Guide Dogs.

Use of mobile phones

The use of mobile phones in vehicles can cause or contribute to the cause of accidents.

Information from Guide Dogs ‘Driving on Guide Dog Business Policy’:

All drivers must be aware that using a mobile phone whilst driving distracts attention from the road. Research shows that a driver using a mobile phone whilst driving is about four times more likely to be involved in a crash (the risk is the same as being just over the legal drink/drive alcohol limit).

- Do not confuse what is safe with what is legal. It is illegal to use a hand-held mobile phone whilst driving. It is dangerous to use a hands-free mobile phone whilst driving. It is always best to find a safe and legal place to park before use.
- In law you must always have proper control of your vehicle. If the use of a phone affects your control of the vehicle, causes you to drive without due care and attention, or causes you to drive in a careless or dangerous manner, you could be prosecuted, receive a fine, disqualification, or even a prison sentence.
- We do not expect you to answer or make a call whilst driving, if you do take a hands-free call whilst driving, ensure that it does not distract you, if you feel you are or may be distracted do not take or make any calls
- We do not provide any bespoke equipment for taking calls in vehicles and vehicles must not be adapted for that purpose

Vehicle insurance

Volunteer drivers who use their own vehicle as part of their driver role must contact their insurance company to ensure it is covered for volunteering.

Volunteering is usually covered under the “social, domestic, and pleasure” policies and the majority of companies do not charge an additional premium if the vehicle is used for volunteering purposes.

Accompanied journeys

Only those people who are required to make the journey should be in the vehicle when undertaking a driving task on behalf of Guide Dogs.

Two registered drivers can go on a Guide Dogs requested drive if there is a clear need or a request for this, e.g., sharing a long journey or being required to unload the car of heavy equipment.

Registered volunteers other than drivers are not permitted to accompany a registered driver on a journey unless it has been approved by a Senior Manager and there is justification for this arrangement to take place. Any breach of this instruction could have insurance, safeguarding and health and safety implications.

Anyone who is not registered as a volunteer cannot accompany a driver on a journey regardless of circumstance. Only those who need to be transported should accompany a driver on a journey if required (e.g., a service user, staff member or a fellow registered driver)

Top tips for drivers

Safe driving depends on a safe vehicle. Before using any vehicle, ensure that you check it for faults. If a fault is found, take the appropriate action to get the fault fixed and do not use the vehicle until it is safe to do so.

Basic vehicle check

- Adjust all mirrors so that you can see behind the vehicle easily
- Make sure all lights and indicators are working. Always keep lights, reflectors and number plates clean and clear
- Check the brake, oil and coolant fluid levels regularly. Have the brakes checked by a mechanic if the car pulls to one side or if the brake pedal goes down too far or feels ‘spongy’
- Check tyre pressure every week. Make sure tyres don’t have cuts or other faults. Check for wear and depth of tread (at least 1.6mm) make sure the spare is inflated
- Clean windows and windscreen regularly, checking for cracks and chips. Check that wipers, washers, and demisters are all in working order. Make sure there’s plenty of washer fluid
- Make sure you know where all the controls are and how to use them. Check that they all work properly
- Store all luggage securely, don’t keep any items loose in the vehicle
- Adjust your seat so it is comfortable, you can see properly, and you can reach all the controls - **see separate fact sheet on setting up for correct posture**
- Make sure seat belts work and everyone in the vehicle wears one
- Do not overload your vehicle. If you carry a load that is heavier than usual or plan to tow a caravan or trailer adjust the tyre pressure according to the manufacturer’s instruction plan to drive safely. A planned journey reduces the risk of drowsiness or falling asleep at the wheel and is more efficient saving you time and stress

Schedule carefully

- Plan your appointments taking account of travel time, route, and possible congestion areas
- Change your schedule if your journey time is unrealistic or doesn't give you enough time for regular breaks

Plan the route

- Know your route and junctions before you start your journey
- Find out about weather and traffic conditions before you set out

Take regular breaks

- Stop when you feel tired
- As a minimum, stop every two hours for at least 15 minutes. Get out of the vehicle for fresh air and to stretch
- Take account of the need to have an overnight stop if appropriate.
- Make safe driving a habit

Special driving conditions

Night driving

- Keep headlights and the windscreen clean
- Dip your headlights if there is a car in front of you
- Increase the distance between you and the car in front
- Avoid looking into oncoming headlights. Use the lane markers as a guide

Snow and ice

- Keep windscreens clear
- Slow down and keep well back from the car in front
- Accelerate and brake slowly, taking special care on bends

Rain and fog

- Reduce speed in fog and on wet roads
- Use dipped headlights to reduce glare
- Increase the distance between you and the car in front

Road conditions

- Sand, gravel and even wet leaves can reduce the grip on the road so slow down
- Take care as you approach road works, reduce speed, and get in the correct lane as soon as possible

Personal safety

- Make sure you know, understand, and follow keeping Safe and working alone guidance as per fact sheet
- Carry a mobile phone and always ensure that it is charged
- If you see an incident, it is advisable that you do not stop to aid, but to report it to the police as soon as possible
- If you are approached by someone unknown, keep going and try to enter an area where there are other people. If the person does not leave you alone call the police or ask someone else to do it for you
- It is recommended that some form of identification is kept on your person always
- Carefully plan your routes in advance and carry all relevant maps
- Have a torch in the car when driving at night
- Park as close as possible to your intended destination. When using car parks choose a space near lights if it will be dark when you return and avoid parking in secluded corners
- Reverse into the space so that you can pull away if you are approached whilst parking
- Do not leave any valuables in sight
- Do not leave anything visible in the car which shows the driver is female
- Have your keys ready before reaching the car and open the door as quickly as possible. Keep an all-round look until safely inside and the doors are locked
- Consider driving with the doors locked and always lock them at night and in towns
- Lock the car when paying for petrol
- Do not leave handbags or laptop cases on the front passenger seat. Either put in the foot well or store in the boot
- If you are hassled by another driver, try to ignore them. Avoid eye contact with them. If they persist drive to a place where there are a lot of people and seek help. Memorise their number plate and tell the police

Fitness to drive

All drivers have a responsibility to ensure that they are fit to drive. A journey should never be started if you are feeling excessively tired or unwell. If you are unable to volunteer for these reasons, please inform us as soon as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Eyesight

Ensure that you take regular eyesight and eye health checks. If required, wear any corrective glasses, or contact lenses when driving.

Fatigue and stress

Stress can result in fatigue which can lead to reduced levels of attention and judgement. To minimise the risk of stress and fatigue while driving:

- Give yourself extra time to get to your destination
- If you are running late, stop in a safe place and call to explain, do not rush.
- Avoid peak time travel if you can
- Choose the most practical route
- Limit your driving periods to reasonable time or distance.

Alcohol and drugs

Driving whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol is a serious offence which can have catastrophic consequences.

Alcohol and drugs will affect your judgement, slow down reaction time and give a false sense of confidence.

Some prescription medication can cause drowsiness, blurred vision, or other side effects. Ask your pharmacist about any medication you take and if you should drive.

Remember that it can take a long time for alcohol and drugs to leave your body, therefore your ability to drive can be affected and you may

still be over the limit or under the influence the morning after you have had a lot to drink or taken drugs.

Breakdowns and accidents

Breakdowns

If your vehicle breaks down

- Get your vehicle off the road if possible
- Warn other traffic by using your hazard warning lights
- Keep your sidelights on if it is dark or visibility is poor
- Do not stand between your vehicle and oncoming traffic
- At night or in poor visibility do not stand where you will prevent other road users seeing your lights
- If you are in a Guide Dogs vehicle, contact Kinto who look after our fleet on 0330 041 5690 (details are on a card in all Guide Dogs vehicles)

Additional rules for breakdowns on the motorway

- Leave the motorway at the next exit or pull into a service area. If you cannot do so, you should:
- Pull on to the hard shoulder and stop as far to the left as possible, with your wheels turned to the left
- Try to stop near an emergency telephone
- Leave the vehicle by the left-hand door and ensure your passengers do the same. You should leave any animals in the vehicle or, in an emergency, keep them under proper control on the verge
- Do not attempt even simple repairs
- Ensure that passengers keep away from the carriageway and hard shoulder, and that children are kept under control
- Walk to an emergency telephone on your side of the carriageway the telephone is free of charge and connects directly to the police. Use these in preference to a mobile phone
- You should never walk on a motorway hard shoulder for any reason other than to get to and from an emergency phone

- Give full details to the police; also inform them if you are a vulnerable motorist such as a woman travelling alone or if you have young children
- Return and wait near your vehicle, well away from the carriageway and hard shoulder
- If you feel at risk from another person, return to your vehicle by a left-hand door and lock all doors. Leave your vehicle again as soon as you feel this danger has passed.
- If you cannot get your vehicle on to the hard shoulder:
- Do not attempt to place any warning device on the carriageway
- Switch on your hazard warning lights
- Leave your vehicle only when you can safely get clear of the carriageway.

Accidents

Accidents happen. If you see or hear emergency vehicles in the distance be aware there may be an accident ahead. When passing the scene of an accident do not be distracted or slow down unnecessarily.

If you are involved in an accident

- Use your hazard warning lights to warn other traffic
- Ask drivers to switch off their engines and stop smoking
- Arrange for the emergency services to be called immediately with full details of the accident location and any casualties
- Move uninjured people away from the vehicles to safety; on a motorway this should, if possible, be well away from the traffic, the hard shoulder and the central reservation
- Do not move injured people from their vehicles unless they are in immediate danger from fire or explosion
- Do not remove a motorcyclist's helmet unless it is essential to do so
- Stay at the scene until emergency services arrive

Avoiding Vehicle Damage Whilst Parked

Damage caused to vehicles whilst parked accounts for **most of** motor vehicle incidents reported. In most cases, the driver ‘dents and runs’ leaving our staff with a damaged vehicle. Below are listed some steps you can take to help avoid an incident of this type:

- Avoid parking next to a vehicle, with its wheels turned, parked at an angle and that looks badly looked after. If the driver does not care about their own vehicle, they are unlikely to care about scraping yours
- Where possible try to reverse into a parking space
- Ensure your wheels are straight when you park to avoid accidentally turning into another vehicle when you pull out
- Park within the painted lines of a space so you are not encroaching on another space
- Parking further away from trolley return sites to avoid damage being caused by ‘runaway’ trolleys
- Avoiding spaces that are situated at the ends of rows where your vehicle could be scraped by others as they turn the corner
- Avoiding parking close to turning or delivery areas
- When parking on the street remember to: - park in the direction you are travelling - park close to the kerb - allow room for the vehicles ahead and behind you to get out

Do not at any time pick up hitchhikers

- If you are being followed in your car drive to a busy place and seek assistance
- If approached when your car is stationary stay in the car with the doors locked and windows closed, drive off or call for assistance

If you breakdown:

- Switch on your hazard lights
- Call for assistance
- If you must use an emergency phone stand behind the phone, facing oncoming traffic so that you can see if anyone approaches you
- Tell the police if you are a woman on your own
- If your car is not near the phone, note down the nearest marker to tell police

Avoiding road rage

- Share the road safely
- Keep calm, show restraint
- Don't compete or retaliate
- Be patient in traffic
- Set an example to others
- Say thanks and sorry

Where to find additional information

Volunteer Information Point (VIP)

This is where Guide Dogs volunteers can find the latest Guide Dogs news, locate resources related to their volunteer roles and find out how to get in touch. There is also a video from Guide Dogs' CEO Tom Wright introducing the charity, its purpose, our services, and our strategy for the years ahead. It's a dedicated place for dedicated people and available at:

<https://www.guidedogs.org.uk/vip/>

Volunteer Handbook

This is available in electronic and printed versions and is provided to new volunteers when they join us. If you have yet to receive this or are new to the role but not Guide Dogs, you can download a copy of this pack from VIP (see link above) within Resources section or speak with your main Guide Dogs contact. It has key information relevant to your volunteering as well as introducing the charity.

Volunteer Welcome to Guide Dogs days

Local sites will hold welcome events throughout the year for staff and volunteers to attend but if you do not stay close to a site you may prefer to attend one of our virtual sessions. If you have not already been given local dates, please contact your Volunteering Coordinator which you'll find contact detail for in the Key Contacts section.

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