**Drivers – Vehicle safety and security**

Vehicle safety and security is another way of looking at *your* safety and security. If your vehicle isn’t safe, neither are you. Your employer has a legal responsibility to keep you and other road users safe – and so do you.

The first rule is always wear your seatbelt. More than 25% of car drivers who die on the roads are not wearing seatbelts. Wearing a seatbelt halves your chance of dying in a collision, while not wearing one massively increases your chance of serious injury and death, regardless of how big your vehicle is.

**Use the technology**

Until recently vans and trucks tended not to have as many safety features as cars, but this has changed rapidly in the past four years. Embrace these changes because they are designed to prevent collisions or save your life in the event of a collision.

From 2022 a range of advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) became mandatory on new types of commercial vehicles in Europe and mandatory on all new vehicles, including cars, from 7 July 2024. The UK government is currently assessing which of these it wants to bring into UK legislation, but it is likely that European manufacturers will offer these technologies on all the vehicles it sells here.

These technologies include:

- Intelligent speed assistance

- Reversing camera and sensors

- Drowsiness warning systems

- Event data recorders (black boxes)

- Emergency stop signals

- Lane-keeping systems

- Automated emergency braking to prevent or mitigate collision

- Better blind spot warning systems for trucks and buses

All commercial vehicles over 3.5 tonnes must be fitted with speed limiters, and most vehicles below 3.5 tonnes also have them. Don’t disable your speed limiter. They make you and other road users safer and disabling it may also have insurance and health and safety implications. If you have a collision while your speed limiter or any other driver assistance technology is turned off, this can affect your or your employer’s insurance and might be used as evidence of your liability in the collision. Make sure you are trained in how the technologies work, and what their limitations are. Remember, they are there to help you – they do not replace your responsibility to be focused and careful while you drive. There is no technology that can prevent a vehicle from crashing if it is driven carelessly or badly.

**Pre-use checks**

Every vehicle must be roadworthy – you can face significant legal penalties if the vehicle is unroadworthy. Make sure you check every key point in the pre-use check before you start your journey, and notify your employer of any faults, however minor.

Tyres, brakes, suspension and steering are all essential to how the vehicle handles and responds. Worn or defective parts can cause collisions. Remember, tyres are the only part of the vehicle that touches the road, so the correct pressure and tread are essential to its handling.

You can find a guide to pre-use van checks here, if your employer has not provided one.

**Vehicle Security**

Drivers, vehicles and loads can also be vulnerable to criminals. More than 11,000 vans were stolen in 2024, worth £200m, and the police only found 39% of them. Fleets reported £3.5bn worth of equipment stolen from vans in 2022, and there were 25,000 thefts of tools from vans in 2024. Thieves also steal fuel.

NAVCIS (National Vehicle Crime Intelligence Service) reported a sharp rise in cargo theft in December 2023, with one force alone experiencing 140 stolen cargos in one month – double what it would expect.

Remember, this isn’t only about financial loss or the disruption to your work – thefts and criminality can also have a profound effect on you emotionally, and in terms of how safe you feel when doing your job. Don’t let anyone steal your peace of mind.

**Keep yourself safe with these tips:**

- Always lock your vehicle when leaving it. Manually check the doors are locked – don’t rely on the fob. Never leave the vehicle idling, even on your drive – thefts are really common, and the insurer will not pay out if the vehicle was left unattended and running.

- ‘Keyless’ entry signals can also be jammed, relayed or intercepted. Use faraday pouches to prevent criminals copying the fob’s signal by getting close to the driver. Keep vehicle fobs out of sight, and well away from doors and windows when not in use.

- Take your rest breaks somewhere safe, well-lit and preferably with security.

- If you carry expensive equipment or freight, don’t tell anyone where you are going or what routes you take.

- Use physical protections such as steering locks and wheel-locking nuts.

- Keep all cargo, tools and vehicle and personal information out of sight inside the vehicle.

- Where possible drivers should keep trucks in sight, and park with curtains or rear doors close to other vehicles or walls.

Theft is often opportunistic, but there are also highly organised criminal gangs involved in vehicle crime, and using stolen vehicles to perpetrate other crime. Let’s not make it easy for them.

For more information, videos, toolbox talks and pdfs to share with drivers check out the [Van Driver Toolkit.](https://www.vandrivertoolkit.co.uk)