

Escorts on Roads

Policy & Procedure

OFFICIAL

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Policy	4
Statement	4
Aims	4
Objectives	4
Application and Scope	4
Outcome Evaluation	5
Version History	6
1. Special Vehicles	8
1.2 Part 2 Vehicles	8
1.3 Part 3 Vehicles	8
1.4 Part 4 Vehicles	8
1.5 Part 5 Vehicles	9
2. Abnormal Indivisible Load Vehicles (Abnormal Loads)	9
2.1 Definitions	9
2.2 Legislation	9
2.3 Dimensions and Notifications	10
2.4 ESDAL (ESDAL abnormal load notification - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk))	11
2.5 Action by Duty officer from the Commercial Vehicle Unit upon Receipt of Notification	12
2.6 Self-Escorts	13
2.7 Police Escorts	14
2.8 Actions of Control Rooms	16
2.9 Enforcement	16
2.10 Load Movement Times	17
2.11 General Dispensation	18
3. Other Part 2 Vehicles and Part 2 Vehicle combinations	19
4. Part 3 Vehicles	19
4.5 Agricultural Dispensation	19
5. Part 4 Vehicles	20
5.1 Vehicles Carrying Loads of Exceptional Width	20
5.2 Local Excavation Vehicles	20
5.3 Vehicles for Tests, Trials or Non-UK Use, Etc.	20
5.4 Track-laying Vehicles	20
5.5 Straddle Carriers	21
6. Part 5 Vehicles	21
7. Ambulances	21
7.1 Context	21
7.2 Requests from the Regional Health Authority at the Scene of an Incident to Transfer a Seriously Injured Person to Hospital for Emergency Treatment.	21
7.3 Requests from the Regional Health Authorities to Transfer Patients between Hospitals by Emergency Ambulance	22
7.4 Other Requests	23
7.5 Officers & Vehicles	23
7.6 Motorcycles Escorting on Motorways	24

8. Funerals	25
8.1 Context	25
8.2 Considerations	26
8.3 The Funeral Procession.....	26
8.4 Summary Overview.....	26
9. VIP/Royal Visits	27
10. Category A Prisoner Escorts	28
11. Other Escorts	28
12. Police vehicle requirements.....	28

Policy

Statement

Merseyside Police is committed to improving road safety. We recognise that there will be occasions when police escorts are necessary to enable maximum public safety and minimum disruption to all road users and the general community within Merseyside. In those instances, we will provide escorts utilising marked police vehicles and appropriately trained drivers.

Aims

This policy aims to establish a consistent approach to all requests for police escorts of the following vehicles:

- a) Special Vehicles
- b) Abnormal Loads
- c) Emergency ambulance
- d) Funerals
- e) V.I.Ps
- f) Cat A Prisoner Escorts

The policy is designed to ensure that all relevant considerations are taken into account in determining the correct response to individual requests from partner agencies, commercial enterprises and members of the public.

The policy is underpinned by procedures designed to provide clear, definitive and unambiguous direction for all those involved in its deployment.

Objectives

A broad objective is to ensure the safety of all road users. Specific associated objectives are to:

- a) Increase confidence and satisfaction within our community by enforcing relevant legislation concerning special vehicles
- b) Maximise effectiveness of the Ambulance Service when saving life and limb
- c) Enable a professional non-discriminatory approach to requests for escorts for funerals
- d) Minimise disruption of traffic movement across Merseyside

Application and Scope

All police officers and police staff, including the extended police family and those working voluntarily or under contract to Merseyside Police must be aware of, and are required to comply with, all relevant policy and associated procedures.

This policy document sets out principles to help guide decision making and is in some parts quite prescriptive. Officers and staff should also be aware of the guidance contained within College of

Policing APP and other relevant documents and SOP's. Officers and staff must be mindful of the specific and prescriptive training and must operate within their respective skill set and guidelines.

The policy applies to the escort by police of other vehicles on the road. Specific regulations and national guidance that relate to certain types of escort will be fully complied with.

The Chief Officer lead for this policy is the Assistant Chief Constable Matrix.

Any road traffic collision that occurs as a result of a police escort should be treated as a police vehicle collision and handled in line with the Merseyside Police document Police Vehicle Collisions (Policy & Procedure).

Outcome Evaluation

The Chief Inspector, Matrix Operations (Roads Policing) will regularly review progress against the objectives outlined above. Information collated will include analysis of requests for police escorts and analysis of escorts conducted by volumes, types and outcomes.

Procedure

Version History

Version Number	Date	Detailed rationale behind amending/updating policy or procedure.	Policy Owner Details	Policy Author Details
2.0	30/03/12	Extensive rewrite to reflect provisions of ACPO Guidance on the Movement of Abnormal Indivisible Loads (March 2010)		
2.1	22/06/12	Paragraphs 2.7.1 and 8.1.3 amended on request of FPG to clarify legal matter.		
2.2	02/01/14	Changes to reflect the deletion of the 'Abnormal Load Officer' post, and changes to the notification process following the protective services review.		
2.3	01/11/16	- Terminology changes in line with the new Community First Operating Model. - Changes to reflect the new Abnormal Load Notification and Dispensation processes. - Changes to reflect new Force Structure. - Minor grammatical amendments.		
2.4	21/05/20	- Changes to Related Documents and Aims. - Changes to paragraphs 7.5.1,7 - Changes to paragraphs 7.6,1,2,3,4 - Changes to paragraphs 8.3.4,5,6 - Paragraph 9 Other Escorts updated, and Form 2280 implemented. - Minor grammatical amendments, wording changed from Vehicle Crime and Commercial Unit to Commercial Unit.		

2.5	26/07/20	• Numerous cosmetic changes to bring it up to date with department names, version, branding and protective marking. • Removal of standard bikers being allowed to do abnormal loads and emergency ambulances. This brings it in line with advanced car drivers and matches the revised risk assessment. The main drive is safety and using staff trained to a higher level. • Emphasis added about staff ensuring their radio can be heard above road and siren noise and that full volume should only be used with allocated ear plugs – this is to match the updated risk assessment. • Added that outriders for funerals should be VIPEX trained. IE, they have had training to enter a junction and control it. • Extra information around the role of the rear marker.		
3.0	23/05/24	• Change to reflect update in Policy as per COP guidance • Leadership and Me framework and just principals added • 2.3 – Changes in relation to Dimensions and notifications • 2.4 – ESDAL website updated • 2.7.3,4,5 – Changes to who can escort vehicles according to Escorting Other Vehicles course and what vehicles can be used. • 2.7.7 – Roles and responsibilities of the RPU supervisor and Escort Commander • 2.7.14,15 – Requirements to notify contact centres prior to a load moving • 7.3.7 – Clarification which officers are permitted to escort Ambulances • 7.5.8 – Clarification and further guidance on required qualifications for performing Escorts of Ambulances. • 8.1.2 – Authority required for officers to perform escorts at funerals. • 11.2 – Other escorts and authority required to permit these escorts.		

		• 12, 12.1 – Police vehicle requirements for vehicles used on Escorts.		
3.1	10/06/26	• Minor updates to reflect changes to the force structure, removal of the North West Motorway Patrol Group and the Leadership and Me Principles. • Transfer to current force policy template	Ch/Supt. Matrix	Ch/Insp. Head of Matrix Operational Support

1. Special Vehicles

1.1. This section lists all recognised types of special vehicles, covered under Special Types General Order (STGO 2003), and additional regulations that apply to these vehicles when they are used on a road. The STGO 2003 categorises four different classes of vehicle, to which these regulations apply.

1.2 Part 2 Vehicles

1.1.1 The four types of vehicles below are referred to as Part 2 vehicles and Part 2 vehicle-combinations due to the section of the STGO 2003 that describes their use:

- Abnormal Indivisible Load Vehicles
- Mobile Cranes
- Engineering Plant
- Road Recovery Vehicles

1.3 Part 3 Vehicles

1.1.2 The three types of vehicles below are referred to as Part 3 vehicles due to the section of the STGO 2003 that describes their use:

- Agricultural Motor Vehicles
- Agricultural Trailers
- Agricultural Trailed Appliances

1.4 Part 4 Vehicles

1.1.3 The five types of vehicle below are referred to as Part 4 vehicles due to the section of the STGO 2003 that describes their use:

- Vehicles carrying loads of exceptional width (vehicles exceeding widths of 5.0m and 6.1m have further legal requirements placed on their use in relation to speed limits and notifications)
- Local Excavation Vehicles
- Vehicles for Tests, Trials or non-UK use, etc
- Track-laying Vehicles
- Straddle Carriers

1.5 Part 5 Vehicles

1.1.4 The eight types of vehicle below are referred to as Part 5 vehicles due to the section of the STGO 2003 that describes their use:

- Vehicles with moveable platforms
- Pedestrian-controlled Road Maintenance Vehicles
- Motor Vehicles used for cutting grass and trimming hedges
- Trailers used for cutting grass and trimming hedges
- Operational Military Vehicles
- Track-laying Vehicles belonging to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution
- Highway Testing Vehicles
- Vehicles Propelled by Natural Gas

2. Abnormal Indivisible Load Vehicles (Abnormal Loads)

2.1 Definitions

2.1.1 An Abnormal Indivisible Load is any load that cannot be broken down into smaller loads for transport without undue expense or risk of damage.

2.1.2 An Abnormal Indivisible Load is also any load that exceeds certain criteria for weight, length, and width, whereupon the vehicle carrying the load would not comply with Construction and Use Regulations 1986 due to the weight of the load exceeding 44,000 kgs; or as a result of the width and/or length of the load necessitating that it can only be carried on a heavy motor car, trailer or combination of both where they do not comply with the Construction and Use Regulations 1986 in all respects.

2.2 Legislation

2.2.1 Two sources of legislation regulate Abnormal Indivisible Loads. They are:

- a) Motor Vehicles (Construction & Use) Regulations 1986 (amended)
- b) The Road Vehicles (Authorisation of Special Types) (General) Order 2003 (amended)

2.2.2 The Construction & Use Regulations 1986 provide the power and penalties for any breach of their requirements. There is provision within the Construction and Use Regulations to permit the movement of loads, which exceed the dimensions referred to in those Regulations.

2.2.3 The STGO 2003 provides the conditions that must be complied with before moving loads, the dimensions of the load exceeding those covered by the Construction & Use Regulations. Any failure to comply with the conditions contained within STGO 2003 reveals offences under the Construction & Use Regulations.

2.2.4 The vehicle carrying the Abnormal Indivisible Load must also comply with the Construction & Use Regulations unless it is specifically designed to carry Abnormal

Indivisible Loads, in which case, the vehicle itself must be authorised within the STGO 2003. Such vehicles will be licensed and taxed at the STGO rate and will be fitted with an STGO weight plate.

2.3 Dimensions and Notifications

2.3.1 The Commercial Vehicle Unit, within in the Matrix Operations, must be notified of all Abnormal Indivisible Loads travelling through the Force area that exceed the following dimensions:

Width:	2.9m (Attendant to be present if over 3.5m) or if lateral projection beyond vehicle over 305mm
Weight:	More than 80,000kgs
Length:	18.3m rigid length or 25.9m overall length (Attendant to be present over 18.3m rigid length)
Overhang:	3.05m to front or rear of vehicle (Attendant to be present when front projection exceeds 2.0m and/or rear projection exceeds 3.05m)
Height:	No legal requirement to notify

2.3.2

2.3.3 It is specified both within C & U 1986 and STGO 2003 that the haulier is to notify each Police Force through whose area they are proposing to travel, giving 2 full days' notice. This does not include Saturdays, Sundays or Bank Holidays.

2.3.4 The notification will be required by either C & U 1986 or STGO 2003, depending on how the load is abnormal. If the gross weight does not exceed 44,000kgs, and the width does not exceed 4.3 m, the notification will be of the C & U 1986 type. In all other cases, the requirement will be of the STGO 2003 type.

2.3.5 A C & U 1986 notification will consist of the following details:

- a) Time, date and route of the proposed journey;
- b) in a case to which regulation 82(2) C & U 1986 applies, the overall length and width of the vehicle by which the load is carried and the width of the lateral projection or projections of its load;
- c) in a case to which regulation 82(4)(a) C & U 1986 applies, the overall length and width of each vehicle by which the load is carried, the length of any forward or rearward projection and, where the load rests on more than one vehicle, the distance between the vehicles;
- d) in a case to which regulation 82(4)(b) C & U 1986 applies, the overall length of the combination of vehicles and the length of any forward or rearward projection of the load, and
- e) in a case to which regulation 82(7) and (8) C & U 1986 applies, the overall length of the vehicle and the length of any forward or rearward projection of the load or special appliance or apparatus.

2.3.6 An STGO 2003 notification will consist of the following details:

- a) A list of all police forces to which the notice is given;
- b) Details of the user of the vehicle or vehicle-combination, stating:
 - Address
 - Telephone number
 - Email address (if any)
 - User's licence number
 - User's reference number
- c) Details of the intended use of the vehicle or vehicle-combination, stating:
 - Point of departure
 - Point of destination
 - Time, date and route of journey
 - Particulars of any load (including description and profile of load)
- d) Details of the vehicle or vehicle-combination used, stating:
 - Registration number of any motor vehicle
 - Type of vehicle or vehicles
 - Overall length of the vehicle or vehicle-combination (including length of any front or rear projection)
 - Overall length of any single rigid unit included in a Part 2 vehicle combination (including length of any front or rear projection)
 - Overall width (including width of any lateral projection)
 - Maximum height
 - Gross weight or gross train weight
 - Number of wheels per axle
 - All axle weights
 - All axle spacings

2.3.7 Any details omitted from a notification can render that notification void. A haulier may be requested to re-submit the notification in the required format.

2.3.8 The precise time and date of the movement may be required under this policy.

2.4 ESDAL ([ESDAL abnormal load notification - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk))

2.4.1 ESDAL (Electronic Service Delivery for Abnormal Loads) is the official Highways Agency website that is used by police, hauliers, local highway authorities, bridge authorities and any other interested agency, to effectively manage the movement of Abnormal Indivisible Loads throughout the UK.

2.4.2 ESDAL is the Merseyside Police preferred method of notification for movements of Abnormal Indivisible Loads in our Force area.

2.4.3 All information is stored with the Highways Agency via a web portal. A haulier will enter the details of the Abnormal Indivisible Load movement, and the software will provide a map of a suitable route, informing the haulier of any structures that may pose a hazard such as weak bridges. The software automatically notifies the Police and any other interested agency in every Force area that the load is to pass through. This provides the relevant authority and police the opportunity to raise an objection. The haulier must then carry out an effective risk-assessment regarding the resources required. The software automatically highlights notifications that have not been made within the legal timeframe, enabling the police to decide on that basis either to accept or reject the notification.

2.4.4 The advantages of ESDAL to Merseyside Police include:

- a) ESDAL ensures a common approach by all partner agencies, and is owned and operated by the Highways Agency
- b) The route has already been approved by the ESDAL software utilising preset parameters
- c) All affected structures are identified, and all structure owners notified automatically
- d) The system negates the requirement for Merseyside Police to develop and maintain a separate database for the management of Abnormal Indivisible Load movements.
- e) The Commercial Vehicle Unit are able to check and enforce notifications at the roadside at any time utilising any internet-enabled device.
- f) The ESDAL messaging system enables police to efficiently inform all interested agencies of issues previously experienced with a particular haulier, and to receive such information in return
- g) ESDAL contains contact details of all interested agencies for every movement. This information is easily accessible in the event of an emergency, i.e. damage caused to a road, bridge or other structure as a result of the movement

2.4.5 The above points can be used as control measures for our own in-Force risk-assessment of Abnormal Indivisible Load movements.

2.4.6 The use of ESDAL has been identified as best practice to minimise Health and Safety risks to both police staff and the public in the management of Abnormal Indivisible Load movements.

2.5 Action by Duty officer from the Commercial Vehicle Unit upon Receipt of Notification

2.5.1 Merseyside Police reserves the right to reject or amend any time; date or route that they consider may impact on public safety.

2.5.2 If a route is found to be unsuitable, the haulier will need to either identify an alternate route, or additional traffic management measures are to be sought from the relevant local authority, Highways England or Merseyside Police.

- 2.5.3 The duty officer from the Commercial Vehicle Unit will make a decision as to whether the movement requires escorting (based on the relevant risk assessment), and the haulier will be notified of this. If an escort is required, proposed routes will be rejected unless an escort is provided as paragraph 2.6 below.
- 2.5.4 The duty officer from the Commercial Vehicle Unit will check the notification and carry out a risk assessment based on the agreed 'risk category' levels. The officer should consult the Abnormal Indivisible Loads Risk Assessment, the Abnormal Indivisible Loads Risk Matrix and the Abnormal Indivisible Loads Process Flowchart. These documents are saved within the team drive and a hard copy kept within the office.
- 2.5.5 Low risk notifications: There will generally be no necessity for further action. Provide general advice to haulier and file original notification. Inform the haulier of relevant control measure(s) if necessary.
- 2.5.6 Medium risk notifications: Check movement complies with relevant legislation, policies and guidance. Inform haulier if notification has been rejected. If further traffic management is required, contact the Commercial Vehicle Unit Supervisor for a decision regarding the necessity of a police escort or other measures.
- 2.5.7 High-risk notifications: Check movement complies with relevant legislation, policies and guidance. Inform haulier if notification has been rejected. If further traffic management is required, contact the Commercial Vehicle Unit for a decision regarding the necessity of a police escort or other measures.

2.6 Self-Escorts

- 2.6.1 Legislation does not specify the requirement for a self-escort. For movements graded as medium or high risk, or vehicles exceeding the following dimensions, Merseyside Police will require the haulier to provide a self-escort before it is permitted to travel through the Merseyside area:
- a) Single carriageways and ordinary dual carriageways
 - Width: 4.1m
 - Weight: 100,000kgs
 - Length: 30.5m
 - b) Motorways and specified dual carriageways (A5300 Knowsley Expressway and A5036 from Switch Island to Crosby Road South - Seaforth Dock entrance)
 - Width: 4.6m
 - Weight: 130,000kgs
 - Speed: Unable to maintain a minimum speed of 30 mph
- 2.6.2 If following a risk-assessment it is believed by Merseyside Police that the safety of road users or traffic flow may be compromised to an unacceptable extent, an escort may be specified regardless of the vehicle dimensions. If the movement is graded as high risk, further precautions may be required such as additional self-escort vehicles, a media

strategy, or the use of traffic management measures such as diversions, signage, or matrix messages.

- 2.6.3 The haulier will ordinarily provide escorts. Escort vehicles should conform to the type and livery specified by the Highways Agency. Drivers and Attendants must comply with the Highways Agency Operating Guidance for Abnormal Load Escorting and Highways Agency Code of Practice: Self-escorting of Abnormal Loads and Abnormal Vehicles.
- 2.6.4 If a load has been identified as requiring a self-escort or other additional resources, the haulier will be informed that permission for the movement will only be granted on condition of these being provided.
- 2.6.5 See also [APP: Roads Policing – Management of Incidents](#).

2.7 Police Escorts

- 2.7.1 Police escorts will only be provided if specifically requested by a haulier. This request must be made via the Commercial Vehicle Unit.

A haulier may request a police escort for any part of the journey and payment for the police escort will be required. A minimum of eight days' notice will be required for a police escort. If necessary, charges for police officer 'time' will be incurred by the haulier at private cost rate.

The number of police officers required for each escort will be assessed by the Commercial Vehicle Unit supervisor, taking into account such factors as the number of vehicles being escorted, the proposed route and the time of day (not exhaustive).

Charges will be invoiced to the haulier once the escort has been completed. The charges will be paid in full in the event of any cancellation or amendment to the travel date that occurs within 5 days' or less of the movement date first indicated.

- 2.7.2 In the event of a charge being levied (private cost movement), the following disclaimer must be provided to the haulier prior to the agreement being made to escort: ***"Neither the Merseyside Police or the Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner shall be liable to [insert name of haulier] (the haulier) in respect of any loss, damages, costs or expenses or any other loss whatsoever or howsoever incurred and whether directly or consequently as a result of the Merseyside Police escorting the haulier's vehicle or vehicles on or about [insert date(s)]".*** A copy signed by the haulier should be kept on file for future reference.
- 2.7.3 Only Matrix Roads Policing officers who hold an "advanced" driving qualification and have passed the Escorting Other Vehicles training course will be utilised. Standard Police Motorcyclists are not permitted to escort Abnormal Loads (regardless as to them holding an advanced car driving qualification).

Advanced Vipex Motorcyclists can be used without having completed an Escorting Other Vehicles course, however once they have completed a Vipex refresher they will

no longer be permitted to conduct escorts until they have attended and passed an Escorting Other Vehicles course.

2.7.4 Only fully liveried Police vehicles will be used.

It is preferred that Motor vehicles are used instead of Motorcycles to secure entry onto motorways or dual carriageways, likewise they should not be used in a static position on motorways or dual carriageways.

Motorcycles should not be used on any escort conducted over a long distance on the motorway network unless necessary to reduce the risk to the convoy and no other option is available.

2.7.5 Additional support from a fully liveried car on motorway routes should be considered as part of any planned escort along a motorway.

2.7.6 Qualified RPU supervisors will ensure that one escort officer has been identified as Escort Commander for the movement.

2.7.7 The RPU supervisor overseeing the matter will ensure that the Escort Commander has completed an appropriate briefing document with all available details relating to the movement and any risk-assessments is available. The Escort Commander will disseminate this information to any other escorting officer. The Escort Commander will provide a full briefing with specific mention made of difficult or dangerous junctions etc. A debrief should also be held after each movement and any learning or development points recorded for future reference.

2.7.8 An escort should not commence until the vehicle and load have been examined by the Escort Commander or an officer from the Commercial Vehicle Unit, to ensure that it fully complies with the legislation, including lighting, marking and construction and use, if applicable. This will require the officers to be in possession of or have access to the content of the relevant paperwork.

2.7.9 The Escort Commander will establish the maximum speed permitted for the vehicle by the manufacturer in relation to its current load (plated on vehicle), and the maximum legal speed for each part of the route in relation to its current mass. From this information the Escort Commander will brief any other escorting officer with the expected speeds for each part of the journey.

2.7.10 The Escort Commander will, after liaison with the Abnormal Indivisible Load vehicle driver decide the appropriate method of negotiating junctions and other hazards and will brief any other escorting officer accordingly. Consideration should be given to stopping at regular intervals where safe and appropriate to do so, in order to relieve traffic congestion caused by the movement. The motorway hard shoulder must not be used unless in the event of a breakdown or emergency.

2.7.11 The tachograph records of the driver may be examined by a qualified officer, to ensure he/she has had the required rest periods prior to the movement and has sufficient remaining driving time to reach the next stopping point.

- 2.7.12 Photographs should be taken of the vehicle and its load including lighting and marking prior to the movement; to negate any allegations should the vehicle be involved in a collision on that or any subsequent route for that movement. Photographs should then be forwarded to the Commercial Vehicle Unit.
- 2.7.13 Officers will ensure they have a copy or detailed knowledge of the route prior to commencing movement. It is best practice for the escorting officer(s) to have carried out a 'recce' of the route if it is anticipated that difficulties will occur. It is however acknowledged that this may not always be possible and where this is the case then the use of web-based maps may be advisable as a minimum.
- 2.7.14 The Convoy Commander will ensure that a STORM / NSPIS log has been created in advance and the relevant Control Room(s) informed of the movement. The incident log must contain the proposed route, callsigns completing the movement and the operating channel being used.
- 2.7.15 Immediately before commencing the movement, the Escort Commander will contact the duty Roads Policing Unit Sergeant. If the move has significant impact to the road network. In any event, the convoy commander will endorse the log that the convoy is ready to be moved.

2.8 Actions of Control Rooms

- 2.8.1 There is no responsibility within this policy for the Control Room in relation to non-escorted loads. However, the Commercial Vehicle Unit/Escort Commander may identify certain loads that could pose a higher risk to the public due to the fact that they are exceptional in nature or due to other considerations. In these circumstances the Control Room may be required to assist with the management of such movements.
- 2.8.2 In above cases, the Commercial Vehicle Unit/Escort Commander will create a STORM log and will make the duty Roads Policing Unit Sergeant aware of the movement. Such moves will normally involve a police escort and as such have a dedicated Escort Commander. In these circumstances the Control Room will be updated in real time as to the location of the load and of any incidents en-route.
- 2.8.3 The Control Room will manage any matters within their current remit. The Matrix Roads Policing Unit Sergeant informed, and an Escort Commander must be appointed.

2.9 Enforcement

- 2.9.1 The Matrix Roads Policing and the Commercial Vehicle Unit will proactively enforce legislation relating to Abnormal Indivisible Loads.
- 2.9.2 Abnormal Indivisible Load movements must only be stopped in appropriate locations where it is safe to do so. For movements that are abnormal due to width, or if the occupants of the Abnormal Indivisible Load vehicle are unable to open the vehicle doors safely, designated Abnormal Indivisible Load stopping points should be used.

- 2.9.3 Vehicles that are abnormal due to weight must not be stopped or allowed to remain stationary on over-bridges.
- 2.9.4 The designated Abnormal Indivisible Load stopping points in Merseyside are the M6 motorway (north and south carriageways) at the junction of Rob Lane (hard shoulder at the widest point of the road, half a mile south of Junction 23), Burtonwood Services at Junction 8 of the M62 motorway. The over-bridge at Junction 8 of the M62 motorway is 45HV rated requiring any vehicle exceeding 180,000 kgs to be risk-assessed by the Highways Agency before crossing. Switch Island, DVSA site. Providing that no obstruction is created and causes any obstruction to the operation of the site.
- 2.9.5 Abnormal Indivisible Load vehicles are to be police-escorted to an appropriate site if any of the following conditions are met:
- a) Police have not received notification of movement
 - b) Notification of movement is invalid due to inaccuracies
 - c) Abnormal Indivisible Load vehicle or load is incorrectly marked or lit
 - d) Abnormal Indivisible Load vehicle does not have the required attendant
 - e) Abnormal Indivisible Load vehicle does not have the escort vehicle as required by Merseyside Police
 - f) Driver is currently committing a 'driving hours' offence under tachograph regulations or will have committed an offence before reaching next stopping point
 - g) Driver is currently committing an 'insufficient rest' offence under tachograph regulations
 - h) Any construction and use offences not exempt by STGO 2003 are evident
- 2.9.6 The duty Roads Policing Unit Sergeant can make an exception to the vehicle being escorted to an appropriate site if following a dynamic risk-assessment it is believed to pose less risk to the safety of police officers and the public to allow the load to travel to another destination.
- 2.9.7 Abnormal Indivisible Load vehicles may be immobilised. The only permitted method of vehicle immobilisation is that of vehicle immobilisation cable, used by the Commercial Vehicle Unit and qualified/authorised roads policing officers.
- 2.9.8 In the event of an Abnormal Indivisible Load vehicle being escorted to an appropriate site at the direction of police, the duty Roads Policing Unit Sergeant will be consulted before further action is taken.

2.10 Load Movement Times

- 2.10.1 Merseyside Police do not permit the movement of abnormal loads during the following peak traffic periods:
- 0730 hours to 0930 hours
 - 1600 hours to 1900 hours

2.10.2 Merseyside Police permit Abnormal Indivisible Load movements during the hours of darkness on the motorway network providing the vehicle and load display the correct lighting and markings. In all other cases the movement of Abnormal Indivisible Loads during the hours of darkness is not permitted.

2.10.3 Exception to the above restrictions can only be made upon application to the duty officer from the Commercial Vehicle Unit.

2.11 General Dispensation

2.11.1 The Commercial Vehicle Unit may issue a dispensation to move Abnormal Indivisible Loads with dimensions up to 3.5m wide and up to 44,000kgs, without prior notification for a period of 12 months.

2.11.2 A dispensation will only be issued to ESDAL registered hauliers. A dispensation must be provided in the following format:

- A Specified route, using either motorways or 'A' roads only within the Merseyside area.

2.11.3 The purpose of a dispensation is to allow hauliers to dispense with giving the required two clear days' notice for movements that have been identified as being low risk.

2.11.4 All requests for dispensations must be made by e-mail to the Commercial Vehicle Unit. Requests sent by any other method or addressed to any other recipient are not acceptable to Merseyside Police.

2.11.5 Sub-contractors cannot use another hauler's dispensation; they must apply for their own.

2.11.6 When a vehicle is being driven in accordance with a dispensation, drivers must carry a copy of the dispensation and produce it to a police officer upon request.

2.11.7 The haulier must continue to give the required notifications for any movement falling outside the terms of the dispensation.

2.11.8 Commercial Vehicle Unit will register all dispensations with ESDAL.

2.11.9 A dispensation can be revoked if it is not being used for the specified purpose, or if the haulier fails to comply with the regulations.

[Back to Contents](#)

3. Other Part 2 Vehicles and Part 2 Vehicle combinations

- 3.1. There are additional legal requirements for mobile cranes, engineering plant and road recovery vehicles, as specified in STGO 2003, in respect of their maximum gross weight, axle weight, wheel weight, dimensions and speed.
- 3.2. Aside from any differences specified in STGO 2003, mobile cranes, engineering plant and road recovery vehicles are to be treated as Abnormal Indivisible Loads.

4. Part 3 Vehicles

- 4.1. Part 3 vehicles are subject to different requirements in respect of dimensions and notifications, as specified in STGO 2003
- 4.2. If applicable, the operator is to notify each Force through whose area they are proposing to travel, giving 1 full day notice. This does not include Saturdays, Sundays or Bank Holidays.
- 4.3. The notification method will be email to the Commercial Vehicle Unit. Notifications sent by any other method or addressed to any other recipient are not acceptable to Merseyside Police.
- 4.4. All action with regard to escorts and enforcement will be treated as Abnormal Indivisible Loads.

4.5 Agricultural Dispensation

- 4.5.1 Commercial Vehicle Unit may issue an Agricultural Dispensation to move Part 3 vehicles with dimensions up to 4.1m wide without prior notification.
- 4.5.2 An Agricultural Dispensation will only be valid for the use of vehicles within a 25km radius of the operating base, and only for the Merseyside Police area of responsibility.
- 4.5.3 An attendant must accompany all vehicles exceeding 3.5m wide.
- 4.5.4 Agricultural Dispensations will not be registered on ESDAL.
- 4.5.5 Agricultural Dispensations are issued on a 12-month basis.
- 4.5.6 A Dispensation can be revoked if it is not being used for the specified purpose, or if the operator fails to comply with the regulations.
- 4.5.7 Sub-contractors cannot use another operator's Agricultural Dispensation; they must apply for their own.
- 4.5.8 The operator must continue to give the required notifications for any movement falling outside the terms of the Agricultural Dispensation.

- 4.5.9 All requests for dispensations must be made by Email to the Commercial Vehicle Unit. Requests sent by any other method or addressed to any other recipient are not acceptable to Merseyside Police.

[Back to Contents](#)

5. Part 4 Vehicles

5.1 Vehicles Carrying Loads of Exceptional Width

- 5.1.1 Loads exceeding 4.3m in width are subject to speed restrictions as specified in STGO 2003.
- 5.1.2 Loads exceeding 5.0m in width require a VR1 from the Department for Transport, authorising the movement, but not the route, day or date. Once the VR1 has been issued the haulier can then use the normal notification procedure, quoting the VR1 reference.
- 5.1.3 Loads exceeding 6.1m in width or 30m rigid length (27.4m rigid length if less than 12,000 kgs) or 150,000 kgs gross weight require a Special Order from the Secretary of State. A Special Order ensures that the route is negotiable and may lay down certain conditions. It does not, however, replace the notification procedure.

5.2 Local Excavation Vehicles

- 5.2.1 The requirements with regard to widths (3.0m, 3.5m, 5.0m) and police notifications (2 days) are as Abnormal Indivisible Loads.
- 5.2.2 The notification method will be via Esdal. Notifications sent by any other method or addressed to any other recipient are not acceptable to Merseyside Police.
- 5.2.3 All action with regard to escorts and enforcement will be treated as Abnormal Indivisible Loads.

5.3 Vehicles for Tests, Trials or Non-UK Use, Etc.

- 5.3.1 If the length of the vehicle or vehicle combination specified in this part of STGO 2003 exceeds that permitted by construction and use regulations, or the width exceeds 3.0m, police notifications (2 days) are as Abnormal Indivisible Loads.
- 5.3.2 The notification method will be by email to the Commercial Vehicle Unit Notifications sent by any other method, or addressed to any other recipient are not acceptable to Merseyside Police.
- 5.3.3 All action with regard to escorts and enforcement will be treated as Abnormal Indivisible Loads.

5.4 Track-laying Vehicles

- 5.4.1 There is no specific requirement to notify the police of the movement of a track-laying vehicle.

5.5 Straddle Carriers

- 5.5.1 If the overall length, together with any forward or rearward projection of the load exceeds 9.2m, the operator is to notify each force through whose area they are proposing to travel, giving 1 full day notice. This does not include Saturday Sundays or Bank Holidays.
- 5.5.2 The notification method will be by Email addressed to the Commercial Vehicle Unit. Notifications sent by any other method or addressed to any other recipient are not acceptable to Merseyside Police.
- 5.5.3 All action with regard to escorts and enforcement will be treated as Abnormal Indivisible Loads.

[Back to Contents](#)

6. Part 5 Vehicles

- 6.1. There is no specific requirement to notify the police of the movement of a Part 5 vehicle.

7. Ambulances

7.1 Context

- 7.1.1 Requests to provide an emergency ambulance escort predominantly fall into the following two main categories:

- a) To transfer a seriously injured patient from the scene of an incident to an Accident and Emergency Hospital for treatment.
- b) To transfer a patient from one hospital to another in an emergency.

- 7.1.2 By assisting the Ambulance Service, the Force is carrying out one of its primary roles i.e. 'protection of life and property'. Our involvement is therefore, considered justified and a proportionate response to the scale and nature of the incidents involving such escorts.

7.2 Requests from the Regional Health Authority at the Scene of an Incident to Transfer a Seriously Injured Person to Hospital for Emergency Treatment.

- 7.2.1 An escort should only be provided when a qualified medical practitioner or a regional ambulance service paramedic makes a request to the senior police officer at the scene, on the basis that the injured person's condition is such that:

- a) There is an urgent need to transfer the patient to the hospital as soon as possible for emergency treatment.

OR

- b) It is vital that the journey to hospital is a slow, uninterrupted and smooth one.

AND

The senior police officer at the scene is of the opinion that: -

- 1) An escort will result in either a reduction in the journey time or make the slow journey smoother and safer.
- 2) The additional police resources required to undertake the escort safely (may take more than one resource) would still leave sufficient police resources to protect the scene and investigate the incident.

AND

The ambulance crew have sought and received the approval of their Duty Control Room Manager.

7.2.2 If the above criteria are not met, then the escort should be refused.

7.2.3 Permission to provide such an escort rests with a supervisory officer at the scene. If there is no supervisor at scene then permission must be sought from either the duty Roads Policing Unit Sergeant, or Matrix RPU Inspector. If they are unavailable for immediate contact, then permission should be sought from the supervisor in the Control Room or the Force Incident Manager.

7.2.4 All requests, actions and decisions must be recorded on STORM.

7.3 Requests from the Regional Health Authorities to Transfer Patients between Hospitals by Emergency Ambulance

7.3.1 The only requests that should be considered are those made by the Duty Control Room Manager at any Regional Ambulance Service Headquarters, direct to the Police Control Room.

7.3.2 Key considerations are:

- a) The medical condition as related by medical staff.
- b) The time of day/night.
- c) Knowledge of road conditions between the two hospitals, i.e. road works.
- d) The distance between the hospitals.
- e) Time delay factors in arranging such escorts i.e. will it be sometime before a police escort can be provided and the ambulance is at the hospital waiting to move off.

7.3.3 Requests will mainly be for the following:

- a) Where a seriously injured patient needs to arrive at a hospital as soon as possible, and it is known that delays are likely due to traffic/road conditions, such as road works or sheer volume of slow-moving traffic.
- b) Where a seriously injured patient requires a slow smooth and uninterrupted passage to a hospital.
- c) Where urgent medical supplies/transplants, organs/blood are required at a hospital.

- d) Piloting of an ambulance on an emergency call where the driver does not know the location of the hospital or is passing through the Merseyside area and is unfamiliar with the road network.

- 7.3.4 The decision to provide a police escort, rests with the relevant duty Roads Policing Unit Sergeant, RPU Bronze, FIM or control room supervisor and should be subject to sufficient police resources being available to undertake the escort.
- 7.3.5 Unless the police escort will be of benefit by, reducing the journey time or making a slow journey smoother/safer, it should be refused.
- 7.3.6 Details of the request and decision must be recorded on the STORM log.
- 7.3.7 This escort must only be completed by officers who have completed an Escorting Other Vehicles course and be in suitable vehicles for the type of escort being undertaken. See [2.7.3](#) for further clarification.

7.4 Other Requests

- 7.4.1 The above covers requests made by recognised Regional Ambulance Services. It does not apply to private ambulances services or private organisations transporting human organs for transplant. These organisations are not regulated, and the quality of the drivers and vehicles cannot be guaranteed. Unless the duty Roads Policing Unit Sergeant, RPU Bronze or the Force Incident Manager are completely satisfied that it is safe to escort any vehicle belonging to such organisations, a police escort should not be provided.
- 7.4.2 Not every eventuality can be predicted and there may be unforeseen special circumstances for a request. On such occasions only the Force Incident Manager will have the discretion, having considered all the facts, to grant or refuse permission for a police escort to be provided. Consultation must also be made with the duty Roads Policing Unit Sergeant the duty Roads Policing Unit Sergeant or RPU Bronze to fully understand the Escort being requested to make an informed decision.

7.5 Officers & Vehicles

- 7.5.1 Only those officers from Matrix Roads Policing who are advanced drivers and driving appropriately liveried (marked) police vehicles should undertake an escort. Standard Police Motorcyclist are not permitted to escort any Ambulances or participate in the movement of 'emergency Ambulances' (regardless as to them being an advanced car driver). Advanced Motorcyclists can be used in an Ambulance Escorts whilst riding appropriately liveried (marked) police motorcycles. Any officers conducting this escort must be suitably qualified and hold an 'Escorting Other Vehicles' qualification or an equivalent qualification through a Vipex course. STORM/Incident log is to be updated via the FCC.
- 7.5.2 The Duty Matrix Roads Policing Sergeant will allocate the appropriate resources. If the duty RPU Sergeant is not qualified in 'Escorting other vehicles', they must seek advice from an appropriately trained officer and allocate resources accordingly. Any police

vehicle travelling in front of an Ambulance is classed as an escort and the officers must be suitably qualified, in a suitable vehicle.

- 7.5.3 Matrix Roads Policing officers, who provide an escort must, where possible prior to commencing the escort, fully establish the type of escort required (i.e. a fast- or slow-moving journey), to save any misunderstanding.
- 7.5.4 If the escort intends to use either the Kingsway or Queensway Tunnels the Tunnel Police Control Room must be informed immediately and kept updated in relation to progress towards the tunnel. If Escorting Officers intend to escort through the tunnel the Tunnel Police should be informed.
- 7.5.5 Slow moving ambulances using the motorway, in Merseyside, there must be sufficient resources allocated, and a rear marker must be utilised to warn other road users and prevent any unnecessary movement of the vehicle being escorted. An escort on the motorway will fall under the command and control of the radio room with geographical responsibility.
- 7.5.6 It is accepted that at certain peak traffic times on any of the roads in Merseyside, traffic volumes and congestion may be such that no benefit will be gained by providing an escort, and having two emergency vehicles in a convoy can present its own dangers. In these circumstances the request should be refused. Advice should be sought from the proposed Escorting Officer and an entry made on STORM recording the consultation.
- 7.5.7 All officers undertaking escorts must be constantly aware that the safety of themselves, the ambulance crew and patient and other road users must not be compromised. Motorcycle radios to be able to transmit at a volume that can be heard while the rider has earplugs in and over traffic and siren noise. Police radio to only be used on full volume when wearing ear plugs, a clear and concise test call is to be made prior to commencing the escort.
- 7.5.8 Only officers who have completed the 'Escorting Other Vehicles' course or hold a current Vipex qualification may provide an escort. Once officers who only hold a 'Vipex' qualification complete a Vipex refresher course, they will no longer be able to perform escort duties until they have completed the 'Escorting Other Vehicles' course. The only exception to this is when performing Vipex duties. Other officers throughout the force should not provide emergency ambulance escorts. Officers will not be sufficiently trained, and vehicles will not meet the required standard with regard to livery and performance.

7.6 Motorcycles Escorting on Motorways

- 7.6.1 Police Control Room staff and the duty Roads Policing Unit Sergeant should be aware that the use of motorcyclists escorting emergency ambulances is a benefit in a built-up area and should be the first resource to be considered. Due cognisance of weather conditions should be taken before utilising motorcycle resources.

- 7.6.2 Motorcycles should not be used on any escort conducted over a long distance on the motorway network unless necessary to reduce the risk to the convoy and no other option is available.
- 7.6.3 The use of motorways for short distances will be subject to a dynamic risk assessment by the supervisor / officer.
- 7.6.4 Additional support from a fully liveried car on motorway routes should be considered as part of any planned escort along a motorway.

[Back to Contents](#)

8. Funerals

8.1 Context

- 8.1.1 The Force will not routinely provide escorts for funeral processions, but each request should be considered on its own merits.
- 8.1.2 BCU Commanders have overall responsibility for policing funerals within their Areas. Any requests for assistance from Matrix Roads Policing should be made directly to the Chief Inspector, Matrix Force Operations Department. Only suitably qualified officers may provide an escort in this instance (See 2.7) Vipex riders may be preferred in this instance depending on the Police escort required.
- 8.1.3 No private cost charges should be levied for Police assistance at funerals. This approach is designed to avoid police presence being viewed as a status symbol by certain elements of the community. In the event of a charge being levied, the following disclaimer must be provided to the requester prior to the agreement being made to escort: **"Neither the Merseyside Police or the Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner shall be liable to [insert name of recipient] (the recipient) in respect of any loss, damages, costs or expenses or any other loss whatsoever or howsoever incurred and whether directly or consequently as a result of the Merseyside Police escorting the recipient 's vehicle or vehicles on or about [insert date(s)]".** A copy signed by the requester should be kept on file for future reference.
- 8.1.4 In the case of funerals involving members of the Armed Forces who have died in combat, or police officers / staff who have died in service, these funerals can be provided with a police escort which will be authorised by the Head of Force Operations (military) or ACC People Services for a police funeral. These escorts will be full-accompanied corteges.
- 8.1.5 There may be other special cases e.g. a high-profile religious leader or Head of State where a request for a ceremonial escort is made. These are not expected to be a regular occurrence, and each case should be considered on its own merits. Care needs to be taken not to set precedents for future events and all should be considered and authorised by the Head of Force Operations or their representative in the department.
- 8.1.6 In principle the police should not provide such escorts but must remain flexible and take into account all the prevailing circumstances when making a final decision.

8.2 Considerations

8.2.1 When deciding how to respond to a forthcoming funeral procession, the following should be considered.

a) The size of the cortege

- Is there a physical need to keep it together?
- Would disruption be minimised by keeping it together?
- Are there any cultural/religious issues for keeping it together?

b) The expected number of mourners along the route.

- Is there likely to be disruption to traffic?
- Is there a possibility of disorder/violence/ protest?
- Are there any cultural/religious issues that may affect the mourners?
- Community, Local, or National Intelligence on issues surrounding the event.
- The needs and expectations of the local community.

8.3 The Funeral Procession

8.3.1 In some cases, the procession may involve a long circuitous route. Apart from consultation and advice, the Force should not routinely intervene in the planning.

8.3.2 Following a successful request for assistance to the Chief Inspector Matrix Force Operations, police motorcyclists should offer discreet support at junctions along the route to ensure the safety of the public and help the flow of traffic. They should not provide an escort to the motorcade.

8.3.3 The practical deployment of the motorcycles on the relevant day is the responsibility of their own supervisors based upon the operational plan agreed with the BCU Commander.

8.3.4 Resourcing of Funerals and any associated escort/ request to escort will be subject to consideration by the nominated BCU Lead.

8.3.5 For the purpose of escorting a funeral cortege all Police motorcycle outriders should be Escorting other vehicle/VIPEX trained.

8.3.6 In relation to the requirement for Police motorcyclists to wear hi-vis outer jackets there is an exception to the lead (pilot) motorcyclist if a solo or three lead motorcyclists (if arrowhead formation) when performing funeral services. All other 'working' outriders must wear hi-vis outer jackets.

8.4 Summary Overview

8.4.1 Following information about a forthcoming funeral procession, the BCU Lead should take into account:

- a) Their risk assessment of the event (see paragraph 8.2).
- b) The available tactics to address possible disorder situations.
- c) Availability of Matrix Roads Policing to assist with the free flow of traffic.
- d) Availability of Matrix Disruption for assistance with crowd control.
- e) Advice on cultural and religious issues
- f) Local and national intelligence sources via ISB

[Back to Contents](#)

9. VIP/Royal Visits

- 9.1. Only officers who are advanced riders and have completed a VIPEX Motorcycle Escort Course are to conduct VIP/Royal Visits. The nominated Commander will policy the choice of tactic, staff, and vehicles. Each operation or request will be considered by the nominated Commander, at the planning stages as to what value a police escort will add or what objective will be achieved by the provision of an escort.
- 9.2. The 'Marked Rear Car' is a liveried police vehicle which follows immediately behind the escort and is responsible for protecting the rear and maintaining a sterile area behind where appropriate. It will carry out the appropriate tactical option along with the protection vehicles in response to an attack or compromise. The rear vehicle may prevent other road users from overtaking or infiltrating the convoy where necessary. The working bikes will usually depart the feature in front of the marked rear car, which provides additional protection for the rider. The driver of the rear marker must have successfully completed a Protection Drivers Course. Vehicle types often used for this role are large SUVs which have significant road presence and the ability to block or ram another vehicle or barricade if necessary.
- 9.3. 'The Marked Rear Car' provides a dedicated and extensive communications platform
 - A clear end marker of the convoy for the working bikes
 - An immediate replacement vehicle in the event of breakdown
 - A blocker to protect the escort from overtaking vehicles
 - A resource facility to deal with any incident that may arise on route, e.g. a collision requiring immediate police response
 - Escort Commander.
- 9.4. In the event of an attack on the convoy unarmed Officers will retreat from scene and deploy to protecting other travelling members of the public or retire to a rendezvous point to reconstruct escort.
- 9.5. Escorting motorcycle outriders will familiarise themselves with the routes and venues. The routes and venues will be checked prior to escort to identify any potential hazards. Riders will be familiar with alternative routes and venues.
- 9.6. [Ab Load Check Sheet](#) to be completed.

10. Category A Prisoner Escorts

- 10.1. Current guidance via the College of Policing states that motorcycles should not be used for a Cat A Escort and should only be conducted by firearms trained staff who have received Cat A Escort training.

11. Other Escorts

- 11.1. Several other scenarios present themselves in relation to the provision of escorts for protected principals or high-risk individuals, high value transfers, sensitive property etc. If the escort requires the deployment of firearms officers, then any decision around tactics, staff, and vehicles will be made by the nominated Firearms Tactical Commander.
- 11.2. Any other requests for Escorts that do not fall into the above categories, must be submitted via the Merseyside Police website to the relevant department within Matrix Force Operations. A decision will be made by the SLT, taking direction from a suitably trained Escorting other vehicles or Vipex trained officer as to whether the requested escort falls within the matrix and stipulations documented within this policy. If an escort is granted an escort commander, trained in escorting other vehicles or Vipex will decide on tactics, staff, and vehicles.

12. Police vehicle requirements

- 12.1. Officers completing an Escort must use the following vehicles.

A fully liveried advanced vehicle with appropriate lighting for use on fast roads. The vehicles should also be equipped with an operational matrix board. This is essential for vehicles that are used as a rear marker. The rear marker should be familiar with the operating of the matrix board and use the appropriate messages. DO NOT PASS – KEEP BACK (preferred) or DO NOT PASS. Several other messages may also be required along the route.

A fully liveried motorcycle, fitted with appropriate lighting.

Unmarked cars or unmarked motorcycles **must not** be used in any part of an Escort.

[Back to Contents](#)