



## Coach Travel – General Risk Assessment and Customer Responsibilities

At Barker Bus Ltd., we take the safety of our passengers, drivers and other road users seriously.

We carry out our own risk assessments and safety procedures covering the operation of our vehicles, our drivers and the provision of coach transport. However, **the organisation booking the coach remains responsible for assessing and managing the risks associated with its passengers, activities and destination.**

This is particularly important for **schools, colleges, youth groups, clubs, charities and other organisations travelling with children or vulnerable passengers.**

### **Your Responsibility as the Group Organiser**

The group organiser, school, employer or other organisation arranging the journey should carry out an appropriate risk assessment for the **whole trip**, not simply the coach journey.

Depending on the nature of the trip, this should consider:

- How passengers will safely assemble and board the coach.
- Supervision of passengers before, during and after the journey.
- Safe behaviour while travelling.
- Boarding and leaving the coach at stops and destinations.
- The suitability and safety of locations where passengers will be picked up or dropped off.
- Rest stops and toilet stops.
- The activities being undertaken at the destination.
- Risks associated with the destination and surrounding area.
- The needs of passengers with disabilities, medical conditions or other additional requirements.
- Safeguarding requirements, particularly when transporting children or vulnerable passengers.
- Appropriate staffing and supervision ratios.
- Emergency arrangements and methods of contacting responsible adults.

- Procedures for dealing with a missing passenger or other incident.
- Weather, road conditions and any other circumstances that may increase risk.

For school and educational visits, the school or other responsible organisation should follow its own **educational visit, safeguarding and risk-assessment procedures**, including any requirements of its governing body, local authority or other relevant organisation.

### **What Barker Bus Covers**

Barker Bus carries out its own safety checks and risk management arrangements in relation to the provision of the transport service.

These include appropriate controls relating to:

#### **Drivers**

Our drivers are required to:

- Hold the appropriate licence and qualifications for the vehicle being driven.
- Comply with applicable road traffic legislation and drivers' hours requirements.
- Carry out the required vehicle safety and defect checks.
- Report defects, accidents and incidents through the appropriate company procedures.
- Drive in a safe and responsible manner.
- Comply with our policies relating to mobile phones and other distractions.
- Ensure that the vehicle is operated within its legal and safe limits.

#### **Vehicles**

Our vehicles are subject to appropriate inspection, maintenance and safety arrangements.

We ensure that vehicles used for passenger transport are maintained and operated in accordance with applicable legal and company requirements, including appropriate daily checks, planned maintenance and statutory testing.

Passengers should not be transported in a vehicle where a safety-critical defect has been identified.

#### **Passenger Safety**

Passengers are expected to:

- Remain seated where appropriate while the vehicle is moving.

- Wear a seat belt where one is provided.
- Follow reasonable instructions given by the driver and group leader.
- Keep aisles, emergency exits and access routes clear.
- Store luggage safely and only in locations designated for luggage.
- Behave in a way that does not distract the driver or put other passengers at risk.

The **group organiser remains responsible for supervising their passengers**, including maintaining appropriate supervision throughout the journey.

### **Boarding and Leaving the Coach**

The group organiser should assess the safety of the locations used for boarding and leaving the coach.

Where possible, passengers should board or leave the vehicle from a safe, suitable location away from moving traffic.

Passengers should take care when using steps and should notify the driver or group leader if they require assistance.

The group organiser should consider how passengers will be supervised and accounted for when boarding, leaving or re-joining the coach.

For school and youth groups, the responsible adults accompanying the group should establish suitable procedures for **head counts/registers and confirming that all passengers are present before the coach departs**.

### **Breakdowns and Emergencies**

In the event of a breakdown or other emergency, the driver will assess the immediate circumstances and take appropriate action to protect passengers and other road users.

The response will depend on factors including:

- The location of the vehicle.
- Traffic conditions.
- Whether the vehicle is in a live traffic lane, refuge, hard shoulder or other safe location.
- The nature of the breakdown or incident.
- Whether there is an immediate danger requiring evacuation.

Passengers should follow the instructions of the driver and group leader.

**Passengers should not leave a vehicle during a breakdown unless instructed to do so or it is necessary because of an immediate danger.**

Where passengers are required to leave the vehicle, the group organiser remains responsible for supervising and accounting for their group, while the driver manages the vehicle and liaises with the appropriate assistance or emergency services.

### **Motorway and High-Speed Road Incidents**

A breakdown on a motorway or other high-speed road can present significant additional risks.

The driver will assess the situation and, where practicable, move the vehicle to a place of relative safety.

If passengers need to leave the vehicle, the driver will provide instructions appropriate to the circumstances. Passengers should remain together where possible and move to a safe location identified by the driver or emergency services.

The group organiser should have arrangements in place for supervising and accounting for all passengers during an emergency.

### **Rest Stops**

The group organiser should consider the suitability of any planned rest stop, including:

- Traffic movements and pedestrian areas.
- Safe routes between the coach and facilities.
- Supervision of children and vulnerable passengers.
- Appropriate meeting points.
- Procedures for ensuring everyone returns to the coach.
- Head counts/registers before departure.

The driver and group organiser should agree a clear departure time and meeting arrangements.

### **Luggage**

Passengers should only bring luggage that can be safely accommodated.

Large or heavy luggage should normally be carried in the vehicle's luggage compartment where one is provided.

Luggage must not:

- Block aisles or emergency exits.

- Prevent access to safety equipment.
- Be placed where it could become a hazard to passengers.
- Exceed the vehicle's permitted loading capacity.

The driver may require luggage to be moved or stored differently where necessary for safety.

### **Mobile Phones and Driver Distraction**

Drivers must comply with the law and company procedures concerning mobile phones and other distractions.

Passengers and group leaders should avoid behaviour that could distract the driver.

If communication with the driver is necessary, it should be done in a manner that does not compromise safe driving.

### **Passenger Behaviour**

The group organiser is responsible for ensuring that passengers understand the standards of behaviour expected during the journey.

Particular attention should be given to behaviour that could:

- Distract the driver.
- Prevent the driver from concentrating on the road.
- Block aisles or emergency exits.
- Result in passengers standing or moving around unnecessarily.
- Cause injury to other passengers.
- Damage the vehicle.

For school and youth groups, appropriate adult supervision should be maintained throughout the journey.

### **Additional Needs and Accessibility**

The group organiser should tell Barker Bus about any relevant passenger requirements when making the booking.

This may include:

- Wheelchair or mobility requirements.
- Passengers requiring additional assistance.
- Medical or other relevant needs.

- Additional luggage or equipment.
- Behavioural or supervision requirements.

This allows us to establish whether the vehicle and service being provided are suitable and whether any additional arrangements are required.

### **Overseas Journeys**

For journeys outside the UK, the group organiser should include relevant overseas travel risks within its own assessment.

Barker Bus will consider the transport-related requirements applicable to the journey, including vehicle documentation, insurance, driver requirements and relevant local driving requirements.

The organiser should separately consider risks associated with the destination, accommodation, activities, passengers and any other non-transport aspects of the trip.

### **Important: Responsibility for Your Trip Risk Assessment**

**Booking a coach with Barker Bus does not replace the need for the customer or group organiser to carry out their own risk assessment.**

Our risk assessment covers the risks associated with **Barker Bus providing the transport service.**

The organisation arranging the trip is responsible for assessing the wider risks associated with **its passengers, supervision, activities, destinations and overall itinerary.**

For example, a school arranging a residential or educational visit should not rely solely on the coach operator's risk assessment. The school should incorporate the coach journey into its **own overall educational visit and safeguarding risk assessment**, alongside the risks associated with the destination and planned activities.

We will provide reasonable information about the vehicle, journey and transport arrangements to assist customers with their own assessment where required.

If you have specific safety, accessibility or operational requirements, please discuss these with us **before the journey** so that we can establish what arrangements can be made.