



Department
for Transport

From the Parliamentary
Under Secretary of State
Katherine Fletcher MP

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Miss Georgina Nolan
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Web site: www.gov.uk/dft

10 October 2022

Dear Miss Nolan,

Thank you for your report into the circumstances surrounding the tragic death of Stanley Hardy in July 2019. I would like to express my sincerest condolences to Mr Hardy's family and friends.

This letter details the Department's response as required by regulation 29 of the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013. The Department has carefully considered the report, and the potential actions that it could undertake to ensure that the tragic circumstances described are not repeated.

Safe braking, including in an emergency, is integral to the skills and understanding required of all drivers, not least bus and coach drivers. Your report notes that "emergency braking procedures do not form part of the required training for new bus and coach drivers." I have set out below the ways in which a bus or coach driver's emergency braking skills are currently assured or promoted.

The Category D (bus and coach) driving test includes a requirement for the candidate to "*brake accurately to stop where directed, if need be by performing an emergency stop*". In practice, the emergency stop is not conducted as part of the test; this is because technological developments such as brake assist aids will be activated in such situations, and there is therefore little value to testing the skill. This does not mean, however, that the knowledge of how and when to safely perform emergency braking is not promoted, or not taught by reputable trainers.

The DVSA has published The National Standard for driving buses and coaches which can be found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/377669/national-standard-for-driving-buses-and-coaches.pdf

This is used by individual drivers, learners and trainers and sets out the skills, knowledge and understanding of what is needed to be a safe bus driver. It states (p.16) that a driver must be able to *“use the accelerator and brakes correctly to regulate speed and bring the vehicle to a stop safely, taking passengers’ comfort and safety into consideration”*, and also, crucially, to *“stop the vehicle safely and under control in an emergency”*.

Advice is also available on the Safe Driving for Life website at:

www.safedrivingforlife.info/advice/bus-driving/

In addition, most professional bus drivers are required to hold a Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) card which is maintained by undertaking 35 hours approved periodic training every 5 years. Drivers have the flexibility to choose the training that is most suitable for their personal development and the needs of their employer.

Questions in the category D theory test and CPC case studies cover the range of emergency braking, normal braking and braking with consideration of passenger safety. The multiple-choice questions in the theory test are based on 3 books:

- The Highway Code: www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code
- Know your traffic signs:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/know-your-traffic-signs
- The Official DVSA Guide to Driving Buses and Coaches:
www.tsoshop.co.uk/product/9780115537479/Transport/Driver-And-Vehicle-Standards-Agency/Bus-Lorry-And-Specialist-Vehicle-Drivers/The-Official-DVSA-Guide-to-Driving-Buses-and-Coaches-Paperback/

I have attached a copy of the latter guide with this response. These publications help drivers to know and understand how their brakes will perform in an emergency, especially on the benefits of Antilocking Brakes. They also provide insight into the importance of sound observations and scanning techniques to help the driver avoid the need to take emergency action.

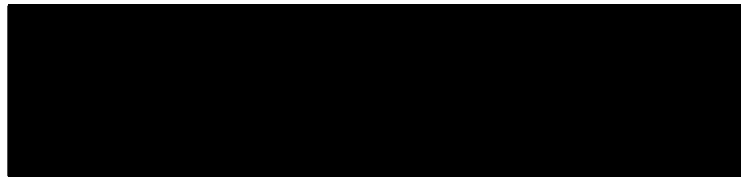
I would also note that the technique required to stop a vehicle in an emergency is no different to what is taught and tested as part of gaining a category B car licence; it is a transferrable skill, and any applicant for a category D licence must already hold a full category B licence.

You are correct that there is, in a strict reading of the terms, no “required training” for a bus or coach driver (that is, there is no legally mandated training course). I am however satisfied that there is an appropriate framework in place to promote and support safe braking skills; DVSA’s National Standards set out what is expected of bus and coach drivers and the official learning materials support the knowledge and skills that drivers are expected to understand and demonstrate.

We therefore do not propose to amend that framework, but given the importance of this matter, the DVSA will ensure that all learning materials where emergency braking skills are covered are reviewed at the next opportunity; and consider whether these sections could benefit from additional or stronger information.

It is also relevant to highlight that industry is developing a new professional register for bus and coach instructors. A longstanding register managed by JAAPT (the Joint Approvals Unit for Periodic Training) is to be replaced with a new register developed and operated by the National Register of LGV instructors (NRI). NRI plan to launch the new register later this year, and are talking to employers, training organisations and other stakeholders with the aim of creating a register which has wide support and endorsement across the sector. The work involves activity to define which instructors and assessors will be eligible to join, and develop an NRI examination as a fair and rigorous test of competence to instruct and assess.

Yours sincerely,



KATHERINE FLETCHER MP

MINISTER FOR ROADS AND REGIONS