

## Section 4: Staying Safe

This section looks at how to keep you and your passengers safe. It covers:

- Driver safety
- Drugs and alcohol
- [Minimising](#) conflict

### Driver safety

Angry or violent behaviour when at work is **never** acceptable. If a passenger in your vehicle becomes angry or violent you have a right to say that you will not accept that behaviour or if that fails, and it is safe to do so, to ask them to leave.

- You should never accept any bad behaviour towards you for any reason. Any offensive or violent behaviour towards you because of your race, faith, [sexual orientation](#), disability or gender identity is a [hate crime](#). If you experience or witness this type of behaviour TfL urges you to report it to the police so that it can be fully investigated and action taken against the offender. TfL advises drivers to report incidents as soon as possible to the police on 101, or 999 in an emergency.

### Protecting yourself

To provide a safe service for your passengers and to protect you as a driver you should consider:

- Discussing with your operator how they can help protect you from the possibility of aggressive or violent behaviour by a passenger
- Making sure your operator has given you booking details, such as the passenger's name, pick up point and destination.
- Checking the passenger's name and destination before they get in the vehicle – this will help make sure the passenger doesn't get into the wrong vehicle
- Being clear with the passenger about exactly where you are taking them, the route there, how long it is likely to take and what the fare will be before the journey starts
- Letting the operator know about any change to the booking. The operator must then tell the passenger what the new fare will be
- Carrying a [lone worker device](#) or asking your operator to provide you with one

All these steps should reduce the risk of any disagreements.

If a passenger is aggressive or violent, tell your operator immediately and give them the passenger's full name and address if you know it.

In an emergency, call the police on 999.

### **Warning signs of possible aggressive behaviour**

Some behaviour is a sign that someone is becoming more angry and upset. Below are signs that someone might become aggressive:

- Tapping their fingers
- Crossed arms
- Hands held tightly in fists
- Aggressive staring
- A raised voice
- An angry expression
- A sudden change in behaviour
- A change to the voice

Trust your own feelings and never try to ignore these signs.

If you feel concerned, act immediately. Remember, the earlier you notice a possible problem, the more choices you have to avoid it.

### **Drugs and alcohol**

When someone has taken drugs or has drunk alcohol, it can affect their ability to think or communicate clearly and their behaviour can be difficult to predict. In some cases they may become aggressive.

Your operator may have warned you about any possible problems when they gave you the booking (e.g. if the passenger sounds like they might be drunk). You can also judge the passenger's physical and mental condition when you pick them up. If you have concerns then, contact your operator immediately.

If the passenger cannot communicate clearly to confirm their destination, or is unable to walk because of drink or drugs, you have the right to refuse to take them in your vehicle. You can do this because you cannot be sure that they have given you the correct address or that they will be able to get out of your vehicle without help.

In this situation, if possible, insist that a friend comes with them in your vehicle, or ask to speak to a friend of the customer by telephone to confirm the destination.

If the passenger is [unconscious](#), extremely unwell or seems to be injured or in an emergency situation, and there is no-one else to help them, call the emergency services on 999 and stay with them until the services arrive. If the passenger is being aggressive or

violent, move somewhere that is safe for you but where you can still see the person until the emergency services arrive.

Think about your personal safety first and do not put yourself at risk.

### **Reducing the risk of violence in a difficult situation**

There are certain things you can do to reduce the chance of someone being violent or aggressive towards you. These include:

- Talking calmly and not raising your voice
- Listening to what someone is saying and not interrupting them
- Responding to the person's concerns
- Asking questions
- Explaining things to them, not arguing
- Having a pre-planned way to excuse yourself from a difficult situation, for example, you can't help them but perhaps someone at the address you are taking them to can sort the problem out for them
- Explaining procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour, for example, you will have to stop the vehicle and possibly call the police unless they stop being aggressive/violent

### **If you cannot reduce the risk of violence:**

Sometimes you are not able to calm a situation. If that is the case, you should:

- Get away from the aggressive person and exit the situation. If necessary, find somewhere safe to stop the vehicle, turn off the engine, take the keys then get out of the vehicle. If the passenger is planning to hurt you, they will probably get out of the vehicle too. This gives you the opportunity to quickly get back in and lock the doors then drive away if it is safe to do so
- Consider using a lone worker device to let someone know that you need help
- If an incident happens while you are away from your vehicle, get to your vehicle when possible and try to take time to calm down before you drive off

After an incident:

- Try to talk about what happened with a friend, a colleague or your operator
- Find out if any support is available (there is advice on health and wellbeing on the [TfL website](#))

- Report the incident to help avoid it happening in future

### **What to do if you are attacked or assaulted**

It is important for you to know where you can go for help if you are attacked or assaulted.

Find out in advance what your operator's reporting procedures are and who to go to after an incident like this.

If something happens to you, tell your operator and if necessary, also call the police and/or an ambulance depending on the incident.

It is important to record and report incidents that almost happened, as well as ones that actually did happen.

When you are recording an incident try and include the following details:

- When and where the incident happened
- Information about the attacker (name, address if known, description of clothing, age, gender)
- Whether the attacker was one of your passengers
- Brief description of the incident
- Anything that might have caused the incident
- Details of any [witnesses](#)
- Type of incident (verbal threat, physical [assault](#), written threat)
- Description of any injuries
- Account of the immediate action that was taken

### **CCTV cameras**

Installing CCTV cameras into a vehicle can reduce threats and violence against drivers. Signs in the vehicle informing passengers that CCTV is used may also help to prevent aggressive or violent behaviour. You can buy a camera or rent one. Although this is an extra cost, having a CCTV camera may reduce insurance premiums. This is because a video recording can be useful evidence when there is a dispute with a passenger.

The [Information Commissioner's CCTV Code of Practice](#) requires that [signage](#) must be displayed where CCTV is in operation. TfL requires all PHVs fitted with a CCTV system to display the sign shown below somewhere that is easy for passengers to see.

The vehicle owner can decide where to put this signage, but it must be displayed somewhere that it does not block the driver's view. It must also be as visible as possible to passengers as they enter the vehicle and while they are travelling in it.

**TfL CCTV sign for PHVs:**

