



Problem solvers

Are you facing a community transport problem? Perhaps you're assessing the implications of recent legislation or considering the specifications of a new vehicle. Whatever your community transport poser, *CTA Journal* can help.

Our problem solver, Amanda Howard (pictured), is a member of the CTA's advice and information team. Every day the team members field enquiries from across the UK's community transport sector and have

a wealth of knowledge and experience to draw upon.

If you have a problem that you'd like solved on this page, please write to Problem Solvers at *CTA Journal*, 26 Grandsen Avenue, London E8 3QA.

"We are about to buy a secondhand minibus which we are going to operate under a section 19 standard permit. What 'legal lettering', markings and signs do we need to display?"

There are different pieces of legislation which govern the requirements for legal lettering, markings and signs. Schedules 6 and 7 of the Road Vehicles (Construction & Use Regulations) 1986 are mandatory for all minibuses first used on or after 1 April 1988. The 1986 regulations apply to all users, not just those operating under a permit, and responsibility for complying with them lies with both the driver and their employer – which would commonly be identified as the body holding the permit.

Emergency doors

Schedule 6 covers emergency doors and requires that they need to be clearly marked, in letters not less than 25mm high, on the inside and the outside, "EMERGENCY DOOR" or "FOR EMERGENCY USE ONLY" and the means of operation shall be clearly indicated on or near the door, ie, "PULL TO OPEN".

Fire extinguishers and first aid boxes

Schedule 7 states that their locations should be identified by signs when they are not visible. Fire extinguishers should be readily available for use, clearly marked with the appropriate British Standards Institution specification number, and maintained in good and efficient working order. First aid boxes must be maintained in a good condition, be readily available for use and prominently marked as a first aid box.



Carrying capacity

The Public Service Vehicles (Carrying Capacity) Regulations 1984 state that the operator of a vehicle shall mark the vehicle's passenger capacity on the inside of the vehicle with letters not less than 25mm in height, in a colour contrasting with the colour of the background, and which may be read from inside or outside the vehicle. It should state the maximum seating capacity of the vehicle as specified in Regulation 4, or, if it be less and the operator so wishes, the number of passenger seats with which the vehicle is fitted and the standing capacity (be it nil or otherwise) of the vehicle specified in Regulation 6. VSE87/1 also recommends that alternative arrangements may be shown, eg, "Maximum number of passengers: 15 seated or 6 seated and 4 in wheelchairs".

Road speed limiters

The Road Traffic Act 1988, as amended by Statutory Instrument 1988/271 states that every vehicle required to be fitted with a road speed limiter must have a plate fitted in a conspicuous and readily accessible position in the driving compartment showing clearly and indelibly the speed at which the road speed limiter has been set.

Seat belt signs

The Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 brought in the need to notify passengers that they need to wear the seat belt provided. This can be most easily achieved by displaying the prescribed pictogram at every seat point.

No smoking signs

The Health Bill 2006 introduced legislation for smoke-free places and the need to display prescribed signs. The Smoke-free (Exemptions and Vehicles) Regulations 2007 extended the ban of smoking in a public place to enclosed vehicles and any enclosed part of a vehicle must be smoke-free if it is used by members of the public or a section of the public (whether or not for reward or hire), or in the course of paid or voluntary work by more than one person (even if those persons use the vehicle at different times, or only intermittently).

Lifting equipment

The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER) require passenger lifts to be clearly marked to indicate their safe working loads. The Code of Practice VSE 87/1, the Safety of Passengers in Wheelchairs on Buses, also

advises that the instructions explaining how to use the lift should be attached to the vehicle close to the lift and that the notice should be durable and easy to clean.

School bus signs

Road Vehicle Lighting Regulations require all buses carrying children (under 16) to or from school at the start and finish of the day to be fitted with a sign showing clearly to the front and rear. The size of the sign being displayed at the front of the vehicle must be at least 250mm × 250mm with the black border not more than 20mm wide and at the rear at least 400mm × 400mm with the black border not more than 30mm wide. Signs should not be displayed at any other time.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Wheelchair tiedowns and occupant restraints

The Code of Practice VSE 87/1, the Safety of Passengers in Wheelchairs on Buses, advises that the instructions explaining how to use wheelchair tiedowns and occupant restraints be fixed to the vehicle in positions readily visible to the wheelchair passengers

and that the notices should be durable and easy to clean.

Oxygen

The CTA and MIDAS recommend that when carrying oxygen cylinders a compressed gas sign should be displayed to warn the emergency services if there is an accident or vehicle fire. The signs must not be displayed when oxygen is not being carried so it is recommended that they are either magnetic or have suckers attached for easy removal.

Company decals

This can be one of the best ways to promote your scheme and one way to make your vehicle stand out from the rest of the traffic on the road. Contact details can include phone numbers, website and email addresses. Consideration should be given to choice of language or images to avoid stigmatising passengers.

Vehicle height

Having the vehicle height displayed in the driver's area can dramatically reduce the threat of roof damage due to drivers hitting

low barriers, as reported in issue 4.2 of *CTA Journal*.

Unladen and gross vehicle weight

The display of unladen and gross vehicle weight will help avoid potential overloading.

Use of advertising – if appropriate

It is possible for section 19 operators to display advertising on their vehicles to generate revenue as long as the advertising is appropriate and the use of the vehicle would not be incidental to a profit-making activity. Examples would be a vehicle manufacturer donating vehicles in return for the operator carrying their sponsorship details on the vehicle, or a vehicle carrying general advertising unconnected with its operation. In both cases the operation of the permit vehicle is independent of the sponsors or advertisers, who only gain a fringe benefit from the display of their name or advertising message. ■

Many of the products above can be purchased from the CTA. For further details visit the shop at www.ctauk.org

1/2 page ad