



Freedom of Information Request FOI 19 62

Blue light drivers

Query and response:

Can you advise how many drivers you have that are permitted to use Blue Light warning devices fitted to a vehicle while the vehicle is in motion.

We currently have 470 emergency response drivers within Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue (DWFRS).

Can you advise at what level these Drivers are trained to? (E.g. is it an internal award or recognized by an external awarding body) What is the total contact time duration of this course.

We have two levels of emergency response driver training;

Emergency response driver acquisition, which is for new emergency response drivers. This is an internal award and conducted over five days on a 1:1 basis, with an independent assessment at the end of the course.

Emergency response driver refresher, which is a reassessment that we require all emergency response drivers to complete at least every three years. This is an internal award and conducted over one day on a 1:1 basis, with the final assessment being completed at the end of the day.

Are these courses compliant with Section 19 of the Road Safety Act 2006.

Yes, these courses are compliant with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) guidelines, which mirrors section 19 of the Road Safety Act 2006. All documentation issued by NFCC Driver Training Advisory Group (DTAG) is used on all response courses as we have to comply with the 69 modules contained in 8 elements for the course and 15 modules contained in 2 elements for the final drive at the end of the course.

Has there been an impact assessment on the introduction of Section 19 conducted in the last 3 years, if please provide the report.

No

If section 19 of the Road Safety Act 2006 was to be enacted what, if any, impact would it have on the service.

The future introduction of section 19 of the Road Safety Act 2006 will replace section 87 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Both pieces of legislation relate to exemptions from speed limits for certain vehicle purposes.

The changes will have two major effects; firstly it will potentially allow certain other vehicle purposes to be included in speed limit exemption regulations



and, secondly, it will prescribe a high-speed training course that drivers must undertake before they are permitted to exceed speed limits. The change in legislation will make it an offence to exceed speed limits for police, fire and rescue authority, ambulance or Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) purposes unless a vehicle's driver "has satisfactorily completed a course of training in the driving of vehicles at high-speed".

Section 19 has not been implemented to date, but its main elements have been embedded in NFCC Codes of Practice since September 2018. This relates to course duration in both the acquisition and reassessment course and the ratio of instructors to students. NFCC DTAG have distributed documentation which covers all modules of the high-speed training.

The implementation of Section 19 would have no impact on the driver training that is currently carried out within our Service. Under current practices;

- No staff member is permitted to drive any Service vehicle on emergency response, without successfully completing a high-speed driving course in that category of vehicle.
- We are compliant with course duration requirements.
- Our policy specifies a more frequent period of reassessment of three years, as opposed to the five years period required by section 19 and NFCC Codes of Practice.
- NFCC documentation is completed within the student portfolio for both the acquisition and reassessment courses and all modules within the different elements are complied with.

We currently employ three fully qualified driver trainers, which enables the Service to be recognised as a 'Training Body' within the NFCC DTAG. Instructors are peer assessed every twelve months and will be further assessed by NFCC Quality Assurance (QA) group within a five year period. This QA group will also assess the complete training package i.e. PowerPoint content and delivery, method of instruction and assessment of students. The instructor portfolio will also be scrutinised. The NFCC QA group will be made up of one permanent member of staff and a regional representative, the training will be assessed over a two day period.