



Driver Standards & Governance (Standard Operating Procedure)

OFFICIAL

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Version History

V4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Title changed to incorporate Driver Standards and PVCs • Removes Shadow Driving Licence Scheme and “Score” • Changes the focus of the panel to a more learning focused and advisory committee. • Places Driver Standards in line with the PDR system and gives some local ownership back to Line Managers and Departmental Command Teams for more minor issues. • Removes automatic grounding of officers following PVCs. • Removes 20pmh+ speed cap on “standard” drivers. • Removes the need for the separate Driver Training Assessment Panel protocol. This will now be removed from the force library as a “live” document. • Introduces the PVC Committee as an advisory body. • Reflects the changes to the Matrix Department under the Community First model and fact there is no longer a “Head of Roads Policing” • Introduces the Matrix Superintendent as the potential decision-maker where more serious issues are identified or where drivers come to notice on more than one occasion. • Places the Matrix Chief Superintendent as the final Appeal Decision Maker and also the Decision Maker where the likelihood of an officer having their driving authority removed long-term/permanently. It also builds in a review period for such matters.
V5 – June 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full review of SOP including the change of the title to Driving Standards & Governance Meeting. • Introduction of the NDM into the PVC Process. • Changes to the chair from Inspector Investigations to Chief Inspector Matrix Operations with the Superintendent Matrix Operations being the responsible for any appeals of decisions made. • Updates to the options available section to include the PDR Process • Removal of section 5 Escalation process • Removal of Section 6 Training / Development • Full removal of driving authority – review period changed to 12 months (from two years).
V6 – July 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made live – all watermarks removed – following approval at SMB 03.07.2019
V7 – January 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects the change to the Management structure for the DSG process. The Chair has been amended from Chief Inspector Matrix to Superintendent Matrix. • The appeal process has been amended to reflect the change to the management structure which includes the introduction of ACC Response and Resolution.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The document is aimed at increasing driver awareness and the importance of careful driving, it sets out the aims and procedures of the new Driver Standards Governance Standard Operating Procedure (DSG) meeting. This process replaces the Shadow Driving Licence Scheme and Force Driver Training Needs Assessment Panel Process.
- 1.2 Previously any score awarded under the Shadow Driving Licence Scheme remained on the officer's record for five years. As this new protocol replaces this process, then those with a score which is over three-years-old from November 2015 will have that score nullified and expunged from their record. Any scores under three-years-old as of November 2015 will not be classed as a score any longer but the circumstances of the driving incident may still be examined should any new incidents occur.
- 1.3 It is therefore the intention that in line with driving protocols for DVLA licences, police officers involved in police vehicle collisions / incidents which have taken place within the previous three-year period will be taken into account when their driving-style is examined. In certain cases when considering high risk drivers, this period may be extended.
- 1.4 The aims of these new guidelines and associated PVC reviews are to ensure the standards of police driving across the Force are maintained through advice, guidance and support to provide a mechanism for ensuring the training needs of police drivers are identified and, if appropriate, allow for supportive intervention to be taken where necessary. The primary aim of the policy and associated ethos however will be to work with the drivers to help them improve where necessary through development and learning. This is because it is acknowledged that as a Force, police drivers drive millions of miles per year, often in challenging circumstances which require drivers to use discretion in how they travel to incidents and requires a constant reassessment of their risk.
- 1.5 It should be acknowledged that the driving of police vehicles is another large part of an officer's duties and therefore, where any development or learning requirements are identified then there is a clear link to PDR process, which is in place to provide the focal point of an officer's developmental requirements as well as a platform to recognise achievements and aspirations. It is incumbent on both the police drivers themselves and supervisors to be alive to any welfare/wellbeing issues which may affect officers and in all cases work should be done to support officers with any such issues in the workplace.
- 1.6 Police drivers and the associated driving standards expected of them are however things that communities often express concern about, especially when police vehicle collisions occur. It is only right and proper that the public expects and demand the highest of standards from those who drive vehicles on behalf of the organisation. As such there is great personal responsibility on drivers to ensure that they maintain the highest standards and act with integrity in accordance with the principles of Community First and those of the Police Code of Ethics. This policy is aimed at learning and not attribution of blame. It aims to ensure police drivers are aware of the driving standards expected from them but is also aimed at giving officers confidence that they will be supported where required and their skills will be developed where necessary.

2. Procedure

- 2.1 Where an incident takes place involving a PVC, then the officers driving authority should only be suspended at the scene where the circumstances of the incident are felt to be serious enough (such as level of injury or serious damage caused) or any indication that the standard of driving of the officer may have fallen far below the required standards. The presumption should always be to allow the officer to continue to drive unless there are welfare issues involved. This is because the removal of the authority would not ordinarily have an impact on any investigation which may be required. The initial suspension of an officer's driving authority may be taken by any police supervisor but the return of the authority should only be undertaken following advice from the Force PVC Manager or authority of a Roads Policing Inspector. In all cases where a PVC occurs, a report/NICHE task must be sent to the Force PVC Manager and a copy sent to vehicle fleet.
- 2.2 Every PVC Report will be reviewed by the Force PVC Manager, if required, incidents deemed as avoidable with gravity factors (see Paragraph 3.6 refers) will be given wider consideration by the DSG meeting. (See Paragraph 3.1) The DSG will assess each incident on its own merits with the primary aim of providing advice and guidance to police drivers and/or signpost them for some lateral development to prevent repeat occurrences of avoidable incidents.
- 2.3 The following will be considered.
- Police Vehicle Collisions that have been deemed avoidable by the Force PVC Manager
 - Any Complaints received in respect of driving standards
 - Any other incidents involving both Police vehicles and privately owned vehicles being driven for Police purposes which have been referred due to concerns raised about the standard of driving.
- 2.4 If other misconduct/criminal issues are under consideration, incidents will only be examined at the conclusion of any related investigation.
- 2.5 Where the advice of either the Crown Prosecution Service or the IOPC has been sought the matter will not be considered until the advice has been received in writing.
- 2.6 Any misconduct issues must be resolved before the incident is considered, unless the Head of Professional Standards Department has given written authority for matter to be examined.
- 2.7 Where any of the incidents described at paragraph 2.1 occur whilst a Police Driver is under tuition the instructor will not be subject to this scrutiny and this will be treated as a training or staffing issue for the Academy to deal with if issues are identified with the training/trainer unless deemed to be of a serious nature then the matter may be dealt with as a PVC.

3. Police Vehicle Collision Reviews

- 3.0 Following an initial assessment of each PVC by the Force PVC Manager, those deemed to have been “avoidable” with gravity factors (Paragraph 3.6 refers) will be referred to the DSG Meeting, that comprises of a number of experienced practitioners (Paragraph 3.1 refers). Those representatives will examine the circumstances of each incident so as to provide advice to driver’s line managers, or, where a case is of significance gravity due to injuries or damage caused, provide advice to the Matrix Command Team. The initial assessments of the PVC Manager may be subject to random dip sampling by the Matrix Ops Support (Investigation) Inspector to review the quality of decisions being made.

The Police Vehicle Collision Manager will notify the Driver Training Unit as soon as practicable after any decision made regarding the need for them to reassess and provide additional training to a police driver.

All PVCs will be reviewed and documented using the **National Decision Making Model** to ensure there is a documented, transparent approach to all decisions made.

- 3.1 The DSG Meeting will be chaired by the Superintendent Matrix, and will comprise of the following:

- Chief Inspector Matrix
- Inspector Matrix Ops Support
- Force PVC Manager
- A Forensic Collision Investigator
- A Driver Training representative
- Strand Representatives
- Police Federation (Optional)
- Practitioner representative (Optional)
- Trade Union (for any incidents involving Police Staff only)
- Health & Safety representative (Optional)
- Professional Standards representative

- 3.2 In addition any other interested parties can observe the process at the discretion of the Matrix Superintendent.

- 3.3 The DSG will meet once a month on predetermined dates, anyone who wishes to attend should contact the PVC Manager in advance. The process is intended to identify training and development needs. It is not a discipline meeting, and is not an adversarial process. Officers and staff wishing to attend should not attend when any incident they are involved in is being discussed. In addition drivers involved in incidents being reviewed will be kept anonymous whilst the review is taking place. This is to ensure the incident, and not the personnel involved, is the subject of the discussion. However, having reviewed the incident and if the PVC Manager deems it necessary, the driver’s history shall be considered to help identify patterns to ensure the appropriate supportive measures are identified. A range of supportive and developmental options that will be linked to the e-PDR process will be available to the DSG meeting (Paragraph 4 refers) and more than 1 of the options available may be recommended.

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- 3.4 The DSG meeting is audio recorded and the review outcomes are retained within the driver records.
- 3.5 The first question that is applied is to ask if the collision was avoidable or unavoidable.
- 3.6 If the collision was deemed to be avoidable then consideration will be given as to circumstances of the collision and if an officers driving has deviated from that taught during Driver Training.
- 3.7 If the officer has been involved in an incident which could have been avoided and which has additional gravity factors to it, (serious deviation from driving standards) injuries or level of damage caused) then the DSG may escalate to the Chief Superintendent Matrix Command Team for consideration of further action. The DSG may offer expert advice and guidance on what may be required in each case, but the Matrix Command Chief Superintendent, will be responsible for any decision in relation to any action which may be taken in respect of the matter. Any appeals to a decision made at this point will be referred to the ACC Response and Resolution for review. The decision of the Assistant Chief Constable will be final.
- 3.8 The types of low level incidents identified below, which routinely come to the attention of the PVC Manager, may be dealt with without referral to the DSG. In each instance the PVC Manager will update the individual's driver record to enable identification of developing driver patterns.
- Fail to conform to a give way.
 - Mounting the pavement / Kerb Strike.
 - Wing mirror damaged passing vehicle.
 - Slow-Speed manoeuvring collisions.
 - Minor deviation from driving authority.
- 3.8.1 The above list is not exhaustive and the manner in which they may be dealt with may also be dependent on gravity factors such as any injury or damage being caused as a result. Other factors which may be considered are things such as speeds, road layout and hazards, parked cars, volume of pedestrians and other road-traffic users. (**NB** – this list not exhaustive and this S.O.P is aimed at guidance as opposed to being a prescriptive document). Repeated low-level incidents (e.g. slow-speed parking manoeuvres) that result in collisions may be considered as part of a pattern and may be subject to referral for consideration of a more formal guidance, training or intervention.
- 3.8.2 Outside of the DSG Meeting, the PVC Manager will also deal with a number of collisions which may be unavoidable. No action will be taken in relation to these matters unless it is felt they display a serious deviation from the expected standards of driving. Records will be retained in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation GDPR legislation.
- 3.8.3 With regards to incidents deemed suitable for discussion at the DSG meeting & not progressing for CPS advice, officers are encouraged to provide all the evidence they can to assist the process. This evidence can be accepted in any form, MG11, E mail or F104. The advice of a Federation Representative, Union Representative or indeed the Force PVC Manager may be sought and will be provided. This should not

be seen as a requirement to provide unnecessary levels of bureaucracy which only serves to support an administrative process.

3.8.4 Incidents and associated driving standards will be reviewed in a manner which reflects the following criteria from the Police Driving Manual (Roadcraft). This is to ensure meaningful feedback can be provided to drivers:

- Situational Awareness
- Anticipation
- Planning/Positioning
- Weather Conditions
- Control of Vehicle
- Manoeuvring at slow speeds/confined spaces

If the driver has not received any formal police driver instruction, then they will be assessed against the Driving Vehicle Standards Agency on:

- Judgement
- Planning
- Positioning
- Manoeuvring

3.8.5 The 20mph+ speed-cap for Standard Drivers is now removed and officers are expected to use the National Decision Making Model in conjunction with a safe driving “plan” when making driving decisions. This is being considered in recognition of advances in technology which allows this to be monitored and also advances in vehicle safety technology.

Officers are reminded that they have a personal responsibility to ensure that their driving is safe and in keeping with the conditions faced at the time, and they can expect such decisions to be reviewed if required. As such any PVC may be examined for whether speed was a contributing factor, but officers’ speed will no longer be automatically scrutinised and dealt with as a “breach of policy”.

4. Options Available

4.1 The PVC Manager will review and quality assure all PVC reports that are submitted. Low level incidents identified in 3.7 will be dealt with by the PVC Manager all other PVC’s will be referred to the DSG where the below options are available. It should be noted that the DSG may recommend multiple options.

- No further action (NFA). The individual and line manager will receive an email informing them that no further action will be taken. The PVC Manager will update the driver record to this effect.
- Meeting with PVC Manager / Drive Training for advice, feedback or de-brief.
- Letters of advice – Depending upon the circumstances of the PVC advice letters will be sent directly to the individual’s first or second line manager who

must ensure the driver is debriefed utilising a one-to-one within the e-PDR to record the details. The first or second line manager is also responsible for further development which must be captured within a development plan within the e-PDR.

- Developmental Action (e.g. - re-assessment/additional training) notification for the requirement for additional developmental support in the form of driving training will be sent to the relevant Command Team by the Force PVC Manager. The individual should be informed in person of the requirement to attend at the Academy for additional training. The details will be recorded by the line manager in the individual's e-PDR utilising a one-to-one. It is the personal responsibility of the individual to arrange attendance and complete the developmental action. Any further development must be recorded within the PDR and monitored by the individual's line manager.
- Management Advice – Notification of the requirement to provide management advice will be sent to the relevant Command Team by the Force PVC Manager. The report will contain sufficient information to enable the relevant Command Team to deliver the advice. A record of the meeting must be completed on a one-to-one in the individual's e-PDR. Any subsequent development or supportive plans must be recorded within the PDR and managed by the first line manager.
- Long-term/permanent withdrawal of Driving Authority – The PVC manager will complete a report containing recommendations and forward it to the Chief Superintendent Matrix for a decision. The outcome will be communicated to the relevant Command Team. The individual will then be given the opportunity to meet with either their own Command Team or a member of the Matrix Command Team to ensure they are fully informed of the rationale behind the decision. All engagement with the individual will be recorded utilising a one-to-one within the e-PDR
- CPS advice – depending on the severity of the incident the DSG may recommend that the investigation is forwarded to the CPS to demonstrate impartiality. Should the matter be returned NFA then the DSG may recommend further supportive interventions utilising the options available. If the matter is returned recommending action then this will be taken with cognisance to those recommendations.

Note: Any driver may be required to undertake a Driver Psychometric Evaluation where driver behaviour/attitude has been identified at any point during the process.

PDR improvement plans will be created in conjunction with Driver Training and templates will be available from the PVC Manager. It is the responsibility of the individual's first line manager to issue, monitor and update improvement plans. Line Managers should ensure that are subject to appropriate review and this process will be supported by the PVC Manager.

5. Appeal Process

- 5.1 Where a member of staff disputes any decision arising from the DSG, a report detailing the grounds of the appeal shall be submitted through to the respective Command Team and forwarded to the PVC Manager within 14 days of their being informed of the decision. The PVC Manager will provide details regarding the circumstances of the PVC together with the outcome of the DSG meeting and refer it to the Matrix Chief Superintendent for a decision.
- 5.2 If any decision is upheld at this stage, the driver may refer the case to the ACC Response and Resolution within 14 days of being notified of the appeal result. The Police Federation will be entitled to make representations for consideration. If the decision is changed in any way then a full rationale will be provided to all parties and any learning identified will be taken forward to assist in future cases. Any decision made at this stage will be final.
- 5.3 Any driver who has their driving authority completely removed may ask for a review of such a decision every 12 months. Any such review may if appropriate require the individual to undertake psychometric evaluation and a driver assessment before consideration is given. This appeal will be submitted to the ACC Response and Resolution who may then delegate responsibility back to the DSG to provide him / her with a report on all the relevant circumstances.