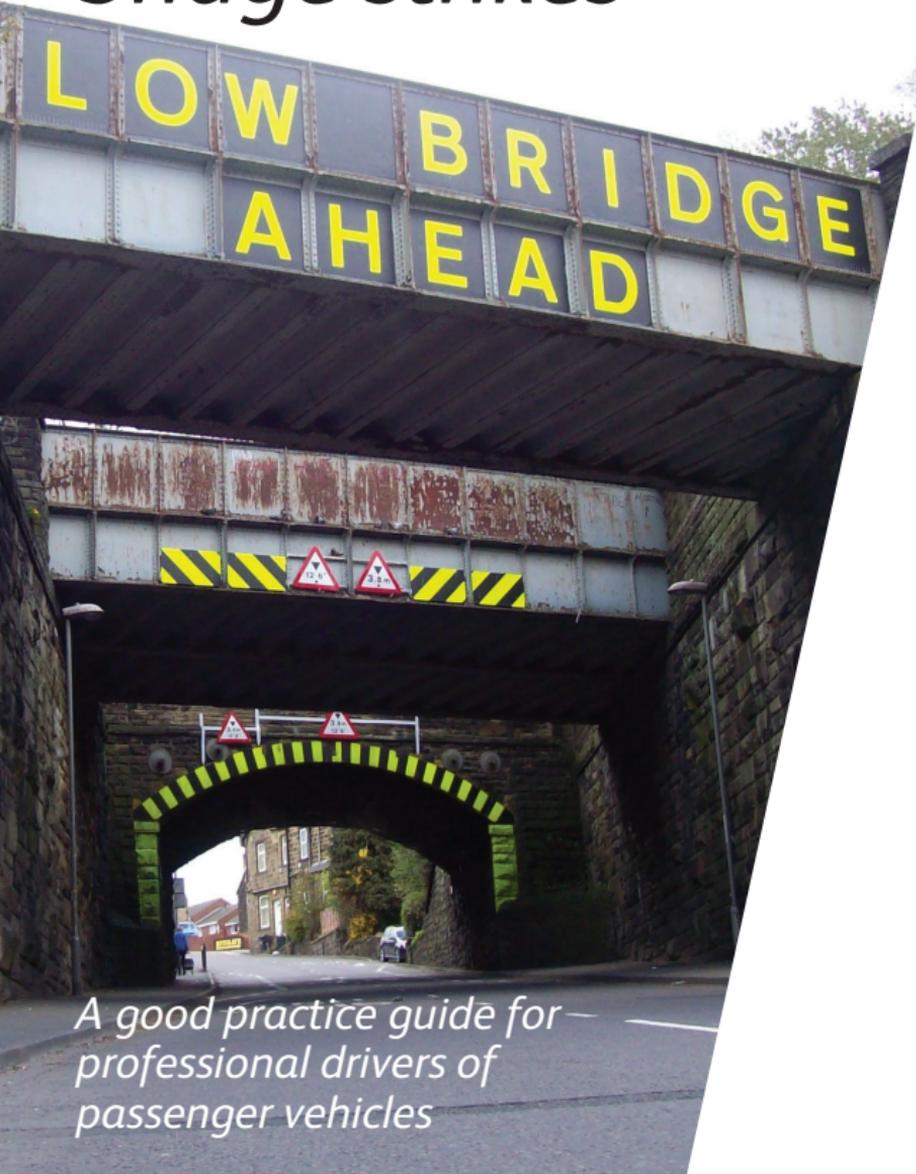


Prevention of bridge strikes



*A good practice guide for
professional drivers of
passenger vehicles*



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Introduction

This good practice guide is intended to give guidance to professional drivers of passenger vehicles so that bridge strikes can be prevented and to provide advice on the risks and consequences of bridge strikes.

What is a bridge strike?

- A bridge strike is an incident in which a vehicle collides with a bridge
- Most bridge strikes occur where roads pass under railway bridges



The roof of a double deck bus removed in a bridge strike

Prevention of bridge strikes

Your responsibilities are to:

- Know your vehicle height and width
- Know your route in and out of service
- Obey traffic signs

Before commencing a journey:

- You should always check that the height of the vehicle that you are to drive is displayed in the cab

This always applies:

- On a normal service route
- On a diversionary route
- On private hire including rail replacement
- When being recovered or on engineering test
- When out of service



Height sign in driving cab

When en route:

Be aware of the height of low bridges.

You commit an offence if the correct maximum height is not displayed in the cab.

Remember routes suitable for single deck vehicles may not be suitable for double deck vehicles.

Avoid short cuts to save time as this could lead you to a low bridge.

Stop and seek advice on an alternative route if and when you:

- Are diverted from your planned route
- Realise that your route is obstructed by a bridge lower than the height of your vehicle
- Are lost or become disorientated

Remember that it is an endorseable offence to use a hand held mobile phone or similar device whilst driving.

Traffic signs

You should be aware that traffic signs are provided at bridges to show the maximum permitted vehicle height when less than 16'-3" (4.95 metres):

- Red circles prohibit
- Red triangles warn



If a vehicle is higher than the dimension(s) shown on a circular traffic sign, you must stop and must not pass the sign. If you pass the sign you are likely to collide with the bridge and be prosecuted.

If the vehicle is higher than the dimension(s) shown on a triangular traffic sign at the bridge, you should not pass the sign.

At arch bridges, white lines on the road and 'goal posts' on the bridge may be provided to indicate the extent of the signed limit on vehicle height, normally over a 3 metre width. There may be an additional set of 'goal posts' showing lower limits towards the kerb.

At arch bridges ensure your vehicle passes between the goal posts.

Slow down as you approach the bridge and only move to the centre of the road when you are sure it is safe to do so. If necessary sound your horn or use dipped headlights to warn of your presence.



Warning chevrons and mandatory roundel signs showing the limit on vehicle height at a flat soffit bridge



White lines on the road and 'goal posts' on the arch indicating the extent of the signed vehicle height limit

On approaches to bridges with a vehicle height restriction, signs might be provided to give you advance warning of the restriction. This is to help you take an alternative route avoiding the low bridge.

You should be aware, however, that advance warning signs are not provided at all low bridges.



Advance warning of a prohibition ahead

What action should be taken if a bridge strike occurs?

At a railway bridge

Step 1: Report the bridge strike to the Rail Authority immediately so that trains may be stopped from crossing the bridge.

Telephone the number shown on the identification plate on the bridge.

Do not wait until you return to your depot before reporting the bridge strike.

Step 2: Decide the best course of action for your passengers, keep them informed and decide whether they need to evacuate the vehicle. If you evacuate the vehicle direct the passengers to a safe place.

Step 3: Contact the Police using the 999 system. Report the bridge strike to your emergency control or depot. For London Buses CentreComm will contact the Police.

Any road traffic collision that causes damage to a 3rd party must be reported. Each bridge strike causes damage to a bridge, and must therefore be reported.

You may need ambulance and fire services as well as the Police.

Step 4: Keep the public away and do not move your vehicle.

At any other bridge

Decide the best course for your passengers as step 2 above. Report the bridge strike to the Police using the 999 system and then your emergency control or depot. Keep the public away and do not move your vehicle.



Example identification plate at a Network Rail bridge

What are the consequences of a bridge strike?

Striking bridges is potentially dangerous and expensive.

On the railway

- A serious incident could result in a train being derailed with catastrophic loss of life
- Bridge strikes may seriously jeopardise the safety of the public travelling by train
- Every bridge strike causes delays and disruption
- Bridge strikes cause damage to railway bridges



Double deck bus without a roof under a bridge

On other road users

You could cause:

- The death or serious injury of another road user
- Serious disruption on the road network



Remains of the upper deck to a double deck bus

On you and your employer

You could:

- Be killed or seriously injured
- Kill or cause serious injury to your passengers
- Suffer serious economic loss – you could lose your job
- Be prosecuted for offences which can result in imprisonment or loss of your driver's licence
- Have to pay increased personal car insurance premiums

Your company may lose their operator's licence

Your company will be liable for the costs of:

- examining the bridge
- repairing bridge damage
- recovering your vehicle
- delays to train services.



Bus resting against the bridge abutment following a bridge strike at a skew bridge

Know your vehicle height
Know and keep to your route
Obey traffic signs
Always be aware of the height
of low bridges
When diverted from your route,
if unsure, STOP and check

*Overall travelling
height conversion chart*



Feet / inches	Metres	Feet / inches	Metres
16'-3"	4.95	13'-3"	4.04
16'-0"	4.88	13'-0"	3.96
15'-9"	4.80	12'-9"	3.89
15'-6"	4.72	12'-6"	3.81
15'-3"	4.65	12'-3"	3.73
15'-0"	4.57	12'-0"	3.66
14'-9"	4.50	11'-9"	3.58
14'-6"	4.42	11'-6"	3.51
14'-3"	4.35	11'-3"	3.43
14'-0"	4.27	11'-0"	3.35
13'-9"	4.19	10'-0"	3.05
13'-6"	4.11	9'-0"	2.75