

CRASH COURSE

**What to do after
a collision or fire**

Buckinghamshire
Fire & Rescue Service



Accidents, crashes, collisions

Whatever we call them, they can happen anywhere, any time. Keep this booklet in your vehicle as it will help you deal with one should you be involved in a collision or come across one.

If a collision happens on a road or in a public place, to comply with the law the drivers must stop and exchange names, addresses, registration numbers and vehicle owner details. Information about the insurance must also be given if someone has been injured. If details are not exchanged, you must report the collision to police within 24 hours at a police station.

If no-one is hurt . . .

The police will not routinely go to collisions which do not involve injury. They will only attend non-injury collisions where there is a clear, specified purpose for doing so.

If the police do not attend, there will be no further details recorded about your incident and no investigation. Use the centre pages of this booklet to record the relevant details and then contact your insurer to progress a claim.

If someone is hurt, stay calm and read on . . .



Your step-by-step checklist

- Warn other road users by turning your hazard lights on.
- Do not move the vehicles or the casualties unless there is more danger or a fire.
- If anyone is hurt, call the police, fire and ambulance on 999.
- If bystanders are present, get them make the call. Otherwise, check on casualties first.
- Protect the casualty from cold with a coat or blanket.
- Are the casualties conscious? Carry out ABC (Airways, Breathing, Circulation) checks (see panel on right).
- Do not cross a carriageway. Wear reflective clothing if possible. Do not smoke in cases of chemical or petrol spillage.
- Park well clear of the accident site. Look out for dangers such as hazardous chemical symbols, damaged power lines or spilt fuel.
- Disable the vehicles involved by turning off engines and applying handbrakes.

ABC checks on casualties

Airways: Tilting the casualty's head back and lifting the chin will open their airway.

Breathing: Ensure all casualties are breathing and have the ability to carry on breathing. If a casualty is not breathing, apply artificial ventilation by blowing your expelled air into the casualty's lungs.

Circulation: If the heart has stopped (no pulse), apply chest compressions to force blood through the heart and around the body. Combine with artificial ventilation so that the blood is oxygenated (30 compressions to two breaths ratio). This will keep the body receptive to defibrillation.

- When you dial 999, we will need to know the location, type and seriousness of the incident, as much as you can tell us about the casualties – number, sex and how old you think they are – and anything you know about their condition, plus details of any hazards and whether any casualties are trapped.

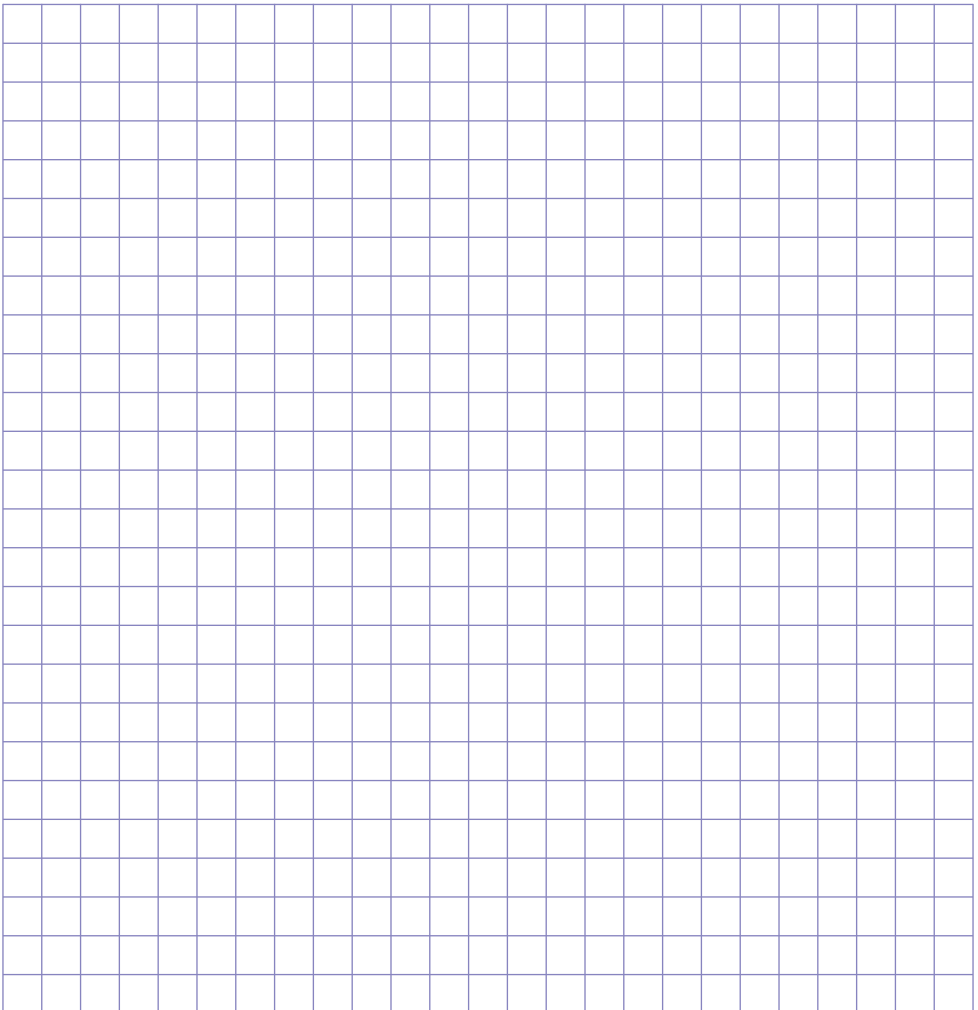
Make a note of the details: 1

Take a photo if you can, and draw a map in the grid below.

Location

Date and time

Weather conditions



Make a note of the details: 2

Record your own details in tear-off section on back page.

Vehicle 1 colour, make, model and registration number

.....

Driver 1 name

Driver 1 address

.....

Driver 1 telephone number

Driver 1 insurance address

.....

Driver 1 insurance telephone number

Vehicle 2 colour, make, model and registration number

.....

Driver 2 name

Driver 2 address

.....

Driver 2 insurance address

.....

Driver 2 insurance telephone number

Make a note of the details: 3

Witness 1 name

Witness 1 address

Witness 1 telephone number

Witness 2 name

Witness 2 address

Witness 2 telephone number

Notes

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If you are just passing . . .

DO stop at the scene until you have spoken to a police officer if you are a witness to collision. They may not take a statement until a later date but you may be able to provide vital information.

DO make a note of a vehicle's registration number if you see a vehicle making off from the scene of a collision when it should have stopped. The make, model and colour of the vehicle as well as a description of the driver should also be noted.

DO always place yourself and other people well clear of the carriageway whenever practical.

DON'T attempt to move any casualties (unless a life is in immediate danger if not moved).

DON'T attempt to move any of the vehicles involved, or to move or clean up any debris.

DON'T be the cause of a further collision by allowing the incident to distract you. If you are not involved and are not required to help, please pass by with as little fuss as possible.

DON'T offer alcohol to any of the people involved, particularly the drivers of the vehicles.



Emergency service vehicles

Delaying the emergency services from attending an emergency could cost lives. Most delays are caused by inappropriate driver reaction when they encounter these vehicles with their blue lights and sirens on . . . in other words drivers tend to panic! What can you do to help?

Look and listen

Looking and listening form part of the everyday task of driving. However, they are not necessarily the same as seeing and hearing. If you think you may have seen a blue flashing light or heard

a siren, consider lowering the window and turning down the radio in order to enhance the looking and listening opportunity.

A word about motorways

Motorists should remain in their vehicles in their carriageway lane and be aware that emergency service vehicles may need to pass them. Make sure you leave enough space so you have room for manoeuvring when the emergency services pass. Do not use the hard shoulder as you may be obstructing emergency service vehicles.





Car fires – what to do

A car fire is a rare event. This guidance will ensure that you and your passengers can get out safely should it happen to you

It will also help you to understand why vehicles catch fire, the common causes and how you should react when they occur so that you can safely leave your vehicle.

Vehicle fires can occur:

- When you are driving
- When you have stopped
- When the engine is off
- Hours after you last drove the vehicle

Some causes

The list of causes may seem alarming, but in reality fires in vehicles are extremely rare when you compare them to the number of vehicles on our roads

Human error: Placing a blanket over your engine on a cold night may seem a good idea at the time but not when smoke is pouring from your engine bay on the hard shoulder because you forgot to remove it.

Smoking: A cigarette blowing back into the rear of the car, or even a cigarette from someone else's car.

Poorly maintained vehicle: Do your weekly checks. Look for signs of wear, leaks (especially fuel) and a build-up of combustible materials such as leaves which can accumulate in the engine bay

Alteration of vehicle: This is very popular but it does bring the risk of fire. If you are changing the bodywork or increasing electrical usage, this should be checked by a professional.

Location

A fire can occur anywhere, although the engine bay is accountable for most fires in vehicles

Engine bay: Smoke will appear from under the bonnet and possibly from under the dashboard.

The engine may cut out or continue to run.

The vehicle's wiring: Smoke may appear from anywhere as it involves the vehicle's electrics.

The engine may cut out or continue to run

Trailer or load area: Discarded cigarettes, recently-used plant equipment or electrical fault are all possible causes.

This type of fire can take hold before the driver is even aware.

Ensure plant is cooled down before storing or at least keep it away from other combustible materials.

Outside the vehicle: Fire may start in wheel areas or under the vehicle. Again, you may not even be aware you have a fire.

Be prepared

Practise what to do if your vehicle catches fire.

- Getting out safely
- Getting your passengers out on the near side of the vehicle
- Getting children out of restraint seats
- Getting away from the vehicle

Recommended action

So let's look at the worst-case scenario – your vehicle catches fire while you are driving

Do not panic – you have plenty of time to evacuate the vehicle. The sight of smoke will alert you to pull over.

If you are on a motorway, pull over on to the hard shoulder. If you are on a normal road, indicate and pull up next to the kerb.

Stop the engine and apply the handbrake. Get yourself and your passengers out of the car

Move well away from the vehicle, because of the danger of projectiles and toxic gases, and well away from moving traffic.

Call 999 and provide the following information:

■ The location of your vehicle.

■ If you are travelling on a motorway, the two junctions you are parked between and the direction in which you were travelling.

■ The type of fuel your vehicle uses.

■ Any load you are carrying.

■ Whether the fire involves any other vehicle or building.

■ Do not return to the vehicle, and do not attempt to fight the fire

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www.bucksfire.gov.uk**

If you are involved in a crash

Record your own details and hand to the other driver(s).

Colour, make, model and registration number of your vehicle

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Your name

Your address

.....

Your insurance address

.....

Your insurance telephone number

Colour, make, model and registration number of your vehicle

.....

Your name

Your address

.....

Your insurance address

.....

Your insurance telephone number