

Why do I need to train my drivers?

The Health and Safety Executive now regards driving as one of the most dangerous regular activities that most people do. Statistically, working as a driver is almost as dangerous as being a deep sea fisherman or working in a quarry, and more dangerous than working in the construction industry.

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, organisations have a responsibility to provide information, instruction, training and supervision to all their staff, and a responsibility to protect the health, safety and welfare of everyone affected by the organisation. This is further endorsed under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, which also place a duty on organisations to provide appropriate training to staff.

There is a clear, legal, obligation to ensure your drivers are trained.

What are the benefits of training my drivers?

Besides the obvious legal requirements there are other benefits, not only to our organisation but also to your drivers and passengers. Trained drivers will drive your vehicles in a more sympathetic manner, thus helping to reduce maintenance and fuel costs. They will have fewer accidents, resulting in lower insurance premiums and less "down-time" of vehicles. The skills they learn during training can be transferred to their own vehicles, with the same potential reduction in running costs. Perhaps the most significant benefit of all is to your passengers, who will be transported in a safe and comfortable manner.

So there are far more reasons for training than simply because the law says you have to.

I can see that I need to train paid staff, but what about volunteers?

In the publication Charity and Voluntary Workers: A Guide to Health and Safety at Work, the Health and Safety Executive states: "In general, the same health and safety standards should be applied to voluntary workers as they would to employees exposed to the same risks."

There may not be strict legal duties but the implication from this statement is clear, you should offer the same level of training to a volunteer driver as you would to a paid one.

There are also other reasons for training volunteers, not least of which is making them feel a valuable part of the team by receiving the same training as other staff members.

OK, so I need to train all my drivers, what should I do?

The simple solution to your driver training needs is to get in touch with Lewisham Community Transport Scheme. We provide MiDAS*, a nationally recognised standard for the assessment and training of drivers that has been designed to enhance driving standards and promote the safe operation of minibuses.

** In 2003, MiDAS won a National Training Award*

Who is MiDAS aimed at?

MiDAS is applicable to any organisation that transports passengers by road, and member organisations range from small voluntary organisations operating one vehicle to local authorities operating large vehicle fleets. Many schools and other educational establishments are members and in its guidance to schools using minibuses, the Department for Education and Skills cites MiDAS training as good practice for all schools.

How does MiDAS work?

MiDAS operates on a "cascade" approach, with a number of CTA-appointed Training Agents providing training for minibus Driver Assessor Trainers (DATs) or Driver Observers who then deliver training to drivers.

If you do not want your own trainer, you can approach a Training Agent to deliver training directly to your drivers. Lewisham Community Transport Scheme employs a full time qualified trainer for this purpose.

What does MiDAS training include?

Under MiDAS, drivers attend an intensive classroom-based theory training session that looks at:

- > Safe and economical driving
- > Drivers' legal responsibilities
- > Passenger safety
- > Health and safety awareness
- > Manual handling awareness
- > Personal safety for drivers
- > Collision and breakdown procedures.

They also undertake an extensive, on-road assessment of their driving skills and a written, multiple-choice theory assessment before being awarded a certificate.

Drivers of accessible vehicles undertake further training in the skills and knowledge they require to safely use an accessible vehicle and they must successfully complete a practical skills assessment before being issued with their certificate.

What makes MiDAS different to other driver training schemes?

The extensive network of MiDAS trainers means that it is readily available throughout the UK. But the significant difference from the majority of training schemes is that it is not simply a one-off course and test.

MiDAS has a four-year refresher cycle, drivers must attend refresher training (including another on-road assessment) every four years in order to retain their entitlement. This not only means that their driving skills are maintained but that they are also fully equipped with the latest information on legal and safety issues.

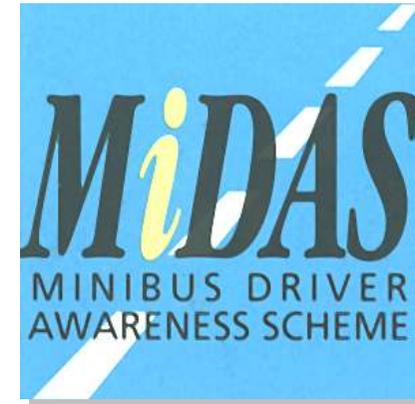
In order to maintain their level of skills, knowledge and training entitlements, Training Agents and DATs are required to attend refresher training every two years.

MiDAS is just what I am looking for. How do I join?

For all MiDAS training enquires, contact the Lewisham Community Transport Scheme office on **020 8318 5900**

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