



## Post-coronavirus start-up guidance: Motor Fleet

This document has been prepared specifically to provide some additional guidance to those who manage, or are responsible for, a motor fleet within a business. It is aimed at businesses who have carried on through the current situation, have had a vehicle fleet used for different purposes, or have had to have vehicles laid up and are starting back after the initial coronavirus shutdown.

**These guidelines would not override any existing policy conditions.**

**All applicable health & safety legislation and regulations remain fully in force including, but not limited to:**

- **The Road Traffic Act 1988**
- **The Road Vehicles (Construction & Use) Regulations 1986**
- **Health & Safety at Work Act 1974**
- **Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999**

**All activities must only be undertaken in line with the current guidance issued by HM Government.**

### Drivers' hours relaxation

The full details of the relaxation are contained [here](#)

The main headlines to note are:

- The drivers' hours and working time rules are in place to protect road safety and the working conditions of drivers, and to reduce the risk of drivers being involved in fatigue-related accidents.
- As such, any relaxation of these rules should only be considered where **genuinely necessary**, and when other supply chain management interventions are **unable to alleviate issues**.
- The Department for Transport wishes to make clear that **driver safety must not be compromised**.
- Drivers should not be expected to drive whilst tired - **employers remain responsible** for the health and safety of their employees and other road users.
- Drivers in question must note on the back of their tachograph charts or printouts the reasons why they are exceeding the normally permitted limits. This is usual practice in emergencies and is, of course, essential for enforcement purposes.
- Operators should maintain records of when standard drivers' hours have been deviated from, along with a justification of why this was needed. The responsibilities of operators, transport managers and the wider supply chain may be examined after the current events. It is important that on subsequent inspections and checks it can be clear that a relaxation was used appropriately, was well implemented and in a way to reduce fatigue, for example in relation to shift patterns.
- If a journey doesn't fall under the emergency provisions the drivers' hours rules **must be complied with**.



# Coronavirus Response

## All activities must only be undertaken in line with the current guidance issued by HM Government.

First and foremost, employee safety is paramount, and activities must only be undertaken where social distancing guidelines can be applied practically.

Following the Coronavirus outbreak, it has been a huge change from business as usual, in many ways, for all of you. Many of you have either not been able to use your vehicles, have used them for different purposes, or using them for far more mileage and time than normal. The focus remains that safety comes first, so there are many actions that you can carry out for all these areas.

You are no doubt aware that there has been a relaxation of certain legislation which is primarily there to ensure the safety of all road users, drivers' hours and MOT's to name but two. The relaxation does not mean safety can be ignored, so more frequent vehicle checks and ensuring vehicles are always legally road worthy is paramount.

Many police forces have found an increase in the amount of speeding and a marked increase in the speeds being driven at. If the speed being driven at is twice or more the posted speed limit, courts have the power to impose an immediate period of disqualification. It may be worth carrying out either random licence checks, or a complete check of all drivers driving on business. This must be through the DVLA to ensure accurate data is used.

If you use or promote car sharing schemes, it may be pertinent to suspend them for a period, to ensure any further social distancing measures are adhered to, and for general health reasons.





# Coronavirus Response

## Haulage sector

**If you operate in the haulage sector**, the areas that you need to manage well remain, drivers, vehicles and trailers.

Your vehicles & trailers may have been laid up, used normally or used far more. For those that have been laid up, regular checks should still be carried out, vehicles allowed to be started up and run for short periods of time at regular intervals.

You should encourage checking the vehicles for anything left in the vehicle which would be an issue if it is left untouched for any period, for example old cups, clothing and food containers. It will be very important to ensure vehicles that have been laid up are in full working order prior to being used on the road once again. Also ensure that you record these checks in detail. For those vehicles that you may have used for more mileage or hours than normal, ensure the O Licence requirements are adhered to, especially when it covers regular maintenance.

Your drivers may well have been away from their driving tasks for several weeks, some may not have driven at all, and several drivers may well have been driving to the maximum allowed limit for some time. For all your driving staff, there is a question set at the end of this document to check their state of mind and skill prior to them resuming driving or continuing driving within the standard driving limits.





# Coronavirus Response

## Other sectors

**If you do not operate in the haulage sector**, the two areas that we need to manage well are the drivers and vehicles.

Many of your vehicles may have been laid up or used very little. For those that have been laid up you need to ensure that your drivers carry out safety checks prior to the vehicles being used again, especially those being used for long trips.

While MOTs due from the 30/03/2020 have been given a 6-month extension, it is still important that any vehicles being used on the road are up to safety standards and road legal.

You need to encourage your drivers to carry out regular vehicle checks - vehicles should still be started up and run for short periods of time at regular intervals.

Your drivers should carry out checks of tyres, as tyres that have not been used can crack or deflate, which will cause issues if not checked and repaired as required. If tyres would have been replaced at the next MOT, they may well have developed defects or be below the legal tread depth by the time the MOT is carried out.

Depending on the type of braking system, checks need to be made to ensure that rusty discs have not formed, and brake lining or pads have not rusted onto discs or brake drums which will cause issues when moving off and braking normally.

Fluid levels – All fluid levels need to be checked especially oil, water and washer fluid.

The above items are examples of the checks that you need to ensure your drivers are carrying out and require attention prior to driving in any event, but more so if the vehicle has not been used for some time. Always check the manufacturers handbook for the checks to be made for your vehicle type.





# Coronavirus Response

## Drivers

Your drivers may well have been away from their driving tasks for several weeks, some may not have driven at all, and several drivers may well have been driving to the maximum allowed limit for some time. For all your drivers, there is a question set below to check the drivers state of mind and skill prior to them resuming driving or continuing driving within the standard driving limits.

Driver Return to Driving question set:

**1. Have you driven during the current restrictions?**

- a. Yes – Normally
- b. Yes – very little
- c. No not at all

**2. Do you feel competent to drive normally for business?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**3. Do you require any support prior to driving?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**4. Have you maintained your vehicle during this period, and can you confirm it is roadworthy and legal to drive?**

It is important to assess your driver's ability to drive in normal circumstances, and especially prior to returning to driving following a period of non-driving. Also consider those that have been driving and are used to less vehicles and quiet roads, reminding them that this will not be the case going forward.

If there are any issues with drivers mental or physical abilities to drive, please refer to your normal AXA contact for further assistance.

## Electric Vehicles & Charging Points

If you or anyone driving on business has an electric vehicle, the advice is not to leave it plugged in if it wasn't being used, as this could cause several issues.

It is best practice that if 100% of the range is not required, then only charge to 80% of the battery capacity, which will reduce the battery degradation and maintain its efficiency for longer.

On the other end of the scale, drivers of electric vehicles should try and avoid letting the charge drop below 20%.

All electric vehicles lose battery charge loss or self-discharge over time, which on average is 2% per month, but that level does depend on the vehicle type and the mode it is left, either shutdown or standby.

Once your drivers have taken the above into account, they should ensure they follow the manufacturers guidelines on recharging.

Once they are back on the road, you could encourage the carrying and use of anti-bacterial wipes and other hand washing facilities to clean down charging points prior to use, and following the washing guidance once charging has finished and the vehicle has been disconnected from the charging point.