

# KEEPING YOUR FLEET SAFE

Five steps

STEP 1. WE ENSURE YOUR VEHICLES  
**ARE RIGHT FOR THE JOB**



STEP 2. WE CHECK VEHICLES  
**ARE FULLY COMPLIANT**



STEP 3. VEHICLES ARE SUBJECT TO  
**STRICT H&S ASSESSMENT**



STEP 4. WE PROVIDE A DETAILED HANDOVER  
**AND FAMILIARISATION**

STEP 5. WE IDENTIFY DRIVER  
**TRAINING REQUIREMENTS**



## BUT ARE YOU AWARE OF YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES?

Our four stage process should be implemented within your business driver policy.

### STAGE 1

Drivers must do a daily 'walk around' to look for defects and make sure the vehicle is roadworthy

### STAGE 2

A clear reporting process is needed for any defects that the drivers spot

### STAGE 3

Managers must act on these reports immediately

### STAGE 4

The driver policy should enable a clear audit trail to be created, one that goes all the way back to the driver

## BUT CREATING SUCH A POLICY IS WORTHLESS UNLESS IT IS PROPERLY ENFORCED

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# KEEPING YOUR DRIVERS SAFE

## Five steps

Lex Autolease, van fleet managers and drivers themselves all have a part to play in ensuring that when a driver leaves home, he or she returns back home safe at the end of the day.

### WHY SAFETY IS IMPORTANT

It goes without saying that everyone wants to ensure that drivers are kept safe. Businesses automatically acquire duty of care responsibility for any employees driving on its behalf, so need to put in place policies and practices to support that responsibility.

If a business is found to be negligent in that duty, it could face prosecution under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 or even, in the case of a fatality, the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007.

Lex Autolease believes that every van driver has a right to come home safely, and its engineering team sets the highest standards possible to ensure that happens.

### HOW LEX AUTOLEASE HELPS FLEET SAFETY – A FIVE STEP PROCESS

**STEP 1:** Before a light commercial vehicle (LCV) is even built, we work with customers to ensure that the proposed LCV fits the intended job role.

**STEP 2:** We also ensure vehicles are fully compliant with all current legislation and are future proofed against any upcoming changes in the industry.

**STEP 3:** After a van has been built, and both before and after any conversion work is carried out, we subject the vehicle to a strict health and safety assessment before it's allowed to be with the customer.

**STEP 4:** We provide a detailed handover and familiarisation document, which explains the functions of the LCV and provides important information such as the location of the fire extinguisher and first aid kit. This document can be downloaded at any time, so it can be easily accessed if the driver of the vehicle changes.

**STEP 5:** We will also identify any specific driver training that's needed for the vehicle.

However, once the vehicle is in the hands of the customer, Lex Autolease has only limited control over its use and maintenance. From that point onwards, it's up to businesses to police vehicle use and put appropriate checks in place.

## WHAT BUSINESSES NEED TO DO

It's up to businesses to create policies and regulations to ensure that drivers come to zero harm. This includes training and monitoring drivers to promote a zero-tolerance policy to unsafe driving practices – for example, ensuring drivers do not use their mobile phones while driving.

At a basic level, a four stage process should be implemented within the business' driver policy.

**STAGE 1:** The driver policy should stipulate that drivers must do daily 'walk-round' checks on the vehicle to look for defects and make sure that the vehicle is roadworthy. The acronym 'FLOWER' – for fluid, lights, oil, water, electrics and rubber – can be used as an easy way to remember what needs inspecting on the checks.

**STAGE 2:** A clear reporting process is needed for any defects that the drivers spot.

**STAGE 3:** Managers must act on these reports immediately.

**STAGE 4:** The driver policy should enable a clear audit trail to be created, one that goes all the way back to the driver.

But creating such a policy is worthless unless it's enforced properly. All drivers must be trained in how to check their vehicle, and managers should aim to carry out spot checks on a minimum of 10% of the fleet each month to ensure that the daily checks are being done effectively.

## AVOIDING OVERLOADING

Businesses have a legal responsibility to ensure that LCVs are not overloaded. We recommend managers aim to weigh 10% of the fleet every six months to detect whether vans are being sent out with dangerous loads.

We can provide guidance on the proper loading of vehicles, but it's up to businesses to actually enforce the rules and there are various training courses and inspection schemes that can help businesses to keep their fleets safe.

For example, the Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme (FORS) is a voluntary accreditation scheme that encourages and trains fleet managers in how to monitor and improve vehicle safety, efficiency and environmental protection.

Furthermore, the Freight Transport Association (FTA) provides vehicle inspection services ([www.fta.co.uk/services/vehicle\\_inspection\\_service/](http://www.fta.co.uk/services/vehicle_inspection_service/)) that are approved by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service and that will ensure the business fleet is safe, efficient and legally compliant.

Another risk comes from LCVs being overloaded with excessive equipment that is placed in such a way as to be potentially dangerous. Managers need to ask whether that equipment could come through into the cab and cause serious harm to the driver in the event of sharp braking.

## RISKS FROM VEHICLE MODIFICATIONS

Vehicle modifications can have a major impact on safety and can even be illegal in certain situations.

Although we will not deliver a vehicle to a customer until it is certain that it's safe for the role it has been built for, there is nothing to stop drivers or the business itself from subsequently making changes to the vehicle. These could render it unsafe.

It's therefore up to companies to be aware of the legal implications and safety risks of retrofitting vehicles – ignorance is no defence in the eyes of the law.

### COMMON MODIFICATION ISSUES:

**ROOF RACKS:** Many companies fit roof racks to their LCVs. But how do drivers load the roof racks? If they are climbing onto the vehicle, this comes under the Work at Height Regulations 2005, and managers will need to conduct a safety assessment and give special dispensation for drivers to work at height. Businesses may want to consider fitting roof racks with built-in ladders to reduce the risk from drivers climbing on top of vans.

**TOW BARS:** Adding a tow bar may seem harmless, but it could mean the business is breaking the law. Not only does towing a trailer require a different driving licence category, it is also likely to push up the weight of the vehicle so that it comes under the heavy goods bracket. This would legally require it to be fitted with a tachograph.

**TAIL LIFTS:** Tail lifts are often fitted to LCVs after the vehicle has been delivered from us. However, tail lifts must comply with the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 and the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998, and they must be thoroughly examined by a trained professional – it's up to the business to ensure that this happens. Similarly, winches fitted to the front of vans come under the same regulations and require annual tests.

**POWER INVERTERS:** Some companies may fit inverters to vans to power equipment – but managers need to monitor how these are used. If drivers are running high-voltage equipment such as microwaves from a 1000-watt inverter, this could result in a potentially lethal situation. Likewise, fitting a second battery to run equipment greatly increases the fire risk.

Lex Autolease can provide safety advice on any vehicle modifications, such as the above. However, it requires the business to get in touch and give notices of any changes to the intended use of the vehicle. This will ensure all legal requirements have been met and employee safety has not been compromised.

## ASSISTING SAFETY

The Lex Autolease engineering team is keen to share more than 250 years' of knowledge and experience with customers. Subject to fees, we can offer audits to ensure the fleet complies with important safety legislation and maintains the reputation of the business as a safe operator.

Aligned to the Freight Transport Association Van Excellence Scheme, for which we are an industry partner, such audits take the form of yearly checks on things like MOT, servicing and tyres, as well as assessing paperwork to make sure that efficient monitoring systems are in place.

For more information on complying with health and safety regulations, you can also visit the Health and Safety Executive website at [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

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