



REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS

HANDBOOK FOR DRIVERS



REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS
September 2026

1. INTRODUCTION

This Handbook provides Drivers employed in the Public Service with essential information and guidance to help them develop safe driving behaviours and perform in a professional manner. Drivers employed in the Public Service must ensure the safety and security of passengers they transport as well as their own safety and security while taking good care of the vehicle allocated to them. The purpose of this Handbook is to supplement the existing Code of Conduct for Public Officers.

2. JOURNEY

2.1 Authorised journeys have to be planned to utilise the most economical and safest roads – Drivers should know beforehand the route to their destination and seek relevant information, if necessary.

2.2 Allow extra time for road works, congestion and bad weather conditions, as well as breaks. If you are delayed, do not overspeed to reach your destination on time.

3. DRIVER

3.1 General

- (i) Use your vehicle in accordance with the legal requirements of the country.

This includes:

- (a) abiding by all laws and regulations in force;
- (b) maintaining your vehicle in a safe driving condition as required by law;

- (ii) you should hold a valid service driving licence and comply with the relevant regulations regarding the carrying of or production of your licence, upon request;

- (iii) show consideration at all times for passengers and other road users, including motorcyclists, cyclists and pedestrians;
- (iv) if another Driver does something wrong on the road, for example, a dangerous manoeuvre that can cause a road crash such as changes lanes too quickly or forgets to signal stopping, keep calm and be courteous at all times;
- (v) keep your family in mind – your goal is to return safely home after each day's work!.
- (vi) inform the Officer in Charge of transport of your organisation at least one month before the expiry of your service driving licence; and
- (vii) you should be alert while driving and remember the key principles of 'Defensive Driving' :-
 - (a) by **OBSERVING** what is happening around your vehicle, you should be able to position yourself in a safe place on the road, and be prepared to **ANTICIPATE** the actions of other road users;
 - (b) by **ANTICIPATING** the actions of other road users (as a result of effective observation), you should be in a position where you are ready to take **ACTION**, if necessary; and
 - (c) by taking **ACTION** when necessary (as the result of effective observation and anticipation) you should be able to avoid many hazardous situations.

3.2 Appearance and grooming

- (i) Drivers should mandatorily wear their uniform while on duty for identification purposes; and
- (ii) drivers are required to maintain a neat and clean appearance at all times while on duty.

3.3 Tiredness

While driving, do everything you can to stay focused on your driving and consider the following suggestions:

- (i) ensure that you always have a good sleep/rest before driving. Having enough sleep is essential to your safety and you should aim to have at least seven continuous hours of sleep; and
- (ii) remember: midnight to 0600 hrs is the most dangerous time of the day to drive, as your body clock is in “sleep mode”.

3.4 Safe following distance

- (i) Maintain a safe distance in relation to your speed and surroundings between your vehicle and the vehicle in front of you;
- (ii) in rainy conditions, increase your following distance to at least 6 seconds. In adverse weather conditions, it can take you twice as long to stop. Spray from the vehicles in front of you may reduce your visibility and your tyres could lose their grip, causing your vehicle to aquaplane; and
- (iii) when you are waiting in a line of vehicles at a red light/STOP sign or intersection/junction, you should stop at a distance where you can see the rear tyres of the vehicle in front of you touching the road surface. This will provide enough space to get around it if stalled or to prevent a roll back collision.

3.5 Speeding

- (i) Stay within legally permitted speeds and taking into consideration road, traffic and weather conditions. Drive only at a speed where you can STOP in the ‘**distance you can see to be clear**’;

- (ii) when driving in towns/cities and built up areas, slow down and be alert for pedestrians and children during school starting and leaving hours; and
- (iii) on rural roads, slow down at curves and avoid overtaking.

3.6 Cell/Mobile Phones

- (i) It is strictly forbidden to use cell/mobile phone while driving. Do **NOT** use hands-free phones while driving to avoid distraction;
- (ii) do not send text messages, read or respond to e-mails or use social media unless your vehicle is safely parked; and
- (iii) never use a cell/mobile phone when refuelling your vehicle as a static discharge COULD set gasoline vapours alight.

3.7 Distractions

- (i) avoid in-depth conversations with passengers. It is vital that you maintain your concentration on the road ahead;
- (ii) avoid changing radio stations, programming Satellite Navigation/GPS instructions or interacting with any other device that might divert your attention from the road ahead;
- (iii) Do not eat, drink, or smoke while driving;
- (iv) your vehicle is a smoking-free area;

3.8 Alcohol/Drug Use and Impaired Driving

- (i) Never drive if you have consumed alcohol or prescribed drugs that may impair your ability to drive. Remember that even “over-the-counter medicines” can have side-effects, such as drowsiness. Always check the label of over-the-counter and prescription drugs;

- (ii) the evening before you drive, do not consume more than the legal limit of alcohol as it may have an effect on your ability to safely drive the following morning/day;
- (iii) do not drive with a physical injury that may impair your ability to safely operate a vehicle; and
- (iv) the consumption of alcohol is strictly prohibited while on duty.

3.9 Medical Check-Up

- (i) Have your eyes tested if you feel your vision has deteriorated; and
- (ii) yearly medical check-up is recommended to identify any potential health issue which may affect your driving.

3.10 Stress Management

Stress Management is recommended. A high level of stress can affect your ability to concentrate as well as the safety of yourself, the passengers and other road users.

3.11 Seatbelts

- (i) Always wear your seat belt while driving; and
- (ii) ensure that all passengers wear (both at front and rear) their seatbelts whatever their age, in accordance with the legal requirements.

3.12 Head Restraints

Ensure that your head restraint and those of your passengers are correctly adjusted. The centre of the back of your head should be at the centre of the headrest. Straighten your seat so that the head restraint is just behind your head.

3.13 Reversing/Parking

You should be vigilant at all times by taking the following precautions:

- (i) wherever possible, you should avoid backing up. If you make a wrong turning, it is safer for example, to drive a short distance up a road to a suitable turning point, e.g. a road circle (roundabout) rather than effect a 3-point turn in the road;
- (ii) in a parking lot try to choose a parking space that allows you to pull through so that you can drive nose out when leaving. If this is not possible, you should reverse/back up into parking spaces rather than out of them as there is less chance of hitting a person or another vehicle; and
- (iii) if you are about to undertake a backing up /reversing manoeuvre and you are unsure of exactly what is behind you, get out of your vehicle and check before you back up into the space.

3.14 Blind Spot/Scanning

- (i) Before manoeuvring, always check your rear view and side mirrors. Incorrectly adjusted mirrors do not and cannot SCAN the whole area safely;
- (ii) all vehicles have four blind spots of a varying degree dependent on the size of your vehicle. The smaller your vehicle, the smaller your blind spots. Blind Spots exist to the FRONT, REAR, LEFT and RIGHT;
- (iii) the critical times where you must be checking your Blind Spots are –
 - (a) before a Backing/Reversing Manoeuvre, and
 - (b) changing Lanes on a Multi-Lane Highway or Making Right/Left Hand Turns; and

- (iv) it is recommended to continually ask yourself: 'WHAT CAN I SEE?', 'WHAT CAN'T I SEE?', and 'WHAT MIGHT I REASONABLY EXPECT TO HAPPEN?' You need to look at the 'far distance', the 'mid-distance' and the 'foreground'. You need to know what is happening to the 'side' and to the 'rear'. SCAN the whole environment, looking at each area in turn.

3.15 Personal Security

- (i) Try to park in safe and legal places and away from places that could hide potential attackers. If possible, avoid unattended parking lots and those situated away from main roads, where the streets are likely to be quieter with less lighting;
- (ii) when parking at night, choose a well-lit area. You will be able to see your vehicle clearly and have a better chance of seeing anyone who is loitering nearby or hiding under your vehicle;
- (iii) drive with your doors locked and windows shut in areas with a tendency for stop/start driving – most car hijackings are opportunistic in nature;
- (iv) in the unlikely event of being involved in a 'car hijacking', YOU SHOULD STRICTLY FOLLOW the 'carjackers' instructions. It could mean the difference between life and death; and
- (v) picking up hitchhikers is strictly prohibited.

3.16 Incident Management

You should report any crash or accident as required by law if you are the first to arrive at the scene of a road crash, your first priority is your OWN safety. Pull off the road to a safe place to notify the Police on phone number 999/148.

3.17 Payment of fines/ penalty

- (i) Any traffic offence committed while driving a Government vehicle is the personal responsibility of the driver; and
- (ii) in the event of a conviction by a Court of law, the driver concerned shall personally pay any fine or penalty imposed. No reimbursement or settlement of such fines by the Government shall be entertained under any circumstances.

4. VEHICLE

4.1 Vehicle Usage

- (i) Any person using a Government Vehicle shall do so only with the proper Departmental authorisation;
- (ii) only authorised passengers shall have access to Government Vehicle;
- (iii) any violations of the Road Traffic Act and its Regulations shall be the responsibility of the Driver;
- (iv) log books and other report forms should be filled in and completed by the Driver immediately after each trip;
- (v) parking at employee's residence -
 - (a) at night, vehicles should be kept in secure places, that is, in well-guarded compounds; and
 - (b) no vehicle should be kept in the yard of Officers or Drivers, without the prior approval of the Accounting Officer.

4.2 Vehicle Maintenance

- (i) Ensure that your vehicle is serviced in line with manufacturer's requirements /instructions;
- (ii) ensure that you know how to open the hood, check oil, water and other fluid levels, check tyre pressures and alter, if necessary.
- (iii) keep an eye on fuel levels and avoid 'taking a chance' on running out; and
- (iv) report any defect observed to the Officer in Charge of transport.

4.3 Tyre Safety

- (i) Use only tyre size and specifications recommended by the vehicle manufacturer;
- (ii) check your tyre pressure in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations or regularly, for example, every two weeks as a minimum, and in the event of the following:
 - (a) making a long journey;
 - (b) significant change in temperature;
 - (c) when your vehicle has been left standing (out of use) for a period in excess of two weeks; and
 - (d) after an impact e.g. hitting a curb or object
- (iii) check your tyre thread wear indicator regularly; and
- (iv) check for abnormal tyre wear.

4.4 Vehicle Security

- (i) Always lock your vehicle, even when leaving it unattended for a few seconds;
- (ii) if your car is fitted with a car alarm, ensure that the alarm is activated in all cases;
- (iii) never place items of value in the vehicle and leave it unattended. If you have to carry something of value in the vehicle make sure it is in the trunk/boot; and
- (iv) always engage your steering lock before leaving your vehicle.

4.5 Accidents

In case of accidents -

- (i) drivers should inform Officer in Charge of Transport and report to the Police.
- (ii) in the event of an accident involving a Government Vehicle, the driver or any other officer, under any circumstances, should never admit fault or reach settlement with a third party.
- (iii) all accidents or incidents that result in vehicle or equipment damage, employee injury and/or any situation that involves vehicle damage or injury to members of the public must be reported immediately to the Officer in Charge of transport; and
- (iv) agreed statement of facts (Constat à L'Amiable) is not allowed for Government vehicles.

4.6 Vehicle Cleanliness

- (i) Drivers are responsible for ensuring that all trash is removed from the vehicle after each trip;
- (ii) if a vehicle needs cleaning prior to use, ensure that such cleaning is promptly carried out;
- (iii) drivers should perform a basic pre-trip inspection prior to operating the vehicle. The inspection should include oil/coolant levels, tyre pressure/wear and visual inspections for vehicle damage.

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September 2026