



**COVID-19 (Coronavirus)
Roadside Recovery Guidance
(30th March 2020)**

This guidance is in addition to that issued by AVRO on the 17th March in relation to COVID-19. All advice, including the below, is formed from Government advice, issued at that time and which is ever changing and must continue to be adhered to, including any alterations or amendments.

The guidance given within this document is in no way an instruction or recommendation to our members, and others, each individual organisation must continue to comply with Government advice and assess and adopt any guidance for their own individual business and operations.

Due to the spread of COVID-19 and the developing research surrounding its spread, we recommend that all incidents are, wherever possible, treated with the same precaution and procedure and treating all incidents as if they are all potential exposure to COVID-19.

1: PRIOR TO ATTENDING ANY INCIDENT

Prior to attending an incident contact must be made with the casualty vehicle driver and each of the following questions asked:

- 1) Have you or anyone travelling within your vehicle been diagnosed with COVID-19 (Coronavirus)?
- 2) Are you or anyone travelling within your vehicle currently self-isolating?
- 3) Do you or anyone travelling within your vehicle have any symptoms of COVID-19 (Coronavirus)?

Individual operators must assess if they are to attend any incident which involves a person who has answered yes to any of the above questions, if they do, they must always follow guidance and safety precautions.

In addition to the above, the first contact with the casualty vehicle driver should remind that person of the importance, regardless of answering yes or no to the above questions, of social distancing once a technician arrives at scene, regardless of whether this is for a roadside assistance or recovery.

The incident location must always be assessed in regards to the location being safe to attend, it may be that the incident is in a location that is not safe for a roadside attendance and a straight recovery may be the best option or a FEND vehicle may be required or assistance from the Police or Highways England.

At all times, keep the casualty vehicle driver up to date as well as the customer (if applicable) that you may be attending the incident on behalf of i.e. work provider.



2: ROADSIDE INCIDENTS (Incidents attended to attempt a repair, not being recovered)

The following guidance applies to those who are attending a roadside incident i.e. roadside technician

- 1) Contact the casualty vehicle driver, prior to arrival, if contact has not already been made with the casualty vehicle driver, ensure the questions within section 1 are asked. Remind the casualty vehicle driver of the need for social distancing which is for your safety and theirs. Always advise the casualty vehicle driver to follow your instructions.
- 2) If the casualty vehicle driver is away from their vehicle i.e. in their home, place of work etc arrange with them a point where they can leave the vehicle keys, so you do not have to come in contact with the casualty vehicle driver to obtain them. Advise the casualty vehicle driver that you will contact them by phone throughout and they will need to remain near their phone.
- 3) If the casualty vehicle driver is within the vehicle, ask them to remain within it, throughout the assistance, with the engine off and the windows closed. Always ask the casualty vehicle driver to follow your instructions.
- 4) On arrival at scene, carry out a dynamic risk assessment, ensure you are wearing relevant PPE, latex gloves, mask and eye protection as you see fit as a result of your dynamic risk assessment.
- 5) If applicable, collect the keys from the arranged point, ensuring gloves are worn, carry out the roadside repair, avoiding where possible direct contact with surfaces and avoiding internal areas of the vehicle wherever possible.
- 6) Once you have conducted the roadside assistance, first return the casualty vehicle keys to the agreed point, then remove and dispose of your gloves worn during the assistance.
- 7) Contact the casualty vehicle driver by phone and update on the situation i.e. vehicle repaired or necessary action required, advise the casualty vehicle driver that you would usually obtain a signature upon your roadside report or PDA but on this occasion you will not. Advise that the casualty vehicle keys have been returned to the agreed point.
- 8) Ensure you clean down all 'touch points' i.e. tools, equipment, PDA's etc and ensure you wash your hands with soap and water as per Government advice.

3: RECOVERY INCIDENTS: (Incidents attended where a casualty vehicle is to be recovered)

Prior to arrival, the casualty vehicle driver must be contacted and if it is intended that the casualty vehicle occupants are wishing to travel with the recovery vehicle every effort must be made for the casualty vehicle driver and if applicable passengers to make alternative arrangements for their own travel, the following suggestions should be put to the casualty vehicle driver:

- 1) Can the casualty vehicle driver and passengers make their own onward travel arrangements away from scene, this could be one of the following?
 - a. Can a family member or friend attend and collect the vehicle occupants(s)?
 - b. Can a work colleague (if key worker or essential service) attend and collect the vehicle occupants(s)?
 - c. Do they have access to use of another vehicle?
 - d. Can they arrange a Taxi?

In addition to the above, if applicable, the requesting work provider may be able to assist and should be contacted prior to arrival to assist in any onward travel arrangements.

PROCEDURE FOR RECOVERY OF CASUALTY VEHICLE INCLUDING OCCUPANTS WITH DIAGNOSIS OF COVID-19, SYMPTOMS OR IN SELF-ISOLATION DUE TO EXPOSURE:

Due to the risk of exposure, no persons who have been diagnosed with COVID-19, have symptoms or is self-isolating due to exposure to potential COVID-19 should be allowed to enter any roadside recovery vehicle.

For such persons, the emergency services must be contacted and advised of the situation with their instructions and guidance being followed.

If the casualty vehicle driver and passengers can be separated from the casualty vehicle, the vehicle should continue to be recovered as normal but with continuing with COVID-19 safety procedures. It may also be considered if the vehicle needs to be moved from its location or can it remain until a later point when risk has reduced.

It may be a case that the casualty vehicle is in a place of danger or a location which if it were to remain, it could cause an obstruction or danger to others, including any casualty vehicle occupants. In this situation it is recommended the following procedure is adopted:

- 1) Contact the casualty vehicle driver, prior to arrival, if contact has not already been made with the casualty vehicle driver, ensure the questions within section 1 are asked. Remind the casualty vehicle driver of the need for social distancing which is for your safety and theirs. Always advise the casualty vehicle driver to follow your instructions.
- 2) Always ask the casualty vehicle driver and passengers to remain within the vehicle, throughout the assistance, with the engine off and the windows closed. Always ask the casualty vehicle driver to follow your instructions. Advise you will communicate with them by phone throughout
- 3) On arrival at scene, carry out a dynamic risk assessment, ensure you are wearing relevant PPE, latex gloves, mask and eye protection as you see fit as a result of your dynamic risk assessment.
- 4) Consider if you require additional assistance, a FEND vehicle, Police or Highways England assistance or general assistance from the emergency services due to medical needs.
- 5) Advise the casualty vehicle driver that you intend to load the casualty vehicle and recover it with the casualty vehicle driver and passengers remaining in the vehicle, but first confirm that the casualty vehicle driver is comfortable with this and happy to proceed. If they are not you will need to contact the emergency services and seek assistance.

Recovery can be done by the following methods:

Soft Tow / Straight Bar: The casualty vehicle can be recovered from scene, to the nearest place of safety only by means of a using soft tow strap or straight bar. As occupants remain in the vehicle, you must not exceed 30 mph.

Flat Bed Recovery: The casualty vehicle can be recovered from scene, to the nearest place of safety only by means of using a flat bed recovery vehicle. As occupants remain in the vehicle, you must not exceed 30 mph.

Note: Vehicle occupants must not remain in any casualty vehicle if it is being suspended towed, they can only remain within a casualty vehicle if being recovered by one of the above methods

- 6) If the casualty vehicle driver is happy to proceed with the agreed recovery method, you must advise them to follow your express instructions, advise them:
 - a. Ensure the handbrake is applied and it must remain applied until you advise otherwise, equally you will advise when the handbrake is to be applied
 - b. Ensure the vehicle, if applicable, is in neutral and not in park
 - c. Ensure the engine is turned off and remains turned off throughout unless otherwise instructed.
 - d. Ensure the ignition is in position to allow the steering to be free i.e. steering lock off
 - e. Ensure the casualty vehicle driver and passengers to not touch or operate any other controls, including radio etc throughout the recovery process.
 - f. Ensure that, when instructed, the casualty vehicle hazard lights and any other lights are turned off when instructed to do so.
 - g. Ensure that the casualty vehicle driver is aware how to draw your attention during the recovery process, this can be done via phone or using the casualty vehicle horn.
 - h. Ensure the casualty vehicle driver DOES NOT use the vehicles own power to assist in recovery of the vehicle i.e. they drive the vehicle onto the recovery vehicle, it must be winched on and winched off.**
- 7) Load the casualty vehicle in the normal way, adopting where necessary to account for vehicle occupants remaining in the vehicle and aware of the need to give clear instructions to the vehicle occupants. A secondary restraint must always be used during winching on and winching off the casualty vehicle.
- 8) Agree with the casualty vehicle driver a means of communication throughout, the best option is via mobile phone with the recovery technician using Bluetooth within their vehicle throughout and in constant contact with the casualty vehicle driver. Agree the place of safety to where the casualty vehicle is to be recovered to and advise the casualty vehicle driver you will not be proceeding above 30 mph and your warning beacons will remain on during this time.
- 9) Upon arrival at the place of safety, unload the casualty vehicle, but first again advise the casualty vehicle driver and passengers to remain in the vehicle at all times and follow your express instructions at all times, including remaining in the vehicle once the casualty vehicle is unloaded from the recovery vehicle.
- 10) Once the casualty vehicle is at the place of safety it may be a case that the casualty vehicle and its occupants remain at this location pending attendance by others or the emergency services, depending on what arrangements can be made. Social distancing must always continue to be maintained with casualty vehicle occupants remaining in their vehicle.

If a casualty vehicle is loaded on to a recovery vehicle and the occupants remain within the vehicle, the casualty vehicle MUST BE secured by all four wheels using wheel straps without fail. If any side of the recovery vehicle is deemed unsafe then assistance from a FEND vehicle, Police or Highways must be requested to ensure that a safe working area can be created to allow all four wheels to be secured.

The SURVIVE Group best practice guidance V4/18

http://www.survivegroup.org/download_files/SURVIVE%20Best%20Practice%20Guidelines%20v418.pdf

recommends the above practice in relation to vehicle occupants which are disabled and unable to readily remove themselves from their vehicle and or access a recovery vehicle, or any other vehicle. It does not specifically cover those who are not disabled but subject to a contagious virus. It is felt that this best practice guidance is the best available in light that there is no other guidance available.

If it is decided by an operator to adopt the above practice, the operator is very strongly recommended to consult with their insurance provider at the earliest opportunity and prior to attendance of any incident to ensure that individual insurance providers are happy with the adopted procedure and will continue to offer cover in respect of it. In addition, your customer or work provider must be informed and kept up to date with the adoption of the process.

It must also be noted that Government Guidance: Running a vehicle recovery business: driver and safety rules (updated 2018) states:

9.9 Carrying passengers in towed vehicles

Passengers can be carried in a broken-down vehicle if the speed does not exceed 30 mph

Considering the above, it is not recommended that vehicle occupants are carried within the casualty vehicle, any further than the nearest place of safety as to proceed at 30 mph could result in causing an obstruction upon the road.

It must also be noted that clear guidance is lacking in this respect, and with regards to the effects the COVID-19 situation has on guidance already in place, (which has not been modified by Government.) With that it is strongly recommended that operators do not deviate away from best practice guidance.

PROCEDURE FOR CARRYING VEHICLE OCCUPANTS WITHIN A ROADSIDE RECOVERY VEHICLE:

In the case of a casualty vehicle, which is carrying occupants who have not been diagnosed, have symptoms or self-isolating, it could be argued that the above procedure may also be applied to these situations, however, again with the absence of clear guidance from Government it is not recommended that the above procedure is adopted as to carry passengers without any diagnosis, symptoms or self-isolation could be seen as deviating from best practice. Ultimately the law and regulation still apply in this critical situation until such time it is amended, changed and advised.

As stated, each operator will need to decide if they are to continue to carry passengers within their roadside recovery vehicles. If it is decided that an operator will continue to carry passengers, then safety precautions must be put in place to protect not only the recovery technician but others using the recovery vehicle and the passengers being carried.

At present there is not specific Government guidance issued in respect of carrying passengers within a roadside recovery vehicle, however we are lobbying Government to issue such advice. Taking account of current Government advice, the following should be taken into consideration if passengers are carried within a roadside recovery vehicle.

Note: No persons should be carried within any vehicle if they have been diagnosed with COVID-19, have symptoms or are self-isolating due to exposure to COVID-19.

In absence of full Government advice, the following should be considered:

- 1) A dynamic risk assessment must be carried out prior to any passengers entering the roadside recovery vehicle.
- 2) Consideration should be given to limiting the number of passengers permitted to be carried within a roadside recovery vehicle considering the need for social distancing.
- 3) Wherever possible, passengers should sit in the rear seating area of the roadside recovery vehicle. This is obviously only possible in a crew cab roadside recovery vehicle; therefore, consideration

should also be given to only permitting passengers to be carried within a roadside recovery vehicle with a crew cab.

- 4) Consideration should be given to any modification that may be possible to form a physical barrier or protection between the front area and rear area of a crew cab recovery vehicle, ensuring any modification remains within regulation and permissible.
- 5) Keep the vehicle clean and clean all high-touch surfaces (e.g. handbrake, steering wheel, door handles, access points, assistance handles and seat belts etc) after each use.
- 6) Follow published advice on frequent hand hygiene and not touching the face; the virus is transmitted by respiratory droplets that will contaminate surfaces and can be picked up on the hands, and then transferred to the mouth, nose or eyes by touching.
- 7) Keep a box of tissues in the roadside recovery vehicle and ask passengers to use them to contain coughs and sneezes. Provide small rubbish bags for the passengers to dispose of these into and dispose of any used bags after each recovery, washing hands after disposal.
- 8) Keep a bottle of water and soap, along with paper towels, or a bottle of hand sanitiser, in the vehicle, to allow for frequent hand hygiene even if other facilities are not available.
- 9) If doing so, carrying passengers in any roadside recovery vehicle must be kept to an absolute minimum to reduce the risk of contamination.
- 10) Stringent cleaning procedures must be put in place for all roadside recovery vehicles ensuring vehicles are fully clean and disinfected on a regular basis.

It is important that individual operators make operation assessments and decisions based on Government advice and guidance throughout these challenging times. It is vital that operators protect the health and safety of themselves and their employees throughout.

Further Government guidance and related advice can be found at the following links:

UK Government Guidance (COVID-19)

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

ROI Government Guidance (COVID-19)

<https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/c36c85-covid-19-coronavirus/>

UK Government Advice

Running a Roadside Recovery Company

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-for-recovery-operations>

SURVIVE Best Practice V4/18

http://www.survivegroup.org/download_files/SURVIVE%20Best%20Practice%20Guidelines%20v418.pdf

Government Advice (UK)

<https://www.gov.uk/>

Government Advice (ROI)

<https://www.gov.ie/en/>