

Safe travel on school transport

Guidelines for severe weather conditions - Operators

This guidance is designed to give information to bus and taxi operators who provide statutory home to school transport on behalf of the Council as to their position regarding such transport when either the transport provider or the school requires a 'one off' change to transport— most frequently as a result of poor weather conditions.

In the event of severe weather contractors are advised to follow the procedure below:

1. Check that the school or establishment that your contract(s) serve is going to be open wherever possible prior to setting off.

Radio Leicester turn their regular programs over to making repeated listings of school closures in severe weather conditions as well as keeping a web site listing closures.

Link to homepage:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/leicester/hi>

2. Allow extra time to prepare vehicles, particularly for their morning runs. Experience shows that vehicles with air brakes are very susceptible to frozen moisture in air pipes.

It is suggested that in sub-zero temperatures vehicles should be run continuously – rather than arrive in advance of time turn engines off and allow vehicles to cool with consequent problems.

Contractors may wish to give some thought to overnight parking arrangements to ensure that the vehicles best able to cope with severe conditions are not blocked in by those that are not.

3. Contractors continue to be expected to cover their own contracts and should make every reasonable effort to do so. This

requires a balanced judgement to be made about which routes, or parts of routes, are safe to operate based on risk assessment principles.

Factors that should be taken into account are the prevailing conditions and whether they are improving or worsening, the nature of the route, the handling characteristics of the vehicle in the given weather conditions and the driver's level of experience and skill.

4. Drivers once underway are empowered to make decisions about whether to continue, to terminate the run or to revise the run in real time so as to avoid sections of route that would be unacceptably treacherous or have a high risk of the vehicle and passengers becoming stranded.

Where drivers deviate from published schedules they must notify their manager – who will pass the information to the Council as below.

5. Where contractors are clear that they have a problem they should telephone Leicestershire County Council's Customer Service Centre on **0116 305 0033** outlining the contract number and an indication of what the problem is and when and where the contract might operate.

For example, if the contractor has a failed vehicle but will cover by another vehicle albeit an hour later than normal this should be stated. Information you supply to Customer services will be automatically passed to the Contracts & Compliance Team.

Please note that this phone number is a dedicated helpline service for emergency contact from bus and taxi operators operating Leicestershire County Council passenger transport services only.

The service will operate Monday to Friday from 08:00 – 17:00 (term-time only) with a message facility outside those times.

Operators can contact the Council regarding usual contractual matters on the other phone numbers they have been provided with.

All other customers should contact the normal Customer Services number **0116 305 0002** that will be available Monday to Friday between 08:30 and 17:00.

6. Contractors should also contact the schools/establishments they serve at the earliest opportunity as these will be getting calls from parents and carers about the no show of their transport.

Although following the above procedures does little to prevent the impact of severe weather it has the potential to help inform interested parties of major issues and thereby allow them to make informed decisions about whether to continue to wait for their transport or to make alternative arrangements.

Guideline leaflets in this series

This leaflet aims to give advice and information to students, parents, schools, colleges and bus operators who use and deliver transport services provided by Leicestershire County Council. Other leaflets in this series, available on request, include:

- Anti-social behaviour on school transport
- School Bus Passes: Frequently asked questions
- Guidelines for drivers
- Guidelines for taxi escorts
- Guidelines for school staff
- Guidelines for parents and students on mainstream transport
- Guidelines for parents – Special Educational Needs transport
- Guidelines of safe working practice for the protection of children and staff
- Guidelines for severe weather conditions – Schools

If you have any comments about this leaflet or the services it relates to or if you require information contained in this leaflet in an alternative version, e.g. large print, Braille, tape or an alternative language please telephone:

0116 305 0002

or write to:

Customer Service Centre (E&T),
Leicestershire County Council,
County Hall, Glenfield, Leicestershire LE3 8SR

Email: customerservices@leics.gov.uk

or visit our website:

www.leicestershire.gov.uk



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