



Home Office

# **Criminal Investigation: using and maintaining official vehicles**

## Criminal investigation: using and maintaining official vehicles

### About this guidance

[Definition of an official journey](#)  
[Compulsory vehicle maintenance checks](#)  
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This guidance tells Immigration Enforcement staff about using official vehicles and maintaining them.

This guidance is based on the Home Office guidelines but has been expanded to give you more specific guidance for criminal and financial investigation staff who sometimes need to take an official vehicle home more frequently than others.

It contains:

- an overview of the guidance on vehicle maintenance checks you must make
  - including links to the Home Office policy and guidance
- details of the authorised and unauthorised use of an official vehicle
- details of when you may be authorised to take an official vehicle home, and who must authorise this
- notes on how you must record details in vehicle log books

For more information on the Home Office policy, see related link: Fleet and driver policy.

Changes to this guidance – This page tells you what has changed since previous versions of this guidance.

Contact – This page tells you who to contact for help with a specific case if your manager can't answer your question.

Information owner – This page tells you who the information owners are and tells you how the guidance can be updated.

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**Related links**

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## Criminal investigation: using and maintaining official vehicles

### Using and maintaining official vehicles: Changes to this guidance

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This page lists changes to the 'using and maintaining official vehicles' guidance with the most recent at the top.

Date of the change	Details of the change
07 July 2015	Change request: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• update the fleet services email</li><li>• minor housekeeping changes</li></ul>
18 August 2014	Change request: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Private use of official vehicles:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ new page added</li></ul></li><li>• Authority to take an official vehicle home:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ new bullet point added.</li></ul></li></ul>
10 July 2014	Change request: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Compulsory vehicle maintenance checks:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ New 'official sensitive' box before the sub-heading 'Using a fuel card'.</li></ul></li><li>• Using official vehicles to travel to training course or hotels:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ 'Official sensitive' box amended.</li></ul></li><li>• Minor housekeeping changes.</li></ul>
	For previous changes you will need to access the archived guidance. See related link: <a href="#">Using and maintaining official vehicles – archive</a> .

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## Criminal investigation: using and maintaining official vehicles

### Definition of an official journey

<p><a href="#">About this guidance</a> <a href="#">Compulsory vehicle maintenance checks</a> <a href="#">Authorised use of an official vehicle</a> <a href="#">Recording journeys in official vehicles</a></p>	<p>This page tells you the definition of an official journey and what the Home Office fleet and driver policy covers.</p> <p>The Home Office has a policy covering all staff who make an official journey.</p> <p>You make an official journey if you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• drive an official vehicle</li><li>• drive an official hire car or other hired vehicle</li><li>• use your own car for official business</li></ul> <p>For more information, see related link: Fleet and driver policy.</p> <p>You need to be aware of what the policy covers before you make any official journeys:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the various laws which enforce legal and safe driving</li><li>• Home Office recommended driving time limits for its staff.</li><li>• safety issues, such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ eyesight tests</li><li>○ planning journeys</li><li>○ correcting the driver's seating position</li></ul></li><li>• a full list of vehicle maintenance checks that you must do before driving the vehicle</li><li>• the list of weekly maintenance checks that you are required to do</li><li>• smoking in official cars, hire cars and personal cars used for official journeys (if passengers are in the car) is not allowed</li><li>• insurance, breakdown and accident advice and instructions</li><li>• line managers' checks of your driving licence</li><li>• the 'Permit to drive' form that you need to complete before you:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ can use official or hire vehicles</li></ul></li></ul>	<p><b>Related links</b></p> <p>Link to staff intranet removed</p>
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- use your own car on official journeys

## Criminal investigation: using and maintaining official vehicles

### Compulsory vehicle maintenance checks

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This page tells you the compulsory vehicle maintenance checks you must carry out before you drive an official vehicle, and the fuel card policy.

If you are going to use official vehicles, hire vehicles or your own vehicles for official journeys you must be aware of all the compulsory checks to carry out and when to do them.

You must read the policy manual to find out your responsibilities when using vehicles, and those of your manager. The manual stresses that an authority to drive official vehicles can be reconsidered or revoked at any time if you fail to meet your responsibilities.

As a manager it is your responsibility to make sure all your members of staff are aware of the checks and responsibilities.

For more information on the policy, see related link: Fleet and driver policy.

The policy manual tells you, as a driver:

- the daily driver checklist (vehicle functions checks) you have to carry out before driving any vehicle on official journeys
- the weekly checks that you must carry out before you use an official vehicle for the first time each week

For more information on these checklists, see related links:

- Fleet and driver policy form: weekly vehicle checklist
- Fleet and driver policy form: daily driver checklist

If you are a local transport manager, or team leader if this role does not exist, you must make sure that a copy of the daily and weekly checklists are put in a prominent place in the logbook pouch of every official vehicle.

#### Related links

Link to staff intranet removed

Official sensitive – do not disclose – start of section

The information in this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.

Official sensitive – do not disclose – end of section

**Using a fuel card**

Each official vehicle has a fuel card and you must only use it to purchase fuel, oil and a car wash for that specific vehicle. You must not use the fuel card to pay for fuel for any other vehicles such as a car hired for official business.

For more information on the fuel card policy, see related link.

## Criminal investigation: using and maintaining official vehicles

### Authorised use of an official vehicle

<p><a href="#">About this guidance</a> <a href="#">Definition of an official journey</a> <a href="#">Compulsory vehicle maintenance checks</a> <a href="#">Recording journeys in official vehicles</a></p>	<p>This section tells you about the authorised use of an official vehicle, deviating from your planned route and what unauthorised use can lead to.</p> <p>You must only use official vehicles to carry goods and/or passengers on authorised journeys as part of official business.</p> <p>You must always follow a route for your journey that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• is safe</li><li>• is the most direct and economical route possible</li><li>• is planned in advance</li></ul> <p>When you are travelling a long distance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• make sure that you can swap driving duties with a colleague</li><li>• if you are travelling alone on a long journey, you must take regular rest breaks during the journey</li></ul> <p><b>Deviating from your planned route</b></p> <p>You are not permitted during an approved business journey to deviate from any route, other than:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• for official business</li><li>• to take a break for the health and safety of the driver and passengers</li></ul> <p>However, it is recognised that some technically 'direct journeys' can actually take longer if the most direct route is through a city centre for example, so you are permitted to deviate from this route if you can show that your journey will save time or fuel costs.</p> <p>Deviations must be reasonable in these circumstances and if you are in any doubt you must</p>	<p><b>In this section</b></p> <p><a href="#">Using official vehicles to travel to training courses or hotels</a></p> <p><a href="#">Authority to take an official vehicle home</a></p> <p><a href="#">Official vehicles – taxable vehicles</a></p> <p><a href="#">Private use of official vehicles</a></p> <p><b>Related links</b></p> <p>Link to staff intranet removed</p> <p><b>External links</b></p> <p><a href="#">S143 (1) Road Traffic Act 1988</a></p>
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get it authorised by the senior investigation officer (SIO) or HMI.

For example, if you are returning to your office, having worked at another location, you may not take an unreasonable detour to stop off at a shop to buy lunch or refreshments.

But, if you are faced with a long journey back to your office it is important that you take regular breaks from driving, or stop to allow a colleague to take over the driving duties. You are allowed:

- a stop for these health and safety reasons
- a small deviation to find somewhere suitable to stop and take your rest

#### **Unauthorised use of an official vehicle**

If you use an official vehicle for any private purpose, including home to office journeys other than authorised ones, you may be guilty of an offence under section 143(1) of the Road Traffic Act 1988. You must be aware that:

- if you use an official vehicle for any unauthorised purpose you may be liable to:
  - disciplinary action
  - in some cases, prosecution
- you are not permitted to use an official vehicle to collect a colleague from their home, or take them home, unless:
  - there is a justified 'business reason' for this
  - the use of the vehicle for this purpose has been agreed in advance by an SIO or HMI

For more information, see related link: [Fleet and driver policy](#).

## Criminal investigation: using and maintaining official vehicles

### Official vehicles: private use of official vehicles

<p><a href="#">About this guidance</a> <a href="#">Definition of an official journey</a> <a href="#">Compulsory vehicle maintenance checks</a> <a href="#">Authorised use of an official vehicle</a> <a href="#">Recording journeys in official vehicles</a></p>	<p>This page tells criminal investigators in immigration enforcement criminal investigation teams about the private use of official vehicles.</p> <p>The use of fleet vehicles, with the exception of private user scheme (PUS) vehicles, for private purposes is expressly prohibited.</p> <p>As the Home Office insures its own fleet itself, under the exemption granted by the Road Traffic Act 1988, any private use of the vehicle is considered a criminal offence (driving whilst uninsured) which could result in a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• fixed penalty of £200 and 6 penalty points imposed by a police officer</li><li>• fine of up to £5,000 and 6 to 8 penalty points imposed by a police officer</li><li>• disqualification from driving for 12 months</li></ul> <p><b>Exceptions</b></p> <p>In exceptional circumstances home to place of duty and/or return travel may be authorised where it is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• part of a planned official journey (including picking up passengers)</li><li>• an early start, for example 06:00 to 06:30</li><li>• a late finish, for example 18:30 to 19:00</li></ul> <p>In these circumstances it may make it difficult or uneconomical for the driver or passenger to travel in to or from the workplace to collect or return a vehicle. If authority is granted by your line manager then you, as the driver, will be considered to be on duty and so will be covered by the Home Office insurance.</p> <p><b>Staff working away</b></p> <p>Where staff members are working away from their usual place of work the use of an official vehicle to travel from the temporary place of work to any place other than accommodation</p>	<p><b>In this section</b></p> <p><a href="#">Using official vehicles to travel to training courses or hotels</a></p> <p><a href="#">Authority to take an official vehicle home</a></p> <p><b>Related Links</b></p> <p>Link to staff intranet removed</p> <p><b>External links</b></p> <p><a href="#">HMRC guidance</a></p>
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and back will be in breach of this rule and staff will not be insured.

Any abuse of this rule will be reported to your line manager and internal disciplinary procedures followed.

HMRC guidance on what journeys may be considered private and taxable is available at the HMRC website. Tax liabilities due to private use of vehicles will need to be paid by local business units.

For more information see related links:

- HMRC guidance
- Fleet and driver policy

If your line manager authorises you to use a fleet vehicle in the circumstances described above they must make a written record of this decision in the vehicle log book for audit purposes. The decision must be justified and in line with fleet and driver policy guidance.

## Criminal investigation: using and maintaining official vehicles

### Using official vehicles to travel to training courses or hotels

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This page tells you when you can use an official vehicle to travel to a training course, or to a hotel.

For a definition of an official journey, see related link.

If you are due to travel to a training course, or to a hotel as part of your official work, you must consider the travel options open to you and discuss these with your line manager. You must consider the following options:

Form of travel	Advantages	Disadvantages
Using public transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• you can book train and air tickets online using the Redfern travel service - for more information, see related link: <a href="#">Travel</a></li> <li>• the cost of travelling by train or air can often be less than the cost of fuel and other costs when using an official or hired vehicle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• it is unlikely that you can take operational 'personal protective equipment' (such as heavy body armour) by train or air</li> <li>• unless your training course venue or hotel is close to the rail station or airport, you will have additional transport costs such as taxi fares</li> </ul>
Using an official vehicle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• this is probably the best and cheapest way of travelling if there is more than one person travelling together</li> <li>• you can transport 'personal protective equipment'</li> <li>• you can transport 'seized exhibits' if you are travelling as part of an operational visit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• if you are likely to be away from the office for several days, colleagues cannot use that official vehicle for their own business journeys</li> <li>• car parking charges at an hotel or near a training venue may be expensive</li> </ul>

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[Authority to take an official vehicle home](#)

[Official vehicles – taxable vehicles](#)

[Private use of official vehicles](#)

#### Related links

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• you can share the driving duties with other passengers</li> </ul>		
Using a hire vehicle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• this is likely to be the appropriate way of travelling to, and from, a training course which takes place over several days</li> <li>• you can hire vehicles online through the Enterprise car hire - for more information, see related link</li> <li>• hired vehicles are generally newer and can be more comfortable if you have a long journey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• you must pay for the fuel used and reclaim this through travel and expenses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ you cannot use an official vehicle fuel card for this</li> </ul> </li> <li>• vehicles are hired for a specific number of days and penalties can be charged if you return the vehicle after the 'end date', so it may be impractical</li> </ul>		
Using your personal vehicle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• this can be the most appropriate way to travel when the training course is closer to your home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• using a personal vehicle for travel as part of an operational visit is usually not allowed for security reasons</li> <li>• the mileage costs payable to you may be more than the costs of a different form of travel</li> </ul>		
<p>If you need to use an official vehicle to travel to another location to attend a training course or travelling to a hotel to stay overnight before a meeting or other business reason, you must obtain authority to do this from a senior investigation officer (SIO) or HMI before you start your journey.</p> <p><b>Unauthorised use of the official vehicle</b>  Most hotels used by the Home Office provide evening meals and refreshments for customers. You are not permitted to use an official vehicle to drive to an alternative</p>				

restaurant, either:

- on the way to the hotel (before checking in)
- later

If you cannot eat at the hotel booked for you or prefer to eat elsewhere, you must make alternative travel arrangements at your own cost, these personal incidental expenses are included in the night subsistence rate that you can reclaim.

The only permitted situation when you can use an official vehicle to purchase a meal on the way to a training course or to a hotel, is if:

- you are on a long journey
- you need a rest or meal break, in these circumstances you can:
  - stop at the nearest and safest place to do so
  - take a break and purchase a meal

Official sensitive – do not disclose – start of section

The information in this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.

Official sensitive – do not disclose – end of section

For more information, see related link: [Fleet and driver policy](#).

## Criminal investigation: using and maintaining official vehicles

### Authority to take an official vehicle home

<p><a href="#">About this guidance</a> <a href="#">Definition of an official journey</a> <a href="#">Compulsory vehicle maintenance checks</a> <a href="#">Authorised use of an official vehicle</a> <a href="#">Recording journeys in official vehicles</a></p>	<p>This page tells you about when you may be required to take an official vehicle home, and what authority you must have before you can do this.</p> <p>You can be authorised to take an official vehicle home, if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• your work includes being part of a 24 hour on-call system:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ you have to quickly respond to call-outs</li><li>○ make unplanned official journeys out of office hours</li></ul></li><li>• your line manager also considers this is the best option to meet the needs of the business this includes:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ access to a fleet vehicle (this will be an exception rather than the rule and will especially apply when colleagues can be collected on route)</li><li>○ public transport</li><li>○ private transport where the individual has the ability to claim mileage expenses</li></ul></li><li>• you are returning on an authorised 'business journey' following a long shift and would have to pass your home before arriving at your office: in these circumstances:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ a criminal and financial investigation (CFI) team senior investigation officer (SIO) or Her Majesty's inspectorate (HMI) equivalent may allow you to take the vehicle home</li><li>○ you must return it directly to your office the following day</li><li>○ you must always get this authority in advance</li></ul></li><li>• you have been authorised to use an official vehicle for an early start the following day - your SIO or HMI can authorise you to take the vehicle home the previous day so that you are ready to travel directly from home the following morning</li></ul> <p>To take an official vehicle home you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• always get advance permission, on every occasion, by an SIO or HMI, for more information for managers, see section 6.3 of the related link: Fleet and driver policy</li><li>• have sound business reasons:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ the SIO or HMI must make each decision on its own merits</li></ul></li></ul>	<p><b>In this section</b> <a href="#">Using official vehicles to travel to training courses or hotels</a></p> <p><a href="#">Official vehicles – taxable vehicles</a></p> <p><a href="#">Private use of official vehicles</a></p> <p><b>Related links</b> Link to staff intranet removed</p>
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- you will not be authorised to take a vehicle home simply because it is convenient to you
- for instance, if you return from a work location and either travel past or near your office in order to get to your home, or stop at your office to secure official property or seized exhibits, an SIO or HMI will not give permission for you to take the vehicle home after finishing your work

### **Using official vehicles for operational call outs**

You can ask your SIO or HMI for permission to take an official vehicle home if:

- you have on-call commitments for the specific day or days concerned
- your SIO or HMI feels that there is a business need for you to take an official vehicle home, for example, to allow you to respond quickly to any operational call-outs

If you take an official vehicle home and you weren't actually called out during the time it was at your home, then the journey from the office to your home and the return journey back to the office are taxable journeys.

For more information on taxable journeys and taxable vehicles, see related link: [Official vehicles – taxable vehicles](#).

### **Records that the SIO or HMI must keep**

If you are the SIO or HMI, you must:

- set up and maintain a simple record of occasions when you have given staff the authority to take an official vehicle home
- note all the verbal authorities you have given and then add them to the written record
- not authorise staff to take any vehicle home that is not a designated 'taxable vehicle'
- always authorise staff to take a vehicle home in advance:
  - journeys made without the correct authorisation at the time are not covered by Crown Indemnity
- follow the same principles of seeking authority from your own line manager when you need to take an official vehicle home yourself

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|--|--|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• keep all authority records for six years in line with HM Revenue &amp; Customs rules for keeping tax records</li></ul> |  |
|--|--|--|

For more information, see related link: [Fleet and driver policy](#).

## Criminal investigation: using and maintaining official vehicles

### Official vehicles: taxable vehicles

<p><a href="#">About this guidance</a> <a href="#">Definition of an official journey</a> <a href="#">Compulsory vehicle maintenance checks</a> <a href="#">Authorised use of an official vehicle</a> <a href="#">Recording journeys in official vehicles</a></p>	<p>This page tells you about taxable vehicles and why they must be the only cars that staff can be authorised to take home.</p> <p>An official vehicle can become taxable for a financial year if you take it home in case you are called out but don't actually use it. This means the department is obliged to pay the tax due as if the vehicle was a 'company car'. So, senior investigation officers (SIOs) or Her Majesty's inspectors (HMIs) must only allow you to take specific 'taxable vehicles' home. These are certain vehicles that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• have been designated as 'taxable vehicles' at the start of the year</li><li>• the Home Office will pay the tax on</li><li>• are not covered by the Home Office insurance policy - instead they are covered under the Crown indemnity (self insurance) scheme: this only provides adequate insurance cover for journeys where:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ you are specifically authorised by a SIO or HMI - you are not permitted to give a colleague, spouse or family member a lift anywhere</li><li>○ you use the most direct journey from the office to your home, and it must not include any detours - for example, you going shopping on the way home</li><li>○ you do not use any part of the journey in the official vehicle for personal or private purposes - this is not covered under the Crown indemnity and you, as the driver, are not insured</li><li>○ you park the official vehicle, wherever possible, on your driveway or in your garage - you must try to avoid parking official vehicles on the road or on communal land near your home</li></ul></li></ul>	<p><b>In this section</b> <a href="#">Using official vehicles to travel to training courses or hotels</a>  <a href="#">Authority to take an official vehicle home</a>  <a href="#">Private use of official vehicles</a></p>
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## Criminal investigation: using and maintaining official vehicles

### Recording journeys in official vehicles

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This page tells you how and when to record an official journey in the vehicle's log book.

Before you drive an official vehicle you must check the:

- final mileage for the previous journey has been entered in the log book
- recorded mileage corresponds with the vehicle's actual mileage

#### Official vehicle log books

Each official vehicle has a log book and the following must always be recorded for all journeys undertaken, the record must always be made by the person driving at the time.

For example, you and a colleague use an official vehicle to drive from the Bristol office to a London office and on your return journey you need to go to the Birmingham office. You and your colleague split the stages of the journey up to share the driving.

Below are the log book entries that both drivers must record.

Each of you must record the part of the journey that you were driving, and the record must include:

- the date
- the start time when you began driving
- the starting mileage when you began driving:
  - if this differs to the previous 'end mileage' you must find out the reason for this before you start your journey
- any vehicle maintenance checks you carried out
- note any damage to the vehicle before you start your journey or that occurred during the journey
- details of any fuel purchases
- confirmation that one of you has paid the London congestion charge

#### Related links

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|--|---|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the end time, mileage and location (in this example it would be Bristol, London or Birmingham)</li><li>• the reason for this journey, for example, visiting the Home Office London office</li><li>• details of who you have reported any noted vehicle damage</li></ul> <p>You must keep all vehicle log books for six years. The fleet and radio services team collect and keep used log books at the end of each financial year.</p> <p>For more information about recording details in the log books, see related link: <a href="#">Fleet and driver policy</a>.</p> |  |
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## Criminal investigation: using and maintaining official vehicles

### Using and maintaining official vehicles: Contact

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This page tells you who to contact if you need more help with a question about using and maintaining official vehicles.

If you have read this guidance and still need more help, you must first ask your line manager.

Official sensitive – do not disclose –start of section

The information in this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.

Official sensitive – do not disclose –end of section

Changes to this guidance can only be made by the Guidance, rules and forms team (GRaFT). If you think the policy content needs amending you must contact the criminal investigation operational guidance team, using the related link: criminal investigation operational guidance inbox, who will ask the GRaFT to update the guidance, if appropriate

The GRaFT will accept direct feedback on broken links, missing information or the format, style and navigability of this guidance. You can send these using the link: Email: Guidance – making changes

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## Criminal investigation: using and maintaining official vehicles

### Using and maintaining official vehicles: Information owner

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This page tells you about this version of the guidance for using and maintaining official vehicles and who owns it.

Version	6.0
Published for Home Office staff on	07 July 2015
Policy owner	Official – sensitive: information removed
Cleared by Director	Official – sensitive: information removed
Director's role	Official – sensitive: information removed
Clearance date	31 October 2012
This version approved for publication by	Official – sensitive: information removed
Approver's role	Official – sensitive: information removed
Approval date	30 June 2015

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