



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 Eastwood (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*, Unit 4, 25a Vyner Street, London E2 9DG.

"One of our employees who holds a standard car licence D1 (101) entitlement would like to become a MiDAS Driver Assessor Trainer. Does she need to pass a PCV D1 test to enable her to provide MiDAS training?"

There is no reason why a MiDAS Driver Assessor Trainer (DAT) would be required to hold a PCV D1 licence, which is obtained by a second test.

The requirement for a trainer to hold a PCV D1 entitlement for a minimum period of three years only applies where a provisionally-licensed driver is receiving driving instruction to gain PCV D1 entitlement. L-plates must be used in these circumstances.

European driving licence rules classify driving licences as either full or provisional. Any licence entitlement gained by passing a driving test is classed as a full licence. Drivers who passed their driving test before 1997 gained full D1 (101) entitlement. The restriction code 101, not for hire or reward, refers to the legal basis under which the minibus is operated regarding the carriage of passengers and the payment of fares. It does not relate to any wages paid to the driver or their competence to drive a minibus.

Since 1 January 1997, drivers are no longer granted a D1 (101) when they pass their car driving tests and can only drive a minibus under a permit if they meet the following conditions:

- They are over 21, have held their B entitlement (for a car) for at least two years and don't tow a trailer.



- They don't receive payment or consideration for driving the vehicle other than out-of-pocket expenses.
- The maximum authorised mass of the vehicle is 3.5 tonnes (or 4.25 tonnes including any specialist equipment for carrying passengers with disabilities).

Part of the MiDAS driving assessment requires a DAT to give a demonstration drive, so a DAT with only a B entitlement would have to ensure that they met all of these conditions.

Organisations and DATs should not confuse assessment with instruction –

remember MiDAS DATs are assessing drivers who already have a legal entitlement to drive a minibus.

MiDAS now requires drivers to attend classroom-based theory training before an assessment, in order to be shown what standards will be expected. The assessment then gives drivers the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of what they have been taught.

MiDAS has been operating for 11 years and its supporters include:

- The Department for Children, Schools and Families, which, in its *Licensing of Incidental Drivers for School Minibuses*, suggests MiDAS training for staff who drive minibuses.
- The Driving Standards Agency (see below).
- RoSPA, which endorses MiDAS in the *Minibus Safety Code of Practice*.
- More than 3,000 community organisations and local authorities that use MiDAS.

The CTA and Hampshire County Council are involved in ongoing discussions with the Driving Standards Agency to formally endorse MiDAS and provide additional quality assurance to the scheme.

The Chief Driving Examiner has already provided a foreword for forthcoming editions of all MiDAS publications and the CTA has received a letter of support from RoSPA. ■

The CTA advice and information service

The CTA's advice and information service covers the UK. It is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm. There's also more information and advice on the CTA's website, www.ctauk.org. To contact an expert adviser, telephone 0845 130 6195, or email advice@ctauk.org. In Northern Ireland, telephone 028 9040 3535 or email adviceNI@ctauk.org. NB: Since 1 January 2007, CTA Ireland manages its own service for the Republic of Ireland.

Further information

For more about MiDAS see the member services and resources section of the CTA website, www.ctauk.org