

# DRIVING STANDARDS

Scoping Document

# HPAC Driving Standards Scoping Document

Version number: 1

First published:

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Health Practice Associates Council INFORMATION READER BOX	
Publications Reference: 104	
Document Purpose	Scoping Document
Document Name	Driving Standards Scoping Document
Author	Mark Crouch - HPAC Driving Standards Lead
Publication Date	
Target Audience	HPAC board, HPAC panel
Equality Impact assessment	This document does not unfairly impact any protected characteristics of HPAC stakeholders registrants, complainants or the public
Description	This document is intended for preliminary discussions surrounding HPAC's position with respect to Driving Standards
Cross Reference	N/A
Superseded Docs (if applicable)	N/A
Revision date	01/07/2020
Action Required	N/A
Timing / Deadlines (if applicable)	N/A
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## AIMS

Health Practice Associates Council is committed to the safe use of vehicles of all types to all road users.

HPAC believes that driving is a critical part of health care delivery and as such is committed to elevating driving standards alongside other key competencies for healthcare delivery to ensure safety and assurance to all parties.

## OVERVIEW

Within the healthcare industry, driving can be broadly categorised into 'blue light' and 'non-blue light' journeys.

Whilst legislation is expected to be updated<sup>1</sup>, there is currently no training requirements to undertake blue light driving. It is the *purpose* of the journey that affords driving exemptions, but there is currently nothing that stipulates any form of assessment or training for the driver themselves.

That being said, the industry as a whole has a reasonably well defined training programme adopted by nearly all of the NHS trusts, and mirrored by the private sector, namely the L3 Certificate in Emergency Response Ambulance Driving (often colloquially referred to as *L3ERAD/CERAD*), awarded by FutureQuals or this course's predecessor awarded by IHCD.

There are some additional blue light qualifications in existence, most notably by those individuals with a Police or Fire Service background.

The non-blue light sector generally demonstrates a wider range of standards being applied, left largely up to each provider.

Whilst the blue light driving area tends to get the majority of the focus within organisations, it is in fact non-blue light journeys that make up the majority of patient transport, and vehicle movements as a whole.

## PRINCIPLES

The key principle behind any motor risk management is the safety of road users of all types including those patients being transported by the provider.

There are a number of key advantages in raising the standards of driving within an organisation, not least reduced journey times, improved costings, reduced vehicle downtime, negative brand exposure and liabilities surrounding collisions.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 19 – Road Safety Act 2006

Whilst there is often little disagreement with the principle to the raising of standards of driving within organisations, it is the implementation of changes that prove challenging.

In principle, HPAC will endeavour to work with training providers looking at the core competencies trained and assessed to ensure that only suitably trained drivers are recognised by HPAC at each of the levels.

With legislation surrounding an emergency driving provision expected to be updated in the near future, HPAC are committed to supporting organisations reach and exceed the new standard.

## CURRENT POSITION

Driving categories and wider legislation can often be a complex area, with many organisations employing a driving specialist to navigate this field.

Currently, HPAC has adopted the following position:

*HPAC will only accept blue light driver qualifications that are accepted by at least one organisation/service operating as a statutory emergency service provider, these services are predominantly Police, Fire and Rescue, NHS Ambulance Service - Hospitals with formal agreements in place with their local NHS Ambulance Trust to contract/conduct such journeys as High Dependency Unit transfers typically with associated CAD incident numbers assigned by the NHS Ambulance Service will also be recognised by HPAC.*

*For clarification an NHS ambulance service” means—*

- (a) an NHS trust or NHS foundation trust established under the National Health Service Act 2006 which has a function of providing ambulance services;*
- (b) an NHS trust established under the National Health Service (Wales) Act 2006 which has a function of providing ambulance services;*
- (c) the Scottish Ambulance Service Board.*

*If your blue light driving certificate is not accepted for use on public roads by at least one organisation within one the above described services we cannot reflect it on your HPAC National ID card or profile.*

*NB HPAC recognised 4x4 emergency response driver entitlement: Please note that unless you specifically supply 4x4 training evidence or contact us to discuss 4x4 entitlement by default 4x4 will not be included on your HPAC blue light drivers licence card. A certificate or signed statement from a recognised NHS driver trainer stating that you have been specifically trained in a blue light scenario to operate the vehicle using four wheel drive on low friction surfaces such as snow, mud and off road must be supplied. \*Being trained in normal conditions using a 4x4 capable vehicle does not qualify as specialist 4x4 emergency response driver training.*



Therefore, HPAC's current position is exclusively in the blue light sector.

HPAC aims to support organisations and drivers by providing each registrant with an ID card which on the \*reverse includes an overview of their driving entitlements. This is intended to provide a generalised overview 'at a glance' of a registrant's driving skills and entitlement.

## Reverse view of HPAC ID CARD



Therefore, in summary HPAC concerns itself only with the blue light sector and does not currently adopt a position on non-blue light driving.

## CONSIDERATION

HPAC should consider its position with respect to non-blue light drivers. Specifically, if it wishes to take non-blue light driving into consideration in one form or another.

There are a number of pros and cons relating to this which are briefly discussed below. To discuss this, it is helpful to briefly understand HPAC's position with respect to clinical gradings.

In essence, one of the key purposes of HPAC is to provide a register for clinicians that provides assurances to organisations and members of the public a Member's previous conduct can be transferred along with the registrant, should they move between organisations.

In many respects, this function is already largely fulfilled by the DVLA driving licence and any Court imposed penalties. Therefore, HPAC should carefully consider if it wishes to take a position on the non-blue light sector

Whilst the DVLA licence itself provides a good deal of assurance; it is not the complete picture. For example, a driver's motor risk is not exclusively restricted to the number of points they have on their licence. It is their attitude towards driving as well as understanding the number of collisions they have been involved in.

For example, a driver may work for 3 different organisations and have been involved in 2 crashes with each of the organisations in the past 12 months. Their risk is, on face value, quite significant on the basis they have had 6 incidents in the past 12 months – yet each organisation in their own regard would only know about two, dramatically underestimating the level of risk in their vehicles.

In addition, there are varying standards around the number of endorsements allowed on an individual's driving licence prior to an intervention. This would range anywhere from a stringent check on a driving licence, to a position whereby the only requirement is to possess a driving licence. Taking the latter position as an example, if a driver had been convicted of Dangerous Driving, given 12 points, but had successfully pleaded 'exceptional hardship' at Court and *not* received a ban, they would continue to be driving.

It is clear that additional levels of regulation surrounding driving is likely to be unfavourable to organisations who have no legal or current regulatory obligations to performed detailed analysis on their driver's.

Should HPAC choose to adopt an active position within the non-blue light sector, it is clear that most benefit would currently be obtained for supporting organisations perhaps either by addressing the issue of best practice (with due regard to the sensitivities around such a phrase) and/or providing a 'toolkit' style approach to the management of motor risk that organisations can adopt should they so choose.

HPAC should be aware that this is an area that has never been a key area of focus for organisations and any inroads into such areas are likely to be initially met with some resistance – so a key part of any strategy should be centred around supporting and adding value.

If HPAC provide an indication of their preference, it would then be a process of engaging key stakeholders in understanding the needs and requirements of the industry to identify where HPAC can add the best value.

## **ADDITIONAL OBSERVATION**

A blue light driving qualification is currently a requirement for an HPAC registrant to be designated as a An Emergency Care Assistant/Emergency Care Support Worker.

In some sectors, particularly in the voluntary sector, there may be a number of candidates who meet the required clinical level, but do not possess a blue light driving qualification.

This may be due to cost implications, medical conditions that prevent a member from driving and/or individual organisational requirements.

Given anticipated changes in driving legislation it is entirely feasible that a member could allow their blue light entitlement to expire (as they have not undertaken refresher training). Under the current position, they would also have to alter their Membership grade also.

Consideration may also be given to separating clinical and driving entitlements whereby, for example a registrant could be an Emergency Care Assistant with or without a blue light driving entitlement with their driving entitlement shown separately, as it is anyway.

## **CONDUCT**

As driving a motor vehicle carries a degree of risk, HPAC considers driving standards to be governed by the Associations Code of Conduct and disciplinary process.

## **KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

- Driver's
- Organisations with a driving provision
- Awarding Organisations
- Association of Ambulance Chief Executives (AACE)
- Driver Training Advisory Group (DTAG)
- National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC)
- Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA)
- Independent Ambulance Association (IAA)
- Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)
- Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) Northern Ireland
- Department for Transport (DFT)

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list