

Passenger transport provided by voluntary groups under the Section 19 or 22 permit system

When you take a group of young people out in a mini-bus there is legislation that must be adhered to, otherwise you could be breaking the Law and you will find that your motor insurance is invalid, and may also invalidate 3rd party liability insurance provided through your church for activities away from the normal meeting place. **So this is very important information.** Here are some typical scenarios.

Scenario 1: You want to take your group to an event, and so you hire a mini-bus from a local company. You make a small additional charge to cover the costs. **YOU MUST HAVE A PERMIT** under the 'Section 19 permit system'.

Scenario 2: Same situation, but you hire a bus from a 'Community Transport Association' company. Your volunteer driver is not a registered CT driver. **YOU MUST HAVE A PERMIT** (If the driver IS a registered volunteer with the particular Community Transport you hire from, then you don't need an additional permit as they should already have one). **BUT** if you make any charge at all for transport (even hidden in the cost of the event) **YOU MUST HAVE A PERMIT!**

Scenario 3: A parent has a mini-bus and offers to take the group to an event and a small additional cost is involved to cover fuel: **YOU MUST HAVE A PERMIT.** If no charge is made at all for transport then no permit is required, **BUT** the insurance on the vehicle **MUST** be correct and insurance company informed (not just Comprehensive).

Note: from the legislation guide:

If no charge is made for the use of the bus at all, no permit is required. However a charge covers more than just the payment of a fare. Any payment which gives a person a right to be carried on a vehicle (the legal term for this is 'Hire or Reward') would require the operator to hold either a Section 19 permit or PSV Operator's Licence. Hire or reward takes place if the journey is organised in a way that goes beyond the bounds of mere social kindness. Hire or reward would include, for example, someone who provided frequent school transport for his children and friends in return for contributions to running costs.

The payment can be made by the person himself or on his behalf by someone else. The payment may be direct (such as a fare) or indirect (as would be the case for example where a membership subscription to a club or a payment for a hotel room includes the right to use the bus). Although indirect payments are usually made in respect of other services (rather than specifically for the transport) they are still viewed by the courts as hire or reward because anyone who had not made the payment would have no right to be carried.

WHO CAN APPLY FOR A PERMIT?

Any non-profit making body concerned with:

- education
- religion
- social welfare
- recreation (small bus permits only); or • other activities of benefit to the community

HOW DO I APPLY FOR A SMALL BUS PERMIT?

There are 3 ways to get a permit, depending on the type of group you need one for. VOSA is the normal route for a church group.

- **VOSA**

A permit is normally issued to a specific group (e.g. a scout group). However, in certain cases a permit can be granted to a named individual on behalf of a body which he or she represents. Both borrower and lender groups are required to have a Section 19 permit. They are not vehicle specific; the same permit can be used when hiring different minibuses. Lender organisations must have a permit for each of their vehicles.

Section 19 permits currently cost £11 each and can be obtained from The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA). Fees for a Small Bus Permit may change. The completed application forms should be sent to: **VOSA, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF.**

The 2 relevant forms to fill in and a guide are available from the Diocesan web site. For a full list of rules about the Section 19 Permit please refer to VOSA web site and search for [PSV 385 Guide](#).

Permits can also be obtained from:

- **A designated body**

These are national voluntary organisations who are able to issue permits both to themselves and to any of their local organisations. In some cases they can issue permits to other bodies with the same interests. (eg Air Training Corp).

- **A local authority**

Local authorities may issue permits to their own departments and to those bodies concerned with:

- Those health and welfare services eligible for grants under the Health Services and Public Health Act 1968.
- Assisting or co-ordinating the activities of community groups in the area. These are known as 'umbrella organisations'. Groups affiliated to one of these organisations may use a small bus under that organisation's permit.
- Schools or other bodies connected with education (if they fulfil the authority's duties under the Education Act 1944).