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Introduction - overview

1. What are BACT's aims and objectives for its existence as a Charity?
2. What exactly does BACT set out to provide, and what steps are taken to ensure that it does so in the most effective manner possible?
3. Who in the community are our clients that it serves?
4. What is its code of practice; is it legal and up to date?
5. What is the hierarchy of its personnel and how this is managed?
6. What are its regular procedures, such as meetings/AGM's?
7. What are its decision-making procedures to ensure the code of practice agreed to by the Board is maintained in good working order?

Section A - BACT BUS POLICIES

A1 - BUS PERMITS

A1.1 Section 22 Scheduled Service

Small Bus Permits are necessary permits for buses in registered services
East Sussex County Council has a Code of Conduct for these scheduled services
Where there are numerous requirements on us to comply
e.g. Yellow monthly operator returns.

Timetables must be adhered to within a 10 minute leniency.

ESCC and Traffic Commission must be informed as to failure to meet registered routes and failure to keep to agreed timetables. Also holidays must be notified to both organisations.

A1.2. Section 19 Small Bus Permits for Group Bookings

Applies to all Community Buses

From 1st May 2002, fuel duty rebate has been extended to cover section 19 permit holders.

This is now termed "Bus Service Operators Grant" for both 22/19 permits.

PROCEDURES TO APPLY TO THIS SCHEME

Application is to be made under certain categories that apply to BACT. NOTE: We are registered for this scheme following eligibility categories:

A – persons who have attained the age of 60 years

B – disabled persons

G – carers or persons under 16 years of age accompanying any of the foregoing

Six monthly applications are then put in for the BSOG to ESCC who reimburse the fuel duty.

Eligible schemes in BACT

- Age Concern
- Group transport / "group booking" registered with BACT – any bookings that fit into the criteria above [A/B/G categories]

[NOTE: not to use the word "hire", as this is to keep the VAT rating at zero by providing a driver with the bus, and allows passengers to be carried from that organisation as long as both it and driver are registered – so are part of the CT. If neither the driver nor the organisation is registered then VAT must be charged at 17.5% extra]

A.2. Maintenance of buses

A2.1 Operational checks

Every bus has a check by our contracted garage Jempsons Commercial of Rye. This is carried out every six weeks or thereabouts.

A2.2 MOT / Insurance / Blue Badge cover

Both the MOT and Insurance is kept up to date and maintained by the office administrator. Documents are stored in files secure in locked office premises. Buses that are wheelchair accessible are eligible for Blue Badge certification. This is done through ESCC and is an Institutional Badge registered to BACT until 31 August 2010 currently.

A3 Health and Safety issues

A person within BACT will be delegated this area.

Currently Ray Avann is the nominated person – he will deal with the following areas for training

A3.1 COSHH [Control of substances hazardous to health]

A3.2 First Aid boxes

All buses are provided with first aid boxes and will be upgraded periodically.

A3.3 Fire extinguishers

All buses have fire extinguishers and are checked annually. All drivers must ensure that they know where these are in case of emergency and also how to operate them.

A3.4 Triangles on Buses

A safety warning triangle will be issued to every vehicle in case of break down. Every vehicle will be issued with one.

A3.5 High Visibility Jackets

These will be supplied to all drivers and should be worn:

- when assisting passengers on/ off the vehicle
- if walking around the bus
- if in any emergency

A3.6 Seatbelts on buses

Drivers are to wear seatbelts at all times when driving, except when reversing the vehicle

All passengers should wear seatbelts at all times. Unless they have a medical exemption from the doctor. This applies to both Section 22 & Section 19 bus journeys.

Drivers should only assist a passenger with securing of seatbelts if requested. It is essentially the passengers own personal responsibility to ensure they were belt whilst on a BACT vehicle. [updated 10/10/08]

A.3.7 Manual handling regulations

A3.8 Risk assessment – of all safety issues

There is a separate risk assessment that has been undertaken and is currently awaiting signature.

A3.9 Mobile phones on buses

BACT will provide all buses with a mobile phone. They are primarily provided as a safety measure for the driver. This also enables drivers to receive and send messages on urgent issues should any emergency arise. Drivers can contact the office on any issues that arise whilst driving BACT vehicles and can also be contacted on routes if needs be. Mobiles must be switched on whilst driving any BACT vehicle.

[10/10/08]

A3.10 CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS

Checks are carried out on all new, voluntary bus drivers, via the CRB [Criminal Record Bureau], shortly after initial registration with BACT. This is after two personal reference letters have returned to the office.

Any CRB is carried out to take the necessary recommended steps as in the *Code of Practice and Explanatory Guide for Registered Persons* which is published under section 122 of the Police Act 1997 ("the Act") in connection with the use of information provided to registered persons ("Disclosure information") under Part V of that Act. [ref www.crb.gov.uk]

Also taken into consideration is the section in MiDAS handbook:
"Legal Requirements and Good Practice for Minibus Drivers" [p72-3].

Both publication, strongly recommend any organisation to carry out CRB checks especially where drivers come into contact with

- a] children and
- b] vulnerable adults, on a one-on-one basis,

This is to ascertain a drivers' suitability for driving the public vehicle especially bearing in mind that the majority of our passengers at BACT are in these two categories [a & b]

Completed CRB forms are sent to CRB via an umbrella organisation:

Currently: Rother District Council [contact is B F]

- The office administrator [VG is the only verified person] and is trained in processing and storage of these documents
- CRB checks have no charge, as agreed by BF as we are a charitable, voluntary organisation with a limited number of CRB's to be carried out
- If a driver already has a CRB then a copy of the certificate will be required if under 3years, however, as each CRB taken out is specifically for that organisation, the driver will still need to complete a new CRB for BACT
- existing certificates do not have a validity date and presently, this is negotiable

[updated 13/10/08]

After discussion of the "validity issue of CRB's", concerns were taken up with our umbrella organisation contact. It was decided that checks would be retaken under a 5 year period rather than 10 year, as was suggested by the BACT board [see meeting notes 2/10/08].

The considerations for this, in the absence of any other guidance being forthcoming is:

- having considered the risks, it was felt to be a low risk situation
- drivers would only be alone when there was only one person on the bus and this situation occurs rarely
- all appointments are also subject to personal references being taken up so if a situation arose where a criminal act was committed, if challenged by a member of the public or board member, then 5 years would be considered the maximum "reasonable" length of time for the CRB to hold validity. 10 years would be seen as too long a period if it became a legal issue.
- Additionally, as all drivers take MiDAS training where these various issues are covered during training regarding relating to passengers
- then BACT would be seen to have taken all recommended steps to prevent any criminal act as described in the code of conduct above
- But although there is no hard and fast ruling in any of the codes of practice, and most of the drivers are long serving and well know to the passengers and clients and in the community generally, it is recognised that as soon as they are carried out, they are current only up to that date
- Consequently, the BACT policy on CRB's will be reviewed annually to take into consideration any new legal and recruitment issues that have occurred in the interim. [updated 13/10/2008]

A3.11 Contingency for vehicle breakdown / emergency

[must be included with any bid to ESCC i.e. Section 22 services]:

1. Flat tyre or bus breakdown

- GWV is a back up bus
- Phone into the office [01424 772001] – or assess whether Jempsons [Rye] need to be called or whether Stiles [Battle] can deal with it [phone numbers are on the bus files and contact sheet]

2. Accident with another vehicle

- inform office – police and any additional emergency services as required
- driver is to stay with the vehicle whilst relief vehicle is brought to the site if on service route [Section 22] as necessary. Someone must stay with the vehicle and passengers if this is done. It is the driver's responsibility that safety of self, passengers are priority at all times. Wearing of yellow Hi Visibility Jackets is essential in this instance.
- TAKE THE OTHER PERSONS DETAILS ON AN INCIDENT FORM an incident form [in the BACT driver folder on bus]. This must be completed as soon as possible after the incident, as it may be used as evidence is needed for an insurance claim.

3. Accident Helpline

- For a major accident needing immediate assistance over and above police/ambulance at the incident please call our insurance company
- Emergency phone number of Norwich Union Clubline Tel: 0800 1079052
NOTE: BJK are our current insurance brokers - see policy brochure Section 14 page 15/15 as to what is covered by this insurance this phone number above is the RAC on the BJK Helpline

They will need to know the registration of vehicle and they will help you from there onwards with the following at no additional cost to BACT: [brief summary]

1. Someone to come out to help if vehicle cannot be repaired immediately it will be taken to a nearby garage or one of our choice.
2. If vehicle cannot be repaired, the onward transportation of self, passengers; [if driver falls ill for example].
3. Assistance if vehicle will not start whilst parked at bus depot; if cannot be repaired will be taken to chosen garage.
4. What is NOT COVERED by the insurance company?
 - Toll charges / ferry crossing charges
 - Recovery if stuck in water, bog or ditch, or stuck on a beach or if bus has been turned over.
 - Recovery if it breaks down at premises of motor trader

Section B - PERSONNEL

Section B 1. All personnel

B.1.1 Contracts / agreements

B.1.2 Board nomination - AGM

B.1.3 Driver / administrator selection recruitment processes

B.1.4 Training

B.2 COMPLAINTS – internal – within BACT personnel
- external – with members of the public

Dealing with conflict within the organisation

Internal – any grievance concerning safety, welfare, and anti-social behaviour of any member of BACT whether paid or voluntary worker will be addressed by the board. This should be brought to the attention of any member initially, verbally. If this is not satisfactorily resolves then put in writing to the Chair of the Board.

Dealing with complaints from public

External - BACT's policy covers incidents or complaints with the public using the Community buses
Drivers should notify the office administrator immediately and complete a record of any incident The administrator must inform the Chair or another member of the Board as soon as possible afterwards as to appropriate steps if it is not easily addressed as a day to day issue.

Stress in the workplace

All issues around stress are a matter of individual responsibility and should be brought to attentions of the Board of Directors if appropriate. If it is brought to their attention, then they will endeavour to alleviate this concern.

Lone working issues

Safety of the volunteer is paramount importance. It is understood that common sense be your guide if you feel at risk at any time. A MOBILE phone on bus and dialling 999 for the police or local police in Battle
Tel: 084560 70 999 [is for Police office general enquires].

All drivers and staff who work alone; the management are there to support them in their work and expect contact if any problems arise. There is a procedure in place for this.

Confidentiality

All personal data of all volunteers and workers and clients are treated in strict confidence. Everyone in the organisation is covered by the same requirements; these are non-disclosure of personal issues or the Directors will deal with grievances seriously.

Honesty

As all personnel will be dealing with money at some point during being a volunteer with BACT, it is expected that the references taken up when initially when applying for the position, are truthful and honest. If anyone has any doubts about someone this must be brought to the attention of a relevant Board Member either verbally or in writing. It will be taken seriously.

B2 - Bus Drivers

Induction procedures

These include the following areas:

1. What is needed to become a volunteer driver with BACT is to provide:

- Current driving licence [with D1 category]
- Provide two references
- To undertake to do a CRB [criminal record bureau] check every three years

Access to training and supervision

Training is given as a necessary requirement to all BACT drivers

- MiDAS [Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme] is a practical and theoretical part of the training, for all who decide to become a bus driver with us.
- FIRST AID is optional but will be offered if requested
- We hold monthly drivers meetings to update and inform our drivers, to which it is advisable drivers attend. These are held on Wednesdays, from 4-5pm.

Health and Safety issues

See section A3 where all these issues are covered for all personnel

Outline of duties

- There will be a probationary period of six months during which time the driver will be inducted and trained as to BACT's policies and procedures
- Various bus checks are undertaken prior to driving service routes or hires.
- These must be completed and recording of kilometrage on appropriate forms is essential. Drivers will sign these on completion of duties
- Recording on paperwork appropriately – white forms for section 22 service
- blue forms for section 19 hires
- Training will be given as to how to use the Wayfarer ticket machine effectively for issuing tickets to passengers
- Assistance with cleaning and maintaining buses both inside and outside is voluntary

Dress Code

BACT's policy on dress code for volunteer drivers states that appropriate clothing is to be worn whilst carrying out duties as a representative of BACT. Drivers are asked to bear in mind that they are dealing with the general public so image of safety is a priority issue:

- The high visibility jacket is required to be worn for the driver's safety when in charge of a vehicle whilst walking around the bus for example attending to passengers or wheelchairs.
- The identity badge may be worn clipped to the polo shirt but must be carried with you at all times whilst driving for BACT.
- The royal blue polo shirt is optional but supplied to all drivers.

Lost Property

Left on the bus, lost property will be sent into the office, or kept on the bus if it is likely to be one of our regular passengers. Please inform the BACT office, who will inform the Police as a matter of routine. The police have requested we do this. We will keep the item then pass it onto the police. Passengers can phone Tel: 084560 70 999 [Battle police for general enquiries about this].

B3 - Office workers

B3.1 Health and Safety

Display Screen Equipment Regulations [1992] require employers to minimise the risk to staff working on VDU by ensuring workstations and practices are well designed in the office. These should be assessed to ensure they meet minimum requirement and remedied if not.

B3.2 Criminal Record Bureau Checks [CRB's]

The organisation we contact is Rother District Council

The office administrator will be trained in processing of the CRB checks and storage of documents. CRB's are now checked in the BACT office, although the umbrella organisation [RDC] sends them to the Bureau direct.

[see section A3.8 for fuller description which also covers drivers]

B3.3 Personal Safety

It is the personal responsibility of everyone working in the BACT offices to take reasonable steps to secure their personal safety, especially when working alone in the Rutherford offices. It was agreed that various alarms would be made available for use by lone workers.

Section C – GENERAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS

Updating this section as appropriate when new laws are brought out for example

BEST PRACTICE PROCEDURES - BACT RECOMMENDATIONS

GENERAL STATEMENT

All members of Battle Area Community Transport [BACT] who volunteer or contract their services to BACT are subject to the same terms and rights on conditions and legislation as employees; under the health and safety and all discrimination act.

1. Equal Opportunities

Whilst volunteers are not generally covered by Equal Opportunities legislation, BACT regards this as “Good Practice” to include all workers, paid or voluntary under the opportunities scheme.

BACT has a commitment to offering equal opportunities to volunteers from diverse backgrounds, with inclusively in mind. Anyone over the age over 21 years and who fulfils the BACT requirements and is willing to drive our vehicles is encouraged to apply to do so.

2. Racial, Gender and Age Discrimination

BACT does not discriminate against any race or gender in any way. All our volunteers are and contractors are assessed on their individual merits and abilities. We have requirements governing the age of a driver in accordance with DVLA regulations for driving a minibus.

3. Children and Vulnerable adults

Unaccompanied children and vulnerable adults there will always be a passenger assistant on our vehicles. If there is no escort, then we cannot run the bus. It is not our responsibility to CRB check the escorts, but of the organisation who books the hire with us.

ACTS GOVERNING THIS AREA: [see separate details of these acts]

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Sex Discrimination Act 1975

Race Relations Act 1976

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Human Rights Act 1998

- Policy Statement – is to be drawn up and reviewed by the BACT Board of Directors at regular periods
- Objectives concerning equal opportunity are to be reviewed from time to time to accommodate any new laws and regulations.
- Procedure – Monitoring – Review process: these are Board level processes and are to be reviewed when required.

3. Recruitment procedures

BACT endeavours to recruit by all method; advertising where applicable for paid and voluntary work. We also encourage people to reach out to the public by word of mouth to volunteer. There are driver's agreements, and a declaration of undertaking to driver, that are signed. These are treated in strict confidence.

4. Premises

Health and Safety issues are addressed here regarding fire and access. The landlord updates these annually. BACT ensure an acceptable level of working office environment.

5. Financial policy

Insurance

BACT has an office insurance policy covering damage to property [see insurance policy for what is included excluded]

Public Liability

BACT has a Public Liability Insurance cover to include all personnel. [see insurance policy for what is included/excluded]

Expenses – are provided to cover the following:

1. Travelling expenses at 40p per mile [currently]
2. Any laying out of monies to pay for equipment or services in the line of duty for BACT
3. For a hire a driver can request £10 to cover expenses separate from mileage

6. Publicity

BACT use local press and Parish Magazines and various clubs and Sheltered accommodations and notice boards and libraries to advertise there services.

Publicity is regarded as a matter of personal preference. All volunteers have choice as to how any publicity about themselves is conducted.

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