

Netring Ltd

Driving for Work - Guidance For Employees

This document is available online at: <http://www.netring.co.uk/policies>

1. **Aim of the Guidance**

Netring Ltd 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 Driving for Work Guidance Notes have been created in order to help fulfil these obligations. It is a requirement of Netring Ltd'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 Company 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 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 Netring Ltd also provides in all Company vehicles a Vehicle Checklist, which should be completed at regular monthly intervals.
- 3.4 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;
 - 3.4.1 First aid kit;
 - 3.4.2 Fire extinguisher;
 - 3.4.3 Up to date road atlas;
 - 3.4.4 An umbrella or rain coat;

3.4.5 If travelling in snowy conditions a spade or shovel and extra clothes.

4. **Personal Safety and Security**

Netring Ltd 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.

4.1 **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. [This is in any event a breach of Company policy when travelling in a Company vehicle or on Company business. See Netring Ltd Safe Driving Policy].
- 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**

Netring Ltd makes every effort to ensure its vehicles are serviced and maintained so as to reduce as far as possible the likelihood of breakdown. Netring Ltd 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 Company 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**

Netring Ltd 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.