

Driving Policy

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1 AIM OF THE POLICY

1st Homecare has a duty to provide employees with a safe and healthy working environment, to manage and assess any risks to them, and ensure as far as is reasonably practical that employees do not place at risk or harm any members of the public through work related driving activities. This Policy has been created in order to help fulfil these obligations.

2 OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

The following are the key objectives of this Policy:

- To ensure that all private vehicles and any vehicles owned by 1st Homecare and used by staff are maintained in a safe, clean and road-worthy condition to ensure the maximum safety of the driver, occupants, and other road users at all times
- To ensure that staff driving 1st Homecare vehicles (which includes hire vehicles) and private vehicles demonstrate safe driving and other good road safety habits at all times when driving
- To ensure that the 1st Homecare and its employees comply with all the obligations imposed on them by law

3 CODE OF CONDUCT

All employees must ensure, when driving on business, that they comply with all road traffic legislation, are conscious of road safety, road conditions and other drivers, and apply defensive driving techniques at all times. The following non-exhaustive list of actions will constitute gross misconduct and may result in summary dismissal:

- Driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Driving whilst disqualified, or not correctly licensed and/or insured
- Reckless or dangerous driving causing death or injury
- Failing to stop after a crash
- Any actions that warrant suspension of a licence

4 EMPLOYEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

Drivers of 1st Homecare vehicles or private vehicles must:

- Ensure they hold a current driving licence for the class of vehicle they are driving and that they are appropriately insured for business use
- Immediately notify the Office if their driving licence has been suspended or cancelled, or has had limitations or endorsement placed upon it
- Be responsible and accountable for their actions when driving 1st Homecare or private vehicles

- Display the highest level of professional conduct when driving motor vehicles
- Practice anticipatory and defensive driving techniques;
- Drive within the legal speed limits and take into account road conditions
- Wear a seat belt at all times
- Not carry any unauthorised passengers when driving 1st Homecare vehicles, and under no circumstances pick up any hitchhiker
- Report vehicle defects to the Office before the next vehicle use. In the event that a defect is suspected, staff should not risk attempting to drive the vehicle
- Have regular eyesight tests and ensure that any glasses or contact lenses required for driving are always worn
- Comply with all traffic legislation when driving a 1st Homecare vehicle
- Regularly check the oil, water, brake fluid and tyre pressure of 1st Homecare vehicles they regularly use
- Report any near hits, crashes and scrapes to the Office or On call manager, including those which do not result in injury
- Follow the accident procedure outlined in this policy
- Read any updates that 1st Homecare may periodically issue on road safety matters. These will include information on good practice as well as forthcoming legal changes which affect those who drive for work
- Be familiar with the guidance on driving attached in Appendix A to this Policy

Employees are also responsible for ensuring that they are physically fit to drive. Should this change, the Office must be informed as soon as possible. Drivers should also remember that some prescription drugs can cause drowsiness and affect their ability to drive safely. In the event that medication is necessary, employees should check with their GP or pharmacist before driving, even for short distances.

5 **EMPLOYER'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

1st Homecare will not require staff to drive under conditions that are unsafe and/or likely to create an unsafe environment, physical distress, fatigue, etc. The employer will ensure all 1st Homecare vehicles are well-maintained and that the equipment promotes driver, operator and passenger safety, monitoring and managing work schedules to ensure they do not encourage unsafe driving practices

6 **MOBILE PHONE USE**

Mobile phones can cause distractions by causing drivers to take their hands off the wheel encouraging drivers to concentrate on communication and not the road.

It is against the law for any driver to use a hand-held mobile phone while driving which includes when the vehicle is stationary but with the engine still running (except where making a 999 call and it is unsafe to stop). Any contravention of this whilst

driving on 1st Homecare business may be treated as gross misconduct leading to summary dismissal. Employees should not make any calls, dial numbers, text message, surf the internet, or take pictures whilst driving.

It is within the law to make and receive calls where a legally compliant hands-free kit is properly installed.

7 **SMOKING IN CARS**

It is illegal to smoke in any private vehicle with anyone under the age of 18. This became the law through the introduction of the Children and Families Act 2015. It is also an offence to fail to prevent smoking in a private vehicle with someone under age 18 present. The law does not apply to cars that are not enclosed, so it does not apply to a convertible car with the roof completely down.

Company vehicles must additionally be smoke free at all times, if they may be used by one or more people either as driver or passenger. This will therefore cover the situation where the car is used to transport clients to the shops or on other outings during a care visit. The car must display a no smoking sticker of a designated size.

8 **ACCIDENT PROCEDURE**

The following procedure applies if you are involved in an accident:

- Immediately stop your vehicle at the scene or as close to it as possible, making sure you are not obstructing traffic.
- Ensure your own safety first;
- Help any injured people and call for assistance if needed;
- Try to get the following information:
 - Details of the other vehicle(s) and registration number(s);
 - Name and address of the other vehicle owner(s) and driver(s);
 - Name and address of any witness(es);
 - Name of insurer(s)
- Give the following information:
 - Your name and address and 1st Homecare details (where it is a 1st Homecare car);
 - If you damage another vehicle that is unattended, leave a note on the vehicle with your contact details.
- Contact the police:
 - If there are injuries;
 - If there is a disagreement over the cause of the crash;
 - If you damage property other than your own.

- Follow-up

If there is an injury, or major damage, report the crash to the Office as soon as you can. Otherwise report the crash within 48 hours.

9 **ENFORCEMENT**

This Policy applies to all staff when driving on 1st Homecare business. Failure to comply with any element of it may constitute gross misconduct and lead to the summary dismissal of the employee in question.

10 **POLICY REVIEW**

This Policy will be reviewed and may be replaced by an amended version at any time and staff shall be informed of the amended version.

APPENDIX A

GUIDANCE FOR DRIVERS

1 Aim of the Guidance

1st Homecare has a duty to provide its employees with a safe and healthy working environment, to manage and assess any risks to them, and ensure as far as is reasonably practical that employees do not place at risk or harm any members of the public through work related driving activities. These Guidance Notes have been created in order to help fulfil these obligations. It is a requirement of the 1st Homecare's Safe Driving Policy that all employees whose duties involve driving for work read this Guidance.

2 Objectives of the Guidance

- 2.1 To ensure that all staff driving for work purposes in either 1st Homecare vehicles or private vehicles are aware of and follow safe driving practices.
- 2.2 To minimise the incident of vehicle accidents involving staff members whilst driving for work purposes.
- 2.3 To maximise staff awareness of risks to personal and public health and safety associated with driving.

3 General Driving

- 3.1 All staff should practise "defensive driving" techniques at all times when driving for work purposes.
- 3.2 As part of defensive driving all staff should carry out basic maintenance checks on their vehicle before making a journey. These checks should include:
 - 3.2.1 Tyre condition and tread depth;
 - 3.2.2 Front and rear lights including brake and reverse lights;
 - 3.2.3 Hazard warning lights;
 - 3.2.4 Efficacy of windscreen wipers;
 - 3.2.5 Brakes;
 - 3.2.6 Steering
- 3.3 Staff should always plan ahead for their journey, especially for long journeys or journeys in poor weather conditions such as snow or heavy rain. Staff should consider having in the vehicle;
 - 3.3.1 First aid kit;
 - 3.3.2 Fire extinguisher;

- 3.3.3 Up to date road atlas;
- 3.3.4 An umbrella or rain coat or thicker coat as the weather requires;
- 3.3.5 If travelling in snowy conditions a spade or shovel and extra clothes.

4 **Personal Safety and Security**

1st Homecare wishes to ensure that all staff are aware of potential risks to their personal safety when driving and recommends that staff heed the points below when travelling both for work and for personal purposes. Staff should also refer to the 1HC Personal Safety at Work Policy.

4.1 When travelling alone

- 4.1.1 Ensure someone knows your destination and estimated time of arrival.
- 4.1.2 Where possible travel on major or well populated roads.
- 4.1.3 If you have a mobile phone, make sure it is fully charged before starting your journey.
- 4.1.4 Keep car doors locked when in urban areas. When on open roads keep doors unlocked to facilitate rescue in the event of an accident.
- 4.1.5 When you are in slow moving traffic or are approaching traffic lights, roundabouts or other hazards which cause you to slow down, keep your windows shut or wound up enough to prevent anyone from reaching through them.
- 4.1.6 Park in well lit and preferably busy areas. If you are parking in daylight and returning to your vehicle after dark, consider what the area will be like upon your return. Avoid parking adjacent to bushes or anything else that could conceal an attacker.
- 4.1.7 Always lock your vehicle. When you return ensure you have your key to hand, check the back seat to make sure no one has climbed in, enter the vehicle swiftly and once inside lock all the doors.
- 4.1.8 If the vehicle will allow it, only unlock the door you intend to use.
- 4.1.9 Never pick up hitchhikers.
- 4.1.10 If you find you are being followed, try these counter measures:
 - a) If available, pull into the left hand lane and slow down;
 - b) Ignore the follower as they may grow bored and drive off;
 - c) Do not make eye contact or make any aggressive gestures;
 - d) Do not go home. Rather drive to a busy and well-lit public place, ideally a Police station or a garage forecourt;
 - e) Make sure all your windows are rolled up and your doors are locked.

- 4.1.11 If you are forced to stop, keep the engine running and make no attempt to contact the other vehicle. If the other person gets out of the vehicle check that there is enough room to reverse into and accelerate away. Sound your horn and activate your hazard lights. If you are unable to manoeuvre away, ensure all doors are locked and windows closed, and continue to sound your horn.

4.2 Security

- 4.2.1 Do not leave valuables on display, including mobile phones, satellite navigation systems, music players or any chargers for such items. Where possible remove any docks or cradles that may be installed for such items also.
- 4.2.2 Place any bags and coats in the boot of the vehicle regardless of whether they contain anything of value and, where relevant, cover using the vehicle's load cover.
- 4.2.3 Do not leave documents such as the MOT certificate, insurance certificate or registration documents in the vehicle as this will make it easier for a thief to sell the vehicle on.

5 Breakdowns

1st Homecare makes every effort to ensure 1st Homecare provided vehicles are serviced and maintained so as to reduce as far as possible the likelihood of breakdown. It is your responsibility to ensure that your private vehicle is appropriately serviced and covered for breakdown assistance. 1st Homecare is aware that when a breakdown does occur it can pose a serious risk to your health and safety. Should you suffer a breakdown whilst driving on 1st Homecare business you should follow these guidelines in order to increase the ease with which you are able to seek professional assistance and to protect your personal safety.

5.1 Encountering a Problem

When you first become aware of a problem with the vehicle you are driving you should:

- 5.1.1 If on a motorway, where you are able and it is safe to do so, leave the motorway at the first available exit: if you are unable to leave the motorway, again if it is safe to do so coast along the hard shoulder until you reach one of the orange emergency telephones which are spaced one mile apart;
- 5.1.2 Calmly pull over onto the hard shoulder or as far to the left of the road as possible, avoiding harsh and unpredictable braking;
- 5.1.3 If it is after dark and there are lampposts you should aim to stop beneath one in order to increase the visibility of your car to other drivers;

- 5.1.4 If there is a bend in the road you should aim to stop a safe distance from it so that passing cars have ample opportunity to avoid you.

5.2 Procedure Upon Stopping

- 5.2.1 Switch on your hazard warning lights.
- 5.2.2 Exit the vehicle through the passenger side and lock the vehicle.
- 5.2.3 If you are near a lamppost or phone marker post take note of the number on it as it may assist the recovery service in pinpointing your location.
- 5.2.4 If you are on a motorway follow the phone markers to the nearest emergency telephone which will put you through directly to Motorway Control. Inside the box you will find a list of information to give Motorway Control. Even if you have a mobile phone you should use the emergency telephone as it will be easier for Motorway Control to locate you. If you are a woman travelling alone tell them and your call will be given priority.
- 5.2.5 When making your call from the emergency telephone stand as far to the left as you can facing oncoming traffic in order to see any approaching vehicles.
- 5.2.6 After you have made your call return to the vehicle. Do not wait inside your vehicle. Instead stand well back on the verge.
- 5.2.7 If someone pulls up return to your vehicle and lock the doors. If necessary tell the person that help is on the way. If you are still on the telephone when someone pulls up give a brief description of the person and their vehicle to Motorway Control.
- 5.2.8 When the recovery vehicle arrives return to your vehicle. Leave the window open only wide enough to check that the driver knows your name.

5.3 Third Party Breakdown

If someone attempts to flag you down or you see someone in difficulty, think before stopping. You should consider whether it is genuine and whether you can actually help. You should not jeopardise your own safety and it may be safer for you to continue and report the incident at the next telephone or police station.

6 Driving in Poor Weather Conditions

1st Homecare advises that driving in poor weather conditions should be avoided where possible. When it is unavoidable however staff should consider the following advice.

6.1 General Principles

- 6.1.1 Slow down. If visibility is poor it will take longer to see and react to hazards.
- 6.1.2 Keep a safe distance from the car in front. The Highways Agency recommends keeping a gap of at least 2 seconds from the vehicle in front. Stopping distances are doubled in wet conditions and are ten times greater in icy conditions.
- 6.1.3 Drive as though someone could step out or swerve in front of you at any time.
- 6.1.4 Use your lights. If it is gloomy or visibility is poor use your dipped headlights. If visibility falls below 100 metres you should use your fog lights.
- 6.1.5 Avoid harsh or excessive braking or acceleration.
- 6.1.6 Take heed of any warning signs for adverse conditions.

6.2 Snow and Ice

- 6.2.1 Do not set off until the windscreen and rear and side windows are fully de-iced and demisted. You should be prepared to start preparing your vehicle well in advance of your planned departure time.
- 6.2.2 Drive slower than you would normally.
- 6.2.3 Keep no less than a 10 second gap between you and the vehicle in front of you.
- 6.2.4 Use the highest gear possible to avoid wheel spin (without increasing your speed).
- 6.2.5 Brake gently to avoid skidding and try to allow the vehicle to slow down naturally wherever possible.
- 6.2.6 If the vehicle does skid do not apply the brakes. Instead ease off the accelerator, push in the clutch and gently turn into the skid until you regain control.

6.3 Heavy Rain and Flooding

- 6.3.1 Allow a larger gap between you and the vehicle in front to account for increased stopping distances and poor visibility caused by surface spray.
- 6.3.2 Do not attempt to drive through water if you are unsure of the depth. Many vehicles will float in two feet of water, and damage can be caused by much shallower water.
- 6.3.3 If you have to drive in a flood try to drive on the highest part of the road if it is safe to do so.
- 6.3.4 Keep in first gear with engine speed high and your speed low.

6.3.5 Test brakes immediately after driving through water.

7 Stress and Discomfort

Driving can cause mental stress and physical discomfort, especially on longer journeys. Staff should be aware of this and the potential effect that stress and discomfort can have on driving standards and on general well being.

7.1 Posture

7.1.1 Adjust the seat so that it properly supports the small of your back.

7.1.2 When driving you should be able to reach both the pedals and steering wheel without stretching. When your hands are on the wheel and your feet on the pedals your arms and legs should be slightly bent.

7.1.3 Check and adjust the mirrors every time you enter a vehicle.

7.2 Tension

It is advisable when driving to perform some basic exercises to help alleviate tension and discomfort. The British Chiropractic Association suggests the following exercises to be performed when in stationary traffic;

7.2.1 Buttock clenches;

7.2.2 Side bends;

7.2.3 Shoulder shrugs and circles.

7.3 Breaks

You should take at least a 15-minute break every two hours as recommended by the Highway Code. It is important for you to realise when you are tired and in need of a break. If you are tired it is recommended that you have a short nap (up to 15 minutes) and drink two strong caffeine drinks.

CHANGE HISTORY

Issue	Date	Description of Change and Reason
1	2012	First Issue
2	2014	Second Issue
3	November 2014	Third issue – minor amendments and formatting, and insertion of review date
4	October 2016	Fourth issue – minor amendments, no major changes
5	February 2017	Fifth issue – to make applicable to both companies
6	June 2018	Sixth issue – to include provisions on no smoking with another person in the car
7	January 2020	Seventh issue – inclusion of KL office address
8	September 2022	Eighth issue – minor changes to layout and wording

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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Owner	1HC
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