



Guidance Manual – Levels 1-3

Emergency Services Driving Standard

Acknowledgments

The RSA would like to acknowledge the contribution that the members of the ESDS Panel have made towards the development of this publication.

The RSA and ESDS panel would also like to acknowledge and thank The Police Foundation, Park Place, 12 Lawn Lane, London SW8 1UD for the valuable information referenced from their publication 'Roadcraft' the Police Driver's Handbook, 2007 Edition ISBN 978011702168 and 2013 Edition ISBN 9780117081871 published by The Stationery Office (TSO) © Police Foundation copyright 2013.



Údarás Um Shábháilteacht Ar Bhóithre
Road Safety Authority



An Stiúirthóireacht Náisiúnta um Dóiteáin agus Bainistíocht Éigeandála
National Directorate for Fire & Emergency Management



Óglaigh
na hÉireann
DEFENCE FORCES IRELAND



Irish Coast Guard



Seirbhís Phríosúin na hÉireann
IRISH PRISON SERVICE

Pre-Hospital
Emergency Care
Council

Contents

Preface	3
Emergency Services Driving Standard	4
Legislation in respect of emergency service vehicles	5
Socially responsible driving	6
Self-assessment and self-reflection	6
Assessment and appeals – General	7
Glossary of terms and definitions	8

Emergency Services Driving Standard Level 1

Introduction	11
ESD Level 1 – Assessment process	11
Module 1: Before driving emergency service vehicles	13
1.1 Legislation relevant to driving emergency service vehicles	14
1.2 Administrative aspects of driving	15
1.3 Preparing for a journey	16
1.4 Vehicle safety and technical checks	17
Module 2: Driving emergency service vehicles	19
2.1 Pre-start routine	20
2.2 Primary controls	21
2.3 Secondary controls	22
2.4 In-vehicle technology and systems	23
2.5 Observations and mirrors	24
2.6 Communications, signs and signals	25
2.7 Correct positioning on the road	27
Module 3: The fundamentals of road sharing	29
3.1 Sharing the road	30
3.2 Driving at speed	31
3.3 Anticipation and reactions	33
3.4 Changing direction	35
3.5 Night driving	36
3.6 Driving in adverse weather conditions	37
3.7 Driving in an eco-efficient manner	38
3.8 Driving calmly	39

Emergency Services Driving Standard Level 2

Introduction	43
ESD Level 2 – Assessment process	43
Module 4: Recognise manage and avoid risks	45
4.1 Mental skills for better driving	46
4.2 Intelligent use of speed	47
4.3 Advanced observation and anticipation techniques	48
4.4 Dynamic risk assessment	49
Module 5: Vehicle control	50
5.1 System of vehicle control	51
5.2 Skill of vehicle control	52
5.3 Controlling vehicle stability	53
5.4 Use and interpretation of driving signals	54
Module 6: Control in traffic situations	55
6.1 Advantageous positioning	56
6.2 Principles of cornering	57
6.3 Overtaking: planning and techniques	58
6.4 Multi-lane roadways	59

Emergency Services Driving Standard Level 3

Introduction	63
ESD Level 3 – Assessment process	63
Module 7: Managing emergency response	65
7.1 Mental skills for response driving	66
7.2 Evaluate response need	67
7.3 Dynamic risk assessment	68
7.4 Emergency route planning	69
Module 8: Driving standards and vehicle assessment	70
8.1 Maintains driving standards	71
8.2 Vehicle assessment for response	72
Module 9: Emergency response driving	73
9.1 Use of legal exemptions	74
9.2 Progress and restraint	75
9.3 Anticipation	76
9.4 Emergency response driving tactics	77

Preface

Representatives of the principal emergency services, and related organisations in Ireland came together under the auspices of the Road Safety Authority (RSA) to discuss the possibility of developing a common driving standard for drivers within these services. Further to initial discussions it was agreed that a collaborative approach across the services towards the development of such a standard was feasible. It was agreed at the outset that the standard would be entirely voluntary and would not have a statutory footing.

A working panel was established with members drawn from The RSA (Chair), Civil Defence, Irish Coast Guard, Defence Forces, An Garda Síochána, Health Service Executive National Ambulance Service, Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council, Chief Fire Officer's Association, National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management and the Irish Prison Service.

The remit of this group was to devise an approach to the development of such a standard and progress the development accordingly. The process proposed was a modular approach with three distinct levels which reflected the varying needs of the individual organisations. The three levels are referred to as Emergency Services Driving (ESD) Levels 1, 2 and 3. Details of these three levels are covered in the following pages. The initial rollout will cater for panel member organisations with future inclusion for other interested parties, once established.

Creating a culture of safe and socially responsible driving is essential for reducing deaths and casualties on Irish roads. Drivers of emergency service vehicles must appreciate how the presence of emergency service vehicles can impact other road users and understand the need to act responsibly at all times. The Emergency Services Driving Standard reflects the need for higher standards of driving and aims to develop and sustain a spirit of cooperation, caution and courtesy in emergency service drivers. Emergency service drivers should aim to achieve an exemplary standard of driving that acts as a positive example to other road users. The overarching aim of this driving standard is to significantly reduce the risks created by driving emergency service vehicles to benefit their drivers and other road users, and provide for the safety and comfort of patients/passengers as may arise.

This standard focuses on the following areas of driver competence:

- Knowledge, driving laws, rules and vehicle operation;
- Control of the vehicle;
- Control in traffic situations;
- Recognising, managing and avoiding risks; and
- Driving in a professional context.

Introduction

Emergency Services Driving Standard

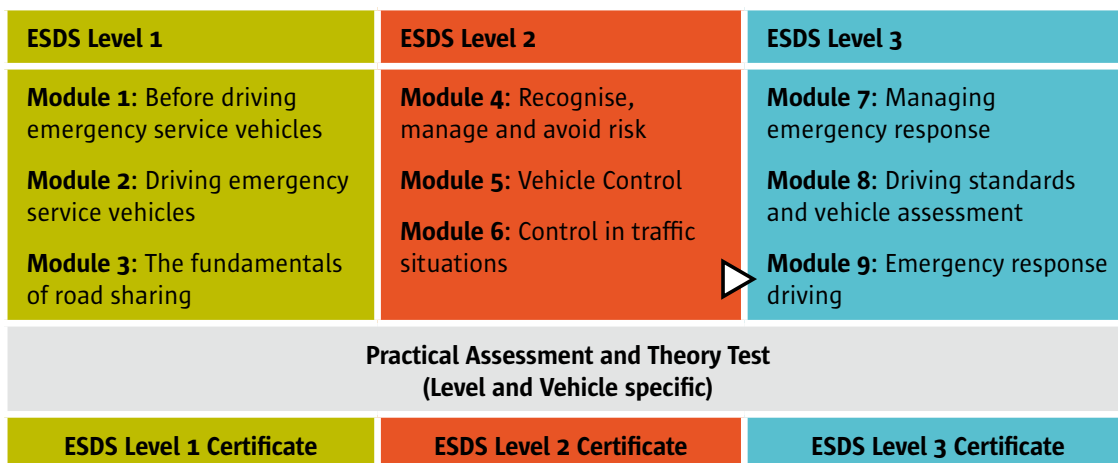
The Emergency Services Driving Standard (ESDS) has three levels:

1. **ESDS Level 1** – This is the entry level and sets out the training, learning and assessment that will produce competent, socially responsible emergency service drivers.
2. **ESDS Level 2** – Describes the training, learning and assessment for emergency service drivers and includes the principles and skills set of “*Roadcraft*”. Roadcraft is a recognised system of vehicle control in the training of emergency service drivers that develops a methodical approach to driving hazards and increases safety by giving the driver more time to react in complex situations.
3. **ESDS Level 3** – Is the only level that extends to driving vehicles while availing of exemptions from Road Traffic legislation. It sets out a series of principles and response tactics which are compatible with *Roadcraft* and focus on the driver’s attitude towards emergency response¹ driving.

Creating the right attitude greatly reduces the risks associated with emergency response driving. The standards as set out will ensure drivers fully understand their responsibility to manage the risks associated with emergency response driving and in doing so, will help to keep both themselves and the public safe.

It is acknowledged that supplementary modules may be developed in addition to ESDS levels 1, 2 or 3 to meet specific legislative or operational requirements. ESDS assessment and certification will only be undertaken at levels 1, 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Diagram representing ESDS levels 1-3 and modules 1-9:



¹ In the ESDS, emergency response is defined as driving when using any of the exemptions afforded by the relevant legislation, and/or the use of emergency warning equipment to facilitate progress.

Legislation in respect of emergency service vehicles

Provision has been made in law regarding the driving and use of emergency service vehicles to assist in the delivery of specific emergency services to the public. The necessity to provide such a service must also take account of the fundamental duty of care as set out under Health and Safety Legislation for employers, employees and volunteers. There are no circumstances when driving to an emergency that can justify actions which lead to death or injury of any person.

Drivers must give cognisance to the potential reactions of other road users to their presence on the road whether responding to an incident or on routine tasks. As with all services provided, driving tasks should be performed to a standard to ensure that the individual or organisation will not be subject to civil or criminal litigation. Drivers must know and understand the legislation and how it applies to each organisation in line with organisation specific driving policies.

Fitting and use of emergency lights and sirens (audible warning devices)

Road Traffic Legislation outlines the specific emergency service vehicles that are permitted to fit emergency lights and sirens and specifies their use where necessary in the circumstances.

The authorisation to fit and use emergency lights and sirens does not in itself grant exemptions from road traffic law. Such equipment gives no right of precedence whatsoever. They are simply warning devices to alert other road users and pedestrians to the presence of an emergency vehicle responding to an emergency situation.

The use of the equipment must not be regarded as a reason to travel at unsafe speeds or to drive without exercising the proper care or in contravention of road traffic legislation. Excessive use of warning equipment can undermine its effectiveness, cause confusion and create unwarranted risk to the general public.

Road traffic exemptions for emergency vehicles

Road Traffic Legislation allows exemptions to members of certain emergency services from general road traffic regulations in the performance of the duties of that member, where such use does not endanger the safety of road users.

The term **'in the performance of the duties of that member'** incorporates a whole range of day to day emergency service activities. The circumstances where it is necessary to exercise such exemptions must be justified and proportionate to the task being carried out. Proportionality will be balanced against the urgency of the incident and the operational requirement to exercise legal exemptions.

Whilst allowing exemptions to general road traffic legislation the following provisions are not exempt:

- Driving under the influence of an intoxicant
- Driving without reasonable consideration
- Driving without due care and attention
- Dangerous driving

It must be understood that any emergency service vehicle driver may be subject to investigation and subsequent prosecution for their driving actions which can be deemed to be dangerous, showing lack of care and attention or without reasonable consideration for other road users. Any resulting conviction/endorsement may be recorded on their driver's licence.

Socially responsible driving

It is important that drivers recognise that a socially responsible driving attitude is the key to safe driving. The measures that have proven most successful are those that aim to develop the whole person by drawing on:

- Intellect
- Attitudes
- Emotions; and
- Actions.

The road is an important arena for many people and work on associated skills must therefore be maintained. The focus is on understanding road traffic as a system involving various kinds of participants, on conditions that affect risk, on the driver's responsibility and on the importance of drivers having critical insights into their own abilities and behaviour. The aim is to develop safe and responsible drivers.

Self-analysis

Self-assessment and self-reflection have valuable parts to play in the learning process. They are important for two reasons:

- The more aware drivers are of their own strengths and weaknesses, the safer and more responsible they are likely to be; and
- Self-assessment and self-reflection help guard against over-confidence as misplaced confidence in their own ability is one of the major dangers for emergency service drivers.

Self-assessment and self-reflection are related but different activities. They are part of a process that leads to drivers having a better understanding of their driving abilities and behaviours. They work best when they are focused on specific issues – for example, negotiating a particular type of junction, braking in particular weather conditions, and so on. They involve drivers themselves actively judging how well they carried out driving tasks and thinking about why they acted in a particular way and how they can improve. Drivers may do this independently or with the help of a registered ESDS Trainer.

Self-assessment

Self-assessment requires drivers to observe and evaluate their own driving performance and behaviour and to judge how well they are driving. They need to ask themselves what they did or what they did not do. The judgements are made against the standards of good driving set out in the ESDS. All aspects of the standard should be considered, not just basic control of the vehicle or performance of manoeuvres.

Self-reflection

Self-reflection requires drivers to consider why they are interpreting information or driving in the ways they are. If they are making errors or driving inappropriately (for example, driving too close to cars in front) they need to identify the reasons why they are driving like this. Does it suggest they lack knowledge and understanding, have a lack of skill, hold inappropriate attitudes or a combination of these? They should ask themselves questions like:

- Why do I keep making that error?
- What causes me to lose control like that?
- What effect does my doing that have on other road users and how would I feel if someone did that to me?

Self assessment and self reflection			
Example	Self assessment	Self reflection	Outcome of self-analysis
Brakes hard to avoid driving into the rear of cars in front	Driver realises that they often have to brake hard to avoid driving into the rear of cars in front	Driver asks themselves: Why do I keep making that error? What causes me to do this? How does this affect other drivers? How would I feel if someone did that to me?	Driver realises corrective action (i.e. leave enough distance between their vehicle and other vehicles, given the speed that they are travelling at. Driver applies the corrective action throughout their driving.

Promoting self-reflection and self-assessment

Throughout the ESDS drivers are encouraged to develop the skills of self-reflection and self-assessment that will help them to maintain a conscious awareness of all aspects of the driving experience. This will involve drivers examining what they have been doing, why they have been doing it (or not doing it) and determining how they themselves can best progress their goals in relation to becoming safe and responsible emergency service drivers.

Glossary of terms and definitions

ADAS	Advanced driver assistance systems e.g. traction control, parking sensors, lane departure, antilock braking systems.
Anticipation	Reading into things that are happening around you while driving, which allows you to act appropriately.
Appropriate speed	A speed that is appropriate to the prevailing conditions and the experience of the driver.
Driving in an eco-efficient manner	Driving in a manner that demonstrates knowledge of the environmental impact of vehicles.
Emergency equipment	Ancillary or specialist equipment e.g. stretcher lifts, gas cylinders.
Emergency response	Emergency response is defined as driving when using any of the exemptions afforded by the relevant legislation, and/or the use of emergency warning equipment to facilitate progress.
Emergency lights and sirens	Emergency lights or sirens on vehicles authorised to be fitted with blue emergency lights under current road traffic legislation.
Emergency service vehicle	A vehicle used to assist in the delivery of specific emergency services to the public.
Emergency service vehicle checks	The necessary additional daily, weekly and periodic checks on all equipment unique to emergency service vehicles.
Emergency service vehicle driver	A driver of an emergency service vehicle.
ESDS Registered Assessor	Driving assessor registered with the RSA to conduct ESDS Level 1-3 assessments.
ESDS Registered Trainer	Driving trainer registered with the RSA to deliver ESDS Level 1-3 courses.
Hazard	Anything which is an actual or potential danger.
In-vehicle technology and systems	Technology systems that exist in emergency service vehicles.
Observation	Using sight, hearing and even smell to gain as much information about conditions as possible.
Pre-start routine	The necessary checks to be carried out on the primary and secondary controls prior to driving the emergency service vehicle.
Road sharing	An ability to anticipate and react to different road traffic situations and interact with other road users while showing a high level of regard for drivers own safety and other road users.
Self-assessment	Driver's evaluation of their own driving performance.
Self-reflection	Driver's questioning themselves on the causes of poor driving.
Vehicle primary controls	The controls required for the basic operation of the vehicle such as steering wheel, accelerator, clutch and brakes.
Vehicle secondary controls	Devices in a vehicle that do not direct its movement or braking but control how the driver sees out of the vehicle and how the vehicle is seen; examples are de-misters, windscreen wipers and washers.

EMERGENCY SERVICES DRIVING STANDARD

LEVEL 1

Introduction

Emergency Services Driving Standard at Level 1 describes the skills and behaviours that an emergency service vehicle driver, fulltime, part time or volunteer should be able to demonstrate. This level does not extend to driving vehicles while exercising exemptions under Road Traffic legislation. The various skills and behaviours are grouped under 3 modules with several supporting units making up each module. ESDS Level 1 places emphasis on two aspects of the learning process and they are self- assessment and self-reflection. Research concludes that these skills are key components in the learning process commensurate with higher levels in the Goals for Driver Education (GDE) Matrix (Hatakka, et al, 2002).

ESDS Level 1 aims to develop competent emergency service drivers who are fully engaged in the act of driving safely and responsibly, in accordance with their roles. Implementation of ESDS Level 1 will demonstrate that drivers have acquired road traffic competence having successfully completed the theory test and practical assessment. These assessments affirm that the drivers have the knowledge, understanding and skills as well as attitudes and behaviours needed to tackle the road traffic environment in a safe and socially responsible manner.

ESDS Level 1 sets out to provide the driver with a clear knowledge of legal requirements and regulations governing the use of emergency service vehicles and how they impact on individual organisations. Other important units cover understanding hazards, risk management, the road network and other subjects largely concerned with attitudes to road safety. The information contained in ESDS Level 1 will enable candidates to prepare for the ESDS Level 1 assessment and in the process help to stimulate and promote safe and responsible behaviour on the roads.

ESDS Level 1 encourages drivers to continually assess their own competencies and development through a process that encourages drivers to reflect on their own driving performance, to see situations from the perspective of others and to cooperate with other road users.

It will improve the driver's:

- Awareness of the necessity to share the road in a safe way (while showing due care for themselves and other road users);
- Attitude to risk;
- Willingness to accept responsibility;
- Ability to take precautions;
- Ability to choose ways of driving that reduces the risk of collisions or incidents;
- Awareness of the need for responsible emergency services driver behaviour;
- Awareness of the reasons that lie behind the regulations that affects them.

ESDS Level 1 – Assessment process

The Emergency Services Driving Standard reflects the need for higher standards of driving and aims to develop and sustain a spirit of cooperation, caution and courtesy in emergency service vehicle drivers. Emergency service drivers should aim to achieve an exemplary standard of driving that acts as a positive example to other road users. The overarching aim of this driving standard is to significantly reduce the risks created by driving emergency service vehicles; to benefit drivers and other road users, and provide for the safety and comfort of patients/passengers as may arise.

The objective of ESDS Level 1 assessment is to ensure that the knowledge, skills and understanding at that level has been achieved. The assessment consists of a theoretical examination and practical assessment. The assessment will be carried out by registered ESDS Assessors.

The candidate's organisation will have due regard to the respective driving responsibilities and shall determine the type of vehicle to be used for the assessment. It should reflect the type of vehicle and type of work authorised drivers will typically be expected to operate. Towing operations where appropriate should be included in the assessment.

Driver recertification will be a requirement in order to maintain ESDS certification within five years from the issue date of previous certification in that ESDS level and vehicle category.

All ESDS certification will be RSA approved and be transferable between emergency services. This interoperability shall not preclude an organisation from determining if refresher or additional training is required in the case of a member who has been trained or assessed by another organisation.

Eligibility criteria for assessment

The following are the requirements for all candidates for ESDS Level 1 assessment.

Candidates must:

- Hold the relevant driving licence qualification for the category of vehicle for which they are applying.
- Successfully complete the specific ESDS Level 1 theory test for the specific vehicle category prior to the drive assessment.
- Be nominated for assessment by an ESDS Panel member organisation.
- Nominations for assessment by the ESDS Panel member organisation must specify the vehicle category in which the assessment will be undertaken.

ESDS Level 1 Modules

ESDS Level 1 consists of the following 3 modules:

Module	Description
1. Before driving emergency service vehicles	This module requires drivers to acquire knowledge of administrative and technical matters relating to driving emergency service vehicles. They are also expected to demonstrate journey preparation including vehicle safety and technical checks including pre-start routine. The knowledge and understanding that drivers acquire in this module will help underpin the development of more complex technical driving skills in the subsequent modules.
2. Driving emergency service vehicles	The units in this module require drivers to demonstrate the basic skills of driving emergency service vehicles. This will include a demonstration of competence while operating primary and secondary controls and all relevant in-vehicle technology and systems. Drivers must in addition be able to respond safely to signs, signals and other types of communication while driving in all road traffic situations.
3. The fundamentals of road sharing	This module requires drivers to demonstrate sharing the road with an attitude that supports safety and responsible driving. To do this, drivers must demonstrate their ability to anticipate and react to different road traffic situations and to interact with other road users, showing a high level of regard for their own safety and that of all other road users.

Module 1: Before driving emergency service vehicles

This module requires drivers to acquire knowledge of administrative and technical matters relating to driving emergency service vehicles. They are also expected to demonstrate journey preparation including vehicle safety and technical checks including pre-start routine. The knowledge and understanding that drivers acquire in this module will help underpin the development of more complex technical driving skills in the subsequent modules.

Module 1: Units

This module includes the following units:

1.1	Legislation relevant to driving emergency service vehicles
1.2	Administrative aspects of driving
1.3	Preparing for a journey
1.4	Vehicle safety and technical checks

UNIT 1.1 Legislation relevant to driving emergency service vehicles

Objective

The driver must know and understand the Rules of the Road and legislation in respect of the use of emergency lights and sirens and exemptions under the Road Traffic Acts that apply to designated emergency service organisations. In addition the driver must know how to keep up to date with actual and planned changes in legislation that affect the safe and responsible use of roads and the driving environment for all road users.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know and understand:
Regulation for the use of emergency lights and sirens	The emergency service vehicles that are authorised to be fitted with emergency lights and sirens and the circumstances where such can be used.
Exemptions under the Road Traffic Acts	When drivers are exempt from certain provisions of The Road Traffic Acts and the circumstances where such exemptions can be availed of.
Use of emergency service vehicle	The potential consequences and legal implications of utilising emergency service vehicle, equipment and legal exemptions where applicable.
Changes in legislation and getting up-to-date information	Current legislation; How to keep up to date with changes to legislation; The potential consequences and legal implications of not keeping up to date with legislation.
Changes to road signs and road markings	Current road signs and markings; How to keep up to date with changes to road signs and road markings.
Rules relating to ESDS Level 1	ESDS Level 1 and the respective organisational policy requirements relating to driving emergency service vehicles.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



- Where would you obtain up-to-date legislation in relation to road signs?
- Whose responsibility is it to keep up to date with legislation?
- What vehicles can be fitted with Emergency Lights and Sirens?
- What drivers are exempt from certain provisions of the Road Traffic Acts?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



- Why do you think 'The Rules of The Road' are considered a valuable aid to safe driving?
- Why do you think compliance with road traffic regulations is important?
- When am I justified in activating Emergency Lights and Sirens?
- In what circumstances can I progress through a Red Traffic Light?
- Is my licence liable to endorsement as a result of driving an emergency services vehicle?

UNIT 1.2 Administrative aspects of driving

Objective

The driver must know and understand the responsibilities and obligations that their organisation and users of emergency service vehicles have in relation to administrative matters, for example, licensing, insurance, motor tax, vehicle tests and any relevant exemptions specific to their organisations.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know and understand:
Licensing	The legal requirements to have the correct category specific licence and the potential consequences of non-compliance.
Requirements and rules relating to motor insurance	The legal requirement to have insurance and the various types of insurance available.
Rules relating to motor tax	The legal requirement to have motor tax; The potential consequences of non-compliance.
Rules relating to the NCT (National Car Test) and CVRT (Certificate of Roadworthiness Test)	The legal requirements in relation to the NCT and CVRT; The reasons why it is important that emergency service vehicles must be roadworthy.
Rules relating to Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC)	The legal requirements to complete Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) training and the potential consequences of non-compliance.
Road Traffic Collision (RTC)	The administrative procedures to follow if involved in a road traffic collision to comply with legal and organisational requirements.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



When is an NCT disc required to be displayed?
Can you ever drive without a motor tax disc displayed?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



Other than for legal reasons, what are the benefits of having your vehicle NCT/CVRT tested?
When is this vehicle due its NCT/CVRT?

UNIT 1.3 Preparing for a journey

Objective

The driver must be able to demonstrate the practical knowledge, understanding and skills required to plan a journey including consideration for passenger/patient condition, comfort and safety and also how to load an emergency services vehicle appropriately.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Planning a journey	Plan a route, taking into account weather, time of day, road works, events, diversions and road signage, and so on; Read a road map or operate a satellite navigation system (as may be required as per organisational policy).
Fitness to drive	The importance of being in a fit state to drive and the causes and symptoms of being unfit to drive; The potential effects on drivers of alcohol, medication, drugs, fatigue, diet, lack of physical fitness, emotions, lifestyle, stress, and so on. The specific organisations requirements regarding driving an emergency service vehicle while on duty.
Eyesight	The necessity for drivers to have regular eyesight tests; The symptoms of poor vision and of the possible necessity to wear prescribed corrective lenses.
Fitness of passengers/ patients	The possible consequences of carrying patients/passengers with the potential to cause mild or severe distraction; Deal responsibly with situations that may arise.
Correct loading of emergency service vehicle	The change in dynamics of a loaded emergency services vehicle; Loading emergency service vehicle safely, securely and legally.
Towing	The organisational policy regarding towing; The technical and legal restrictions regarding the towing capacity of an emergency service vehicle.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



What are the potential consequences of not planning a journey?
Can you show me how you would plan a journey from here to e.g. Portlaoise?
How would tiredness affect you as a driver?
How would you deal with passengers who are involved in noisy conversation and causing you distraction?
How would you find out if there is a risk of ice on your route?
What is the maximum towing capacity of your vehicle?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



How would you decide if you were unfit or too tired to drive?
How often would you expect to need to stop on a journey of 264 kilometres from Sligo to Cork?
What factors might you consider prior to hitching a trailer to a vehicle?

UNIT 1.4 Vehicle safety and technical checks

Objective

The driver must have a knowledge and understanding of emergency services vehicle safety and maintenance, and should know how to enter and leave the vehicle safely, operate all key safety features, and be able to carry out routine safety and maintenance checks.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Emergency services vehicle checks	Conduct the necessary daily, weekly and periodic safety checks both inside and outside the emergency service vehicle at the appropriate times; Find further information on safety checks – for example, in the vehicle’s user manual or organisational policy.
Check on engine fluids	Check all engine fluid levels – for example, engine oil, fuel, brake fluid, coolant, and so on; The potential consequences of incorrect or inadequate levels.
Lights and reflectors	The importance of keeping lights and reflectors clean and in good working order; Check the correct functioning of the lights, and the potential consequences of faulty or non-functioning lights; The importance of replacing light bulbs as necessary.
Tyres	The importance of tyre maintenance, including: Check the air pressure in the tyres; Check the tread depth of the tyres; Check that tyres meet all legal requirements.
Vehicle manual	Locate, read, interpret and find relevant information in the vehicle user manual.
Roadworthiness	Ensure that the emergency service vehicle is safe to drive; The potential consequences of driving an emergency services vehicle in an un-roadworthy condition.
Maintenance and servicing requirements	The vehicle’s servicing requirements and reporting procedure for faults.
Entering, starting, stopping and leaving emergency service vehicle	The correct procedures and be able to enter, start, stop and leave the emergency services vehicle safely, ensuring that the vehicle is safe and secure; Take into account their safety and the safety of others.
Instruments	Locate and interpret the instrument panel, the meters and warning lights; Find and operate the ignition control.
Emergency service vehicle breakdown	The correct procedures to follow to ensure their own safety and that of others in the event of an emergency services vehicle breakdown, including: Using hazard warning lights; Comply with legal requirements and organisational policy relating to breakdowns.
Ancillary equipment	Correctly secure any ancillary equipment; The potential consequences of inadequately secured equipment.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



What emergency services vehicle daily inspection/safety checks should be carried out before starting a journey?

Can you show me how you would perform a check on the windscreen washer fluid?

Where do you check the brake fluid level and why is it important to do so?

What should you do in the event of an emergency services vehicle breakdown?

Why is it important to read the 'Vehicle Manual'?

What are the dangers associated with ancillary equipment in a moving vehicle?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



Why do you think you might have problems if you set out on a journey without carrying out an emergency services vehicle daily inspection?

What kind of ancillary equipment does your organisation carry in its vehicles and what would happen in the event of an impact?

Module 2: Driving emergency service vehicles

The units in this module require drivers to demonstrate the basic skills of driving emergency service vehicles. This will include a demonstration of competence while operating primary and secondary controls and all relevant in-vehicle technology and systems. Drivers must in addition be able to respond safely to signs, signals and other types of communication while driving in all road traffic situations.

Module 2: Units

This module includes the following units:

2.1	Pre-start routine
2.2	Primary controls
2.3	Secondary controls
2.4	In-vehicle technology and systems
2.5	Observations and mirrors
2.6	Communications, signs and signals
2.7	Correct positioning on the road

UNIT 2.1 Pre-start routine

Objective

The driver must have a knowledge and understanding of the vehicle, and operate all key safety features.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:	
Pre-start routine	Handbrake (parking brake)	Ensure that the handbrake or parking brake is applied correctly before starting the vehicle.
	Doors	Ensure that all the doors (rear and side) are secured correctly.
	Seat	Make correct adjustments to the seat to ensure a comfortable and safe position when driving.
	Head restraint	The function of the head restraint; Adjust the head restraint so that it is positioned correctly.
	Steering wheel	Ensure that the steering wheel is correctly adjusted before starting the vehicle.
	Mirrors	Ensure that the mirrors are clean and serviceable; Correctly adjust the mirrors, both interior and exterior; The possible consequences of having incorrectly adjusted mirrors.
	Seat belt	The function of the seat belt; Fasten the seat belt and make any necessary adjustments to it; The necessity for all patients/passengers to wear a seat belt and the possible consequences of not wearing a seat belt.
	Gears	Ensure that the vehicle is not in gear before starting.
	Fuel	Ensure that there is sufficient fuel for the journey/shift.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



Can you show me how you would carry out the 'pre-start check routine' before starting on a journey?
What are the implications of starting a journey with low fuel?
What are the consequences of having an incorrectly adjusted seat?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



Do you think you carried out your pre-start routine correctly?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



Why do you think you might have problems if you set out on a journey without checking the emergency services vehicle for fuel?
Do you think you could carry out a pre-start check routine on a vehicle you are not familiar with?
How do you think incorrectly adjusted mirrors could affect your rear-ward vision?

UNIT 2.2 Primary controls

Objectives

The driver must understand the function of the primary vehicle controls and how they impact on the condition, comfort and safety of patient/passengers in an emergency services vehicle. The driver must have the knowledge, skills and understanding to operate the primary controls effectively and accurately. The driver must also be able to use the primary controls in a timely fashion when it is appropriate, and in such a way that their use do not present a distraction.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Foot brake	Operate the foot brake appropriately with correct pressure.
Handbrake or parking brake	Operate the handbrake or parking brake appropriately (especially on inclines, declines and when stopped for a duration).
Accelerator	The characteristics of an emergency services vehicle that affect acceleration. Operate the accelerator appropriately to control the emergency services vehicle's progress and engine speed.
Clutch	Operate the clutch appropriately to ensure smoothness when moving off, stopping and changing gear.
Gears	Operate the gears appropriately with proper selection for emergency services vehicle and engine speed and with consideration for environmental impact.
Steering wheel	Steer appropriately and smoothly when changing direction; Steer quickly when necessary to take evasive action.
Emergency service vehicle transmission	The characteristics of emergency services vehicle specific transmission and be able to operate effectively; for example 4-wheel drive, all-wheel drive and automatic.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



Can you show me how you would move off and change gear?

What is the function of the clutch?

Explain how primary controls affect patient/passenger condition, comfort and safety?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



Do you think you apply the correct pressure to the brakes when you use them?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



The car behind just sounded their horn at you. How might you have used your mirrors better to avoid that?

How do you think other road users react when they recognise your emergency services vehicle approaching?

UNIT 2.3 Secondary controls

Objective

The driver must have the knowledge, understanding and skills to operate secondary controls in the vehicle effectively, accurately and in a timely fashion when it is appropriate to do so.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Windscreen wipers and washers	The importance of using the windscreen wipers and washer controls and the potential consequences of not using them appropriately; Operate the windscreen wiper and washer controls while driving.
Lights	The importance of using the lights correctly, and the potential consequences of not using them appropriately; Operate the emergency services vehicle lights while driving.
Front and rear demisters	The location of the front and rear demister controls; When, where and how to use the demisters at the appropriate times and the potential consequences of not using them appropriately; Operate demisters when driving; The potential consequences of an unclear windscreen (interior).
Climate control (if available)	Operate the climate control when driving; The potential consequences of not using the climate control.
Windows, doors and door locks	Operate windows, doors and door locks; Use them and know the potential consequences of not using them appropriately.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



Can you please show me the windscreen wiper controls and how to operate them?
If the windscreen is misted up on the inside, how would you clear it using the controls?
When is it illegal to sound the horn?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



During our last drive it began to rain very heavily. Do you think that you used the windscreen wipers correctly?
Do you think you employed optimal use of the air conditioning during our last drive?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



The biggest danger to any driver is being unable to see properly, so how heavy would the rain have to be before you would use a faster speed on your windscreen wipers?
What vehicles in your organisation have poor demisting features and how do you deal with this issue?

UNIT 2.4 In-vehicle technology and systems


Objective

The driver must have a basic understanding of in-vehicle technology systems (as fitted). The driver must be able to demonstrate using in-vehicle technology and systems (as fitted).

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
In-vehicle technology and systems	<p>The location and function and operate use of in-vehicle technology and systems – for example, Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS), airbags, satellite navigation, Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) systems, the entertainment system, and so on;</p> <p>Obtain information relating to the correct use of in-vehicle technology and systems;</p> <p>Interpret any warning lights relating to in-vehicle technology.</p> <p>The potential distraction that some in-vehicle technology and systems can cause.</p>
Category specific technology and systems	<p>The emergency services vehicle specific technology and driving aids, for example, 4 wheel drive, engine retarders and transmission retarders and so on.</p>

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills




What is the meaning of the initials 'ABS' and what are the benefits of ABS?

Can you please show me how you would control the communications system without being distracted from the road?

Why are airbags fitted to vehicles?

Can you explain the function of a satellite navigation system?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



Why might looking at the radio while driving cause you problems?

Do you know how to engage the 4-wheel drive setting on vehicles in your organisation?

Do you understand why you might engage a differential lock on a 4-wheel drive vehicle?

UNIT 2.5 Observations and mirrors

Objective

The driver must know and understand and/or demonstrate correct and appropriate use of the mirrors and of active quality observations. The driver must also be aware of the dangers and risks that come with a lack of observation and ineffective use of mirrors when driving an emergency services vehicle.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Mirrors	When, where and why to use the mirrors; Use the mirrors in a safe and effective way, and following the MSMM (Mirrors, Signal, Mirrors, Manoeuvre) routine; The potential hazards and dangers to the sides and rear of the emergency services vehicle while maintaining effective forward observation.
Safety glances and observations	When, where and why to take safety glances and observations; Take safety glances and observations in an effective and safe way, ensuring that it is safe before moving off, changing position, changing direction or stopping.
Scanning	When, where, why and how to scan effectively for potential hazards or dangers, and to act appropriately to the surroundings on a continual basis.
Blind spots	When, where, why and how to effectively identify and compensate for blind spots in all directions around the emergency services vehicle – for example, those caused by the window pillars and specific vehicle characteristics.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



- Why is it necessary to be aware of traffic following behind?
- How should you check your blind spot when moving away from the kerb?
- How would you take effective observations while driving through this housing estate?
- Can you describe the meaning of 'blind spots'?
- What do the initials 'MSMM' mean?
- Why is it essential to take quality observations at a T-junction?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



- When you changed lanes just now, what did you see when you looked in your mirrors?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



- What else were you thinking about when you were changing lanes?
- What are the factors that lead you to use your mirrors while driving?
- How would you feel if someone pulled out in front of you from a parking space without checking their blind spot and you almost crashed into them?

Unit 2.6 Communications, signs and signals

Objective

The driver must have the knowledge, understanding and skills to use signals correctly and must be able to respond appropriately to traffic signs, signals and other types of communication while driving an emergency services vehicle. The driver must have the knowledge, understanding and skills to use emergency lights and sirens appropriately.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Road signage	Identify and comply with road signs; The rules applying to road signs and the potential consequences of non-compliance.
Gardaí, school wardens, customs officials, persons in charge of animals	Signals and directions given by Gardaí, customs officials, school wardens, and persons in charge of animals; Comply with such signals and directions; The potential consequences of non-compliance.
Indicators	When, where and how to use indicators to give effective advance communication to other road users; Interpret the indicator signals given by other vehicles.
Hand signals	The benefit of hand signals to other road users; When, where and how to use hand signals; Interpret and act on the hand signals given by other persons.
Headlights	When, where and how to use headlights correctly and the legal requirements relating to the use of headlights; Interpret the use of lights by other vehicles; The potential consequences of the misuse of headlights.
Emergency lights and sirens	The relevant organisational policy on using emergency lights and sirens; The potential consequences of using emergency lights and sirens on other road users
Hazard warning lights	When, where and how to use hazard warning lights; Interpret the use of hazard warning lights by other vehicles.
Horn	When, where and how to use the horn; Interpret the use of the horn by other vehicles; The potential consequences of misuse of the horn.
Other emergency services vehicle lighting and sirens	Interpret other emergency services vehicle lighting and sirens and how to act appropriately.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



- When should you use hazard warning lights?
- On what occasions must you use dipped headlights?
- What does a flashing amber light at a pelican pedestrian crossing mean?
- When should you use emergency lights and sirens?
- How would you indicate to traffic that you were taking the third exit from a roundabout?
- Can you please demonstrate how you would use a hand signal to inform following traffic that you intend to turn left?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



- Do you think you acted in the right way when you met another emergency services vehicle on the road?
- Do you think you indicated in a timely manner when taking the third exit at the last roundabout?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



- What were your reasons for slowing down when meeting oncoming traffic with their headlights on?
- What would the possible consequences be of using emergency lights and sirens on other road users?
- How do you think you would feel if you were driving behind a car whose driver did not use indicators or signalled when changing direction?
- What effect do you think late indicating might have on other drivers?

UNIT 2.7 Correct positioning on the road

Objective

The driver must have the knowledge, understanding and skills to demonstrate a correct and safe position on the road, and to maintain a safe braking distance while driving a vehicle having regard to the vehicles load and towing capacity. The respective organisational policy applies where appropriate.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Positioning on the straight, in traffic lanes, and on bends	Correctly position the emergency services vehicle on the straight, in traffic lanes and on bends; The potential consequences of incorrect positioning.
Approaching and emerging from junctions	Correctly position the emergency services vehicle when approaching, travelling around and leaving junctions (major to minor and minor to major); The potential consequences of incorrect positioning.
Negotiating roundabouts	Correctly position the emergency services vehicle when entering, travelling around and leaving roundabouts; The potential consequences of incorrect positioning when negotiating roundabouts.
Entering and exiting road or rail crossings	Correctly position the emergency services vehicle when approaching, entering and exiting road or rail crossings; The potential consequences of incorrect positioning or of stopping in an incorrect position at road or rail crossings.
Positioning on dual carriageways	Correctly position the emergency services vehicle when joining, driving on or leaving dual carriageways; The potential consequences of incorrect positioning on dual carriageways.
Positioning on motorways	Correctly position the emergency services vehicle when joining, driving on or leaving motorways; The potential consequences of incorrect positioning on motorways.
Positioning of emergency service vehicle at incidents/sites	Correctly position an emergency services vehicle at an incident (in compliance with organisational policy where applicable); The potential consequences of incorrect positioning at incidents/sites.
Reversing or performing turnabouts	Correctly position the emergency services vehicle when reversing or performing a turnabout (in compliance with organisational policy where applicable); The potential consequences of incorrect positioning when reversing or performing a turnabout.
Parking, stopping in confined spaces and stopping in traffic	Correctly and legally position the emergency services vehicle when parking, stopping in confined spaces and stopping in traffic; The potential consequences of incorrect positioning when parking, stopping in confined spaces and stopping in traffic.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



Can you please demonstrate how you would take the first exit at a roundabout?

On a three-lane motorway, what is the purpose of the lane nearest to the central median?

Can you please demonstrate the correct position when reversing around a corner?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



Do you think that the reverse manoeuvre you carried out was done in a competent manner?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



How would you react to someone driving very close behind you on a dual carriageway?

Which vehicles in your organisation are more difficult to manoeuvre and why?

Module 3: The fundamentals of road sharing

This module requires drivers to demonstrate sharing the road with an attitude that supports safety and responsible driving. To do this, drivers must demonstrate their ability to anticipate and react to different road traffic situations and to interact with other road users, showing a high level of regard for their own safety and that of all other road users.

Module 3: Units

This module includes the following units:

3.1	Sharing the road
3.2	Speed
3.3	Anticipation and reactions
3.4	Changing direction
3.5	Night driving
3.6	Driving in adverse weather conditions
3.7	Driving in an eco-efficient manner
3.8	Driving calmly

UNIT 3.1 Sharing the road

Objective

The driver must have the knowledge, understanding and skills to be able to share the road safely, to drive a vehicle without undue hesitancy, to give priority where necessary, and to show due care for themselves and other road users.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Passing stationary vehicles	When and where it is safe to pass stationary vehicles; Pass stationary vehicles safely, being aware of any potential dangers; Anticipate the actions of approaching traffic when passing stationary vehicles.
Passing cyclists and other road users	When and where it is safe to pass cyclists and other road users; Pass cyclists and other road users safely, being aware of any potential dangers and taking into account the prevailing weather and traffic conditions.
Crossing and joining roads	When and where it is safe to cross and join roads; Cross and join roads safely, being aware of any potential dangers at controlled and uncontrolled junctions.
Overtaking and being overtaken	When and where it is safe for one vehicle to overtake another; Overtake another vehicle safely, being aware of the potential dangers of doing so; and The potential dangers that may arise when being overtaken by another vehicle.
Reaction of other drivers to an Emergency Service Vehicle	Anticipate and deal with the possible reactions of other road users to the presence of an emergency service vehicle
Reaction of animals to an Emergency Service Vehicle	Anticipate and deal with the possible reactions of animals to the presence of an emergency service vehicle

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



What precautions should you take when overtaking a cyclist?
When joining a road of equal importance at an uncontrolled junction, who should you yield to?
Can you explain how you would overtake stationary vehicles safely?
Why overtaking with an emergency services vehicle poses special problems?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



Do you think you left adequate space between you and the stationary vehicles when overtaking?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



When you were driving down the narrow street and you were forced to almost stop, how do you think the other drivers reacted to your driving and how did the other drivers' behaviour affect you?

Unit 3.2 Managing speed

Objective

The driver must have the knowledge, understanding and skills to drive at a speed that is appropriate for the prevailing conditions. In doing so, the driver must take into account the safety of all occupants of the vehicle (patients/passengers) and that of all other road users, particularly vulnerable road users.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Speed limits	Why speed limits are necessary and be aware of the legal responsibility to comply with them; Adjust the speed of the emergency services vehicle to comply with speed limits; Explain that speed limits are an upper limit only and not a target speed.
Emergency services vehicle dynamics and stopping distances	The stopping distances and of how the load or weight of the emergency services vehicle may significantly affect stopping distance; Stop the emergency services vehicle at different speed with respect to patients/passengers condition, comfort and safety.
Regulating the speed of the emergency services vehicle	Assess and adjust the speed of the emergency services vehicle to suit the prevailing conditions; Assess and adjust the speed of the emergency services vehicle to suit patient/passenger condition, comfort and safety; Assess and adjust the speed of the emergency services vehicle to suit the prevailing conditions, in different situations and without undue hesitancy; Interpret the speed of other vehicles and react appropriately.
Appropriate and inappropriate speed	Drive at an appropriate speed at all times; The potential consequences of driving too fast for the prevailing road and traffic conditions; How speed affects stopping distances.
Adverse weather conditions	The stopping distances for emergency service vehicle in adverse weather conditions, at different speed, and in different road conditions; Adjust speed of the emergency services vehicle to suit prevailing conditions.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



How would the weight/characteristics of the vehicle effect the stopping distance of the vehicle?

How does speed and/or the load or carriage of goods affect the stopping distance of your emergency services vehicle?

What is the maximum speed limit for your vehicle on a motorway?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



Do you think you maintained a good speed while driving on that section of dual carriageway?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



Do you think your speed was appropriate as you drove through this housing estate?

Why did you have to brake hard before you turned left at the junction and what could have been the consequences?

Why did you speed up when overtaken by that car on the main road?

What are the possible consequences for patients/passengers condition, comfort and safety if you drive at an inappropriate speed?

UNIT 3.3 Anticipation and reaction

Objective

The driver must have the knowledge, understanding and skills to anticipate and react to all hazards, to drive at different speed, and to drive in a competent and defensive manner in challenging situations. The driver must be able to manage all hazards and risks while driving on all road traffic situations.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Road junctions	When, where, why and how to scan for road junctions; Anticipate hazards relating to road junctions, to take the necessary precautions and react appropriately.
Parked vehicles	When, where, why and how to scan for parked vehicles; Anticipate hazards relating to parked vehicles, take the necessary precautions and react appropriately.
Pedestrian, tramway crossings and tunnels	When, where, why and how to scan for pedestrian and tramway crossings; Anticipate hazards relating to pedestrian and tramway crossings, take the necessary precautions and react appropriately.
Motorcyclists and cyclists	When, where, why and how to scan for cyclists and motorcyclists; Anticipate hazards relating to cyclists and motorcyclists, take the necessary precautions and react appropriately.
Vulnerable road users	When, where, why and how to scan for vulnerable road users; Anticipate hazards relating to vulnerable road users, take the necessary precautions and react appropriately.
Other hazards	When, where, why and how to scan for other hazards; Anticipate all hazards, take the necessary precautions and react correctly and decisively whilst driving.
Recognising and managing the risks associated with the safety of others	Scan effectively for any imminent or potential hazards associated with the safety of others – for example, that of pedestrians waiting at a pedestrian crossing; Take actual and potential dangers into account, recognise and manage the risks associated with the safety of others, and take the necessary and appropriate actions to mitigate those risks.
Driving defensively	The importance of driving defensively at all times, while identifying and managing risks and dangers, maintaining reasonable progress, and avoiding undue hesitation.
Cooperating with other road users	Effective cooperation with other road users without impeding them; Identify hazards and obstacles, and deal with them effectively, while showing a high level of cooperation with other road users.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



Could you demonstrate to me how you would turn right at a set of traffic lights, interacting correctly with other road users?

Could you please demonstrate how you drive defensively through the town?

Can you explain how you would deal with someone crossing the road ahead who is slightly impeding your right of way?

Could you please drive down the Main Street of the town? I'd like you to observe the situations as they arise and deal with them accordingly.

When turning left at a yield sign, what should you look out for?

How would you deal with road works?

How would you react to the behaviour of this cyclist ahead?

What precautions should you take when approaching busy side roads?

How should you drive through this housing estate where there are a lot of parked vehicles?

Can you explain how you would identify and negotiate a zebra crossing?

How would you approach and negotiate a staggered junction?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



Did you leave enough space between yourself and the vehicles coming the other way on that street?

When you realised that the person in the parked car was going to open the door, what should you have done?

Do you think you acted appropriately when you saw those children on the road?

Do you think you slowed down soon enough when you saw that delivery van unloading on the Main Street?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



Why did you not slow down when approaching that pedestrian crossing?

When you saw the driver of that blue car attempting to turn in the road, why did you not allow her to complete the manoeuvre?

Why did you slow down so much when passing the school gates?

Why did you think it necessary to slow down when you came across the horse riders on the road?

UNIT 3.4 Changing direction

Objective

The driver must have the knowledge, understanding and skills to drive safely at different speed and in challenging situations, while showing due care for him or herself and for all other road users while driving an emergency services vehicle. The driver must be able to read the road ahead, and change direction or course in a safe and timely manner in all road traffic situations.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Changing course safely with due regard to traffic controls	When, where and why to change course or direction; Change course or direction safely, while anticipating and reacting correctly to all traffic controls.
Changing course with due regard for other road users	When, where and why to change course or direction; Change direction safely, and with due regard for all other road users.
Yielding and progressing where necessary	When, where and why to yield to other road users or to progress; The potential consequences of not yielding to others where it is appropriate; Yield or progress as necessary.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



Can you demonstrate the standard routine that should be followed when turning right?
When turning left at a yield sign, what should you look out for?
How would you change lanes on a busy dual carriageway?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



Do you think you indicated at the right time when you approached that right turn?
How well do you think you coped with the busy junctions you had to negotiate today?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



Why did you choose to move off when you did when you turned right at the last set of traffic lights?
Did you feel annoyed when the van failed to yield to you at the last roundabout?
What did you notice while approaching that green traffic light that prompted you to slow down so much before you turned left?

UNIT 3.5 Night driving

Objective

The driver must have the knowledge, understanding and skills to drive at night and in conditions of poor visibility. In doing so, the driver must drive at a different speed and in challenging situations, and must manage the risks associated with night driving and poor lighting conditions in an emergency services vehicle.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
The symptoms of poor night vision	The symptoms of poor night vision, and the difficulties or dangers that it can lead to.
Driving in the dark and poor lighting conditions	Adapt driving behaviour in the dark and in poor lighting conditions, including at dawn and dusk.
The correct use of emergency services vehicle lighting and the appropriate response to other vehicle lighting	Use the correct lighting at the correct and appropriate time and conditions – for example, when to dip lights or when to use fog lights.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



- How should you deal with the dazzle of lights from oncoming vehicles at night?
- How would extra weight in the rear of your emergency services vehicle affect your headlights?
- When should you dip your headlights?
- How would you react to another road user travelling towards you with their full beam on?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



- How do you think you coped with the dazzle of oncoming traffic during that practice drive?
- How would driving at night affect your speed?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



- What aspects of driving at night do you find most difficult to cope with and why?

UNIT 3.6 Driving in adverse weather conditions

Objective

The driver must have the knowledge, understanding and skills to adjust driving behaviour and maintain safe control of the vehicle in adverse weather conditions such as snow, ice, fog, strong winds and heavy rain etc. The driver must be able to drive in adverse weather conditions safely, while taking all necessary precautions. The driver must also be able to make responsible judgements on the suitability of the prevailing conditions for driving.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Checking the weather forecast	Check the weather forecast; Identify and access sources of relevant information relating to weather.
Assessing the risks and implications of driving in adverse weather conditions	Assess weather conditions and determining if they are suitable or unsuitable for driving; Assess the risks and implications of driving in adverse weather conditions.
Driving in an appropriate manner for the prevailing conditions	Drive in a manner that is suited to the prevailing weather conditions.
Recognising the symptoms of poor traction	The symptoms of an emergency services vehicle losing traction; Respond appropriately when an emergency services vehicle loses traction – for example, due to aquaplaning, icy or other slippery conditions.
Being aware of increased stopping distances in extreme conditions	How extreme conditions can affect stopping distance; Judge stopping distances in extreme slippery conditions.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



Can you please explain to me the appropriate precautions you should take when driving in fog?

Can you please tell me what the stopping distance at 50 km/h is when driving on a wet road?

How would you determine if it was safe to drive on an icy road?

Would you engage 4-wheel-drive in adverse weather conditions if you had the option and why?

What is the purpose of a differential lock?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



Do you think that the distance you left between yourself and the car in front was adequate for these slippery conditions?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



Why were you driving so close to that van on the dual carriageway in this wet weather?

UNIT 3.7 Driving in an eco-efficient manner

Objective

The driver must have a knowledge and understanding of the environmental impact of driving, and must be able to demonstrate the ability to drive in an eco-efficient manner.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Using primary controls in an environmentally friendly manner	The environmental impact of driving; Use the primary controls of the vehicle in a manner that is consistent with minimal environmental impact.
Planning trips in an eco-efficient manner	Plan a trip in the most eco-efficient manner; Take different traffic conditions into account when planning a trip; Make good judgements on the necessity or otherwise of undertaking a journey.
Maintaining constant speed when possible	The benefits of maintaining (where possible) a constant safe speed and avoiding unnecessary harsh braking or acceleration;
Using gears and engine in an eco-friendly manner	Use the gears and engine braking in ways that use fuel economically;

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



How would you use the gears to reduce the impact of your driving on the environment?
What are the advantages of maintaining a constant speed when travelling on a journey?
What should you take into consideration (when planning a trip) to use your vehicle in a more eco-friendly manner?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



During our last lesson, how often do you think you selected the correct gear?
How would improper use of the gears bring about a negative impact on the environment?
Do some types of fuel have a lower impact on the environment?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



What do you think are the benefits of driving in an eco-efficient manner?
What were your reasons for continuing to drive in second gear on that long straight stretch of road and what might be the environmental consequences of always driving like that?

UNIT 3.8 Driving calmly

Objective

The driver must understand that their driving will affect the public's perception of their respective organisations and understand how equally it reflects on their profession's reputation. The driver must have the knowledge, understanding and skills to drive calmly; and must exercise the necessary discipline to control sudden impulses, aggression and any other distracting emotions which may compromise their driving.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Reacting appropriately to other road users	Interact calmly with other road users at all times and particularly in relation to vulnerable road users.
Managing internal and external distractions	Manage any internal or external distractions; For example, when dealing with distractions from passengers/patients.
Dealing with and controlling peer pressure	Deal with peer pressure; For example, when dealing with colleagues encouraging unsafe/unacceptable driving behaviour.
Dealing with administrative timelines and performance criteria	Manages and understands importance of safety, relative to administrative timelines Understands the overriding importance of the need to make progress safely notwithstanding any performance criteria, which may be set for that service. (E.g. Turnout times or attendance time targets)

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



How would you turn right safely at a busy junction that incorporates pedestrian walkways and filter lights?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



How well do you think you coped when the car stalled at the traffic lights?
How well do you think you drove through that busy thoroughfare?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



Why were you so upset at that other driver for making that mistake at the junction?
Can you recall when you were most upset while driving an emergency services vehicle and what was the cause?



EMERGENCY SERVICES DRIVING STANDARD

LEVEL 2

Introduction

ESDS Level 2 builds substantially on the knowledge, understanding and skills of the ESDS Level 1. Entrants to Level 2 will complete the combined learning outcomes of ESDS Level 1 and ESDS Level 2.

ESDS Level 2 describes the learning outcomes and assessment for emergency service drivers that includes the principles and skill set of “Roadcraft”. The aim of *Roadcraft* is to improve drivers’ own ability. It is a widely recognised system of vehicle control that assists drivers to apply a systematic approach to managing driving hazards. *Roadcraft* increases safety through a greater understanding and awareness of all the factors that affect driving including the drivers’ capabilities, vehicle characteristics and the road, weather and traffic conditions. This gives the driver more time to react in complex situations.

ESDS Level 2 places emphasis on two aspects of the learning process and they are self-assessment and self-reflection. Research concludes that these skills are key components in the learning process associated with higher levels in the Goals for Driver Education (GDE) Matrix (Hatakka, et al, 2002).

ESDS Level 2 – Assessment process

The Emergency Services Driving Standard reflects the need for higher standards of driving and aims to develop and sustain a spirit of cooperation, caution and courtesy in emergency service vehicle drivers. Emergency service drivers should aim to achieve an exemplary standard of driving that acts as a positive example to other road users. The overarching aim of this driving standard is to significantly reduce the risks created by driving emergency service vehicles; to benefit their drivers and other road users, and provide for the safety and comfort of patients/passengers as may arise.

The objective of ESDS Level 2 assessment is to ensure that the knowledge, skills and understanding at that level has been achieved. The assessment consists of a theoretical and practical element. The assessment will be carried out by registered ESDS Assessors.

Driver recertification will be a requirement in order to maintain ESDS certification within five years from the issue date of previous certification in that ESDS level and vehicle category.

All ESDS certification will be RSA approved and be transferable between emergency services. This interoperability shall not preclude an organisation from determining if refresher or additional training is required in the case of a member who has been trained or assessed by another organisation.

Eligibility criteria for assessment

The following are the requirements for all candidates for ESDS Level 2 assessment.

Candidates must:

- Hold the relevant driving licence qualification for the category of vehicle for which they are applying.
- Successfully complete the specific ESDS theory test for the specific vehicle category prior to the drive assessment.
- Be nominated for assessment by an ESDS Panel member organisation.
- Nominations for assessment by the ESDS Panel member organisation must specify the vehicle category in which the assessment will be undertaken.

ESDS Level 2 modules

ESDS Level 2 consists of the following 3 modules:

Module	Description
Recognise, manage and avoid risk	This module requires drivers to acquire the important mental skills and attitudes for driving emergency service vehicles safely and calmly at all times. By adopting such mental skills and attitudes, drivers will enhance the more tangible driving skills evident in this level.
Vehicle control	This module requires drivers to acquire knowledge, understanding and skills of the fundamentals of <i>Roadcraft</i> . They are expected to demonstrate driving emergency service vehicles using the system of vehicle control with due regard to the prevailing road, weather and traffic conditions taking account of patient/passenger comfort and vehicle sympathy.
Control in traffic situations	The units in this module outline the application of <i>Roadcraft</i> and the system of vehicle control in various traffic situations. Drivers will demonstrate competency in a range of traffic situations including positioning, cornering and overtaking. The emphasis is on safety and the driver displaying an increased awareness, recognising real and potential hazards and adopting the system of driving as outlined in <i>Roadcraft</i> .

Module 4: Recognise manage and avoid risks

This module requires drivers to acquire the important mental skills and attitudes for driving emergency service vehicles safely and calmly at all times. By adopting such mental skills and attitudes, drivers will improve the more tangible driving skills learned in this level.

Module 4: Units

This module includes the following units:

4.1	Mental skills for better driving
4.2	Intelligent use of speed
4.3	Advanced observation and anticipation techniques
4.4	Dynamic risk assessment

UNIT 4.1 Mental skills for better driving

Objective

The driver must have the knowledge, understanding and skills to mentally process information while recognising the attitudes and emotional factors that may impede them especially “red mist”. *Red mist* or “target fixation” are terms used to describe the state of mind of drivers who are target or goal fixated to the detriment of vehicle control and safe driving. The driver must demonstrate vehicle control and safe driving irrespective of the nature and/or the urgency of the incident.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Attitudes and behaviour	Concentrate on the driving task in the face of any other distractions.
Control of “red mist”	Maintain a calm, considerate and professional manner at all times and avoid “red mist”. Control the tendency to personalise at all times when driving Recognise the need to place safe driving above the requirement to respond to an incident or duty.
Physical or physiological factors	Recognise and respond appropriately to the effects of fatigue, adrenaline, stress and other physical or physiological factors that may impair judgement, performance and decision making.
Self-assessment and self-reflection	Accurately assesses own performance and applies the experience to develop competence.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



What are the factors that can impair the mental skills required for driving?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



How did you feel when you were impeded from making progress?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



Why are the higher mental skills especially important for drivers of emergency service vehicles?

Why is it essential to maintain your concentration when driving on familiar routes?

UNIT 4.2 Intelligent use of speed

Objective

The driver must have the knowledge, understanding and skills to use speed safely while driving emergency services vehicles. The driver must demonstrate an ability to use the system of vehicle control to process information (even at higher speeds) and make decisions and negotiate hazards safely and smoothly.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Using speed safely	Accurately judge the speed of the vehicle and that of other vehicles relative to your proposed actions and the prevailing circumstances (speed and distance judgement). Drive within competence at a speed which is appropriate to the circumstances.
Progression	Make appropriate progress whilst recognising the need for restraint and safety at all times.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



What is the relationship between inappropriate speed and collision involvement?
In what way does speed affect your ability to observe your environment?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



Do you think you maintained a safe stopping distance between yourself and other traffic while you were travelling on the busy section of the Naas dual carriageway?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



Why did you not maintain a constant speed round the last bend?

UNIT 4.3 Advanced observation and anticipation techniques

Objective

The driver must develop their knowledge, understanding and skills to improve observations while driving emergency service vehicles. Using advanced observation and early anticipation techniques will assist the driver to anticipate/identify hazards early, plan ahead and formulate flexible driving plans.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Information gathering	Gather information at an early stage through the accurate use of observations and other senses.
Improved observation	Use 'observation links' to improve anticipation of road and traffic conditions.
Planning	From information gathered correctly anticipate all driving situations; Formulate flexible driving plans.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



What hazards would you look out for on road surfaces?
Describe three examples of observation links?
What is the purpose of a Driving Plan?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



What were your contingency plans if the driver of the school bus had moved out in front of you?
How do you feel you dealt with the post van?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



The ability to observe is a vital trait of a good driver, you did that quite well on that urban section of road. Why do you think you had to brake hard behind the post van when he indicated?

UNIT 4.4 Dynamic risk assessment

Objective

The driver must develop their knowledge, understanding and skills to improve their ability to carry out a dynamic risk assessment. Dynamic risk assessment is the continuous assessment of risk in rapidly changing circumstances in order to react as necessary, and ensure an acceptable level of safety, so far as reasonably practicable.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Dynamic risk assessment	Accurately assess risks; Reacts appropriately utilising the system of vehicle control (information, position, speed, gear and acceleration).

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



What is meant by dynamic risk assessment?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



What was your dynamic risk assessment as you approached the national school?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



Why is dynamic risk assessment important to safe driving?

Module 5: Vehicle control

This module requires drivers to acquire knowledge, understanding and skills of the fundamentals of Roadcraft. They are expected to demonstrate driving emergency service vehicles using the system of vehicle control with due regard to the prevailing road, weather and traffic conditions taking account of patient/passenger comfort and vehicle sympathy.

Module 5: Units

This module includes the following units:

5.1	System of vehicle control
5.2	Skill of vehicle control
5.3	Controlling vehicle stability
5.4	Use and interpretation of driving signals

UNIT 5.1 System of vehicle control

Objective

The system of vehicle control includes a systematic approach to managing hazards while driving emergency service vehicles. The driver will be able to respond dynamically and safely to hazards and situations as they occur. The system of vehicle control maintains vehicle stability through enhanced observations; anticipation and planning in addition to organised use of vehicle controls.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Information	Process information throughout all phases of the system by taking, using and giving information.
Position	Position vehicle to pass hazards safely and smoothly taking into account other road users including vulnerable road users and animals.
Speed	Adjust speed as necessary by using accelerator or brake to achieve the correct speed to manoeuvre safely.
Gear	Select the appropriate responsive gear for that speed; Brake gear overlap should only be used in certain circumstances.
Acceleration	Apply the correct degree of acceleration to negotiate the hazard safely; Use the accelerator to maintain speed and stability through the hazard.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



What are the 5 phases in the system of vehicle control?
What is a hazard?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



Did you apply the system in sequence on the approach to the parked delivery truck?
Do you think that you had the correct gear selected on the approach to slower moving vehicles you were about to overtake?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



Why does the system of vehicle control increase the safety of your driving?

UNIT 5.2 Skill of vehicle control


Objective

The driver must understand and operate the accelerator, brakes, gears and steering controls to maintain complete control over the emergency service vehicle while moving, changing direction and stopping. The driver must also understand how these vehicle controls impact on the condition, comfort and safety of patient/passengers.

Guidance


Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Acceleration	Accurately use the accelerator to safely and smoothly control the vehicle.
Brakes	Apply the requisite amount of braking at the correct time to safely control the vehicle.
Gears/Clutch	Use the gears/clutch controls smoothly and accurately using the required techniques to ensure the correct gear is selected for the circumstances.
Steering	Position the vehicle by accurate steering, demonstrating the appropriate technique at all times; Adapt steering techniques as necessary whilst manoeuvring.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills




- Why do you need to be in the correct gear to accelerate?
- What is the basic driving safety rule?
- What is braking sense?
- What is acceleration sense?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



- Did you apply the brakes in a safe and smooth manner at all times?
- Did you make effective gear changes during your drive?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



- Why did the vehicle destabilise during your gear changes?
- How might the incorrect use of primary controls affect patient/passenger condition, comfort and safety?

UNIT 5.3 Controlling vehicle stability

Objective

The driver must have the knowledge, understanding and skills to avoid skidding and demonstrate the appropriate action if/when a skid develops while driving an emergency service vehicle.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Minimising skidding	The causes of skidding and how to minimise the risk of same.
ADAS systems	The working and limitations of ADAS systems.
Skid correction	How to correct various types of skid.
Weather and road conditions	The effects of driving in adverse weather, various road surfaces and surface water.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



- What are the main causes of skidding?
- What is meant by under steer and over steer?
- Are safety devices a replacement for driving skills?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



- Do you think you took the appropriate action on the approach to the build-up of surface water on the main road?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



- Why do you think the traction control activated when you moved off on the gravel surface?

UNIT 5.4 Use and interpretation of driving signals

Objective

The driver must have the knowledge, understanding and skills to use and interpret driving signals when driving emergency service vehicles. Providing other road users with information is a key component of information processing in the system of vehicle control.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Driving signals	Use of signals to inform other road users of presence and intention; Correctly interpret signals given by others.
Range of signals	The range includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• arm signals;• brake lights;• courtesy signals• hazard warning lights;• headlights;• horns signals;• indicators;• position of the vehicle.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



What is the purpose of giving a signal?

What are the various types of signals you could use to give information to other road users?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



Did you give any “courtesy signals” in your last drive?

Would you have considered any other signals at the approach to the car reversing from the driveway?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



How do “courtesy signals” influence the actions of other drivers?

When you were beckoned across the busy junction by the driver coming in the opposite direction why did you feel it was unnecessary to check that it was safe to move?

Module 6: Control in traffic situations

The units in this module outline the application of Roadcraft and the system of vehicle control in various traffic situations. Drivers will demonstrate competency in a range of traffic situations including positioning, cornering and overtaking. The emphasis is on safety and the driver displaying an increased awareness, recognising real and potential hazards and adopting the system of driving as outlined in Roadcraft.

Module 6: Units

This module includes the following units:

6.1	Advantageous positioning
6.2	Principles of cornering
6.3	Overtaking: planning and techniques
6.4	Multi-lane roadways

UNIT 6.1 Advantageous positioning

Objective

The driver must have the knowledge, understanding and skills to accurately and safely position the emergency service vehicle. The driver must be able to make progress in traffic, negotiate bends and corners with due regard for the condition, comfort and safety of patients/passengers. By adopting an advantageous position, the drivers view and awareness of other road users and hazards is greatly improved.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Safety position	Adapt the safety position relative to prevailing hazards.
Following and overtaking	The principles of positioning in relation to the following and overtaking of other vehicles.
Cornering	The principles of positioning in relation to the negotiation of a corner, or series of corners.
Improving vision	The principles of positioning to obtain the best view.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



What is the most important factor in choosing your road position?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



When you drove down the road with restricted space on both sides, did you feel your positioning was appropriate?

Was your position advantageous when following behind the white truck?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



Why did you think it was necessary to pass nearside to nearside when turning right at the last junction?

Why did your road position impede your early view of the pedestrian between the parked vehicles?

UNIT 6.2 Principles of cornering


Objective

The driver must have the knowledge, understanding and skills to apply the system of vehicle control to negotiate corners safely. The driver must understand the cornering forces while considering the information gained from limit point analysis, in applying the general principles when driving around a corner or through a curve or bend in the road.


Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Principles of cornering	Accurately and correctly assess corners and bends while taking account of all relevant factors.
Negotiate corners and bends	The system of vehicle control for cornering (information, position, speed, gear and acceleration).


Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills

	<p>What are the four principles of cornering?</p> <p>What are the 3 main forces that reduce grip?</p> <p>What other factors may reduce grip?</p> <p>Explain the use of limit point?</p>
--	---

Sample questions to promote self-assessment

	<p>Do you think your cornering was affected in any way on the last left hand bend by virtue of the camber on that turn?</p> <p>Did you achieve the correct speed on the approach to the left hand bend near the railway bridge?</p>
---	---

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection

	<p>Why did you need to readjust your speed on the last right hand bend?</p> <p>Why did the vehicle destabilise at the last bend?</p>
---	--

UNIT 6.3 Overtaking: planning and techniques

Objective

The driver must have the knowledge, understanding and skills to demonstrate safe overtaking while negotiating the possibility of secondary and other dynamic hazards. The driver must be able to overtake safely with due consideration for the condition, comfort and safety of patients/passengers in a vehicle.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Stages of overtaking	The stages of overtaking (information, position, speed, gear and acceleration).
Overtaking	Identify, plan and execute all overtaking manoeuvres in a safe manner.
Safety	The correct degree of restraint at all times.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



What are the seven key safety points for overtaking?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



Do you think that your assessment of potential hazards was good on the approach to the slow moving tractor and large trailer?

Do you think that your vehicle was properly positioned in advance of the overtake manoeuvre?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



What elements of planning were missed when you were forced to reconsider your decision to overtake?

What are the possible consequences of not checking your mirrors before overtaking?

UNIT 6.4 Multi-lane roadways

Objective

The driver must have the knowledge, understanding and skills to demonstrate the system of vehicle control while driving an emergency service vehicle on motorways and other multi-lane roadways. The driver must be able to anticipate and react to any additional hazards that are associated with these roadways.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Joining and exiting	Apply the system of vehicle control (information, position, speed, gear and acceleration) when joining and exiting a motorway or multi-carriageway road; Adapt to changes in road layout.
Lane selection	Adopt the correct lane for existing road and traffic conditions.
Hazard awareness	Deal with specific hazards on multi-lane roadways.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



Why do hazardous situations develop more quickly on motorways?
List four things you should do in preparation for driving on a multi-lane carriageway?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



Do you think that you accurately assessed the speed of the HGV on the approach to junction 17?
Do you think that you made good use of “extended observations” on the approach to the filling station after leaving the M8 near Fermoy?
Do you think you could improve your “exiting a motorway” technique in any way?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



Why did you have to almost stop on the slip road when you were joining the M7 at Portlaoise and what could have happened?
What are the possible other signs apart from indicators that may show that a driver is going to change lane on a dual carriageway?



EMERGENCY SERVICES DRIVING STANDARD

LEVEL 3

Introduction

ESDS Level 3 sets out a series of principles and response tactics compatible with *Roadcraft* and focuses on the driver's attitude towards emergency response driving. Creating the right attitude greatly reduces the risks associated with emergency response driving. ESDS Level 3 builds substantially on the knowledge, understanding and skills of the preceding levels. Entrants to ESDS Level 3 will complete the combined learning outcomes of ESDS Level 2 and ESDS Level 3.

The standards as set out will ensure that drivers fully understand their responsibility to manage the risks associated with emergency response driving and in doing so, will help to keep both themselves and the public safe. 'Emergency Response' is defined as driving when using any of the exemptions afforded by the relevant legislation, and/or using emergency warning equipment to facilitate progress.

ESDS Level 3 also places emphasis on self-assessment and self-reflection. Research concludes that these skills are key components in the learning process associated with higher levels in the Goals for Driver Education (GDE) Matrix (Hatakka, et al, 2002).

To ensure continued public support and confidence, emergency response drivers should be courteous and acknowledge assistance from the public. Drivers must be mindful of how the public view their driving behaviour. Drivers responding to incidents who consider it necessary to make use of legal driving exemptions and/or use of emergency warning equipment must ensure that their standard of driving complies with the principles of 'Roadcraft' and the *RSA's ESDS Tactical Response Guide*.

Emergency response drivers are responsible in law for their actions. The statutory exemptions do not afford drivers any protection against compromising safety.

ESDS Level 3 – Assessment process

The objective of an ESDS Level 3 assessment is to ensure that the knowledge, skills and understanding at that level has been achieved. The assessment consists of a theoretical and practical examination. The assessment will be carried out by ESDS Registered Assessors.

Driver recertification will be a requirement in order to maintain ESDS certification within five years from the issue date of previous certification in that ESDS level and vehicle category.

All ESDS certification will be RSA approved and be transferable between emergency services. This interoperability shall not preclude an organisation from determining if refresher or additional training is required in the case of a member who has been trained or assessed by another organisation.

Eligibility criteria for assessment

The following are the requirements for all candidates for ESDS Level 3 assessment.

Candidates must:

- Hold the relevant driving licence qualification for the category of vehicle for which they are applying.
- Successfully complete the specific ESDS theory test for the specific vehicle category prior to the drive assessment.
- Be nominated for assessment by an ESDS Panel member organisation.
- Nominations for assessment by the ESDS Panel member organisation must specify the vehicle category in which the assessment will be undertaken.
- Must be eligible to avail of exemptions under the Road Traffic Act 2010, Section 87.

ESDS Level 3 consists of the following 3 modules:

Module	Description
Managing emergency response	<p>This module requires drivers to acquire the important mental skills and attitudes for driving emergency service vehicles safely and calmly at all times while under emergency response conditions. By adopting such mental skills and attitudes, drivers will increase safety through enhanced information processing and decision making coupled with the driving skill set developed in ESDS Level 2.</p> <p>Drivers are deemed to be in 'Emergency Response' when they are using any of the exemptions afforded to them by the relevant legislation, and/or using emergency warning equipment to facilitate progress.</p>
Driving standards and vehicle assessment	<p>This module requires drivers to consistently display the standards, skills and principles of Roadcraft as set down in ESDS Level 2 while undertaking emergency response driving. Drivers are expected to demonstrate the ability to assess an emergency service vehicle for its suitability for response through its performance, handling characteristics and warning equipment fitted. The response drive should then be adapted accordingly.</p>
Emergency response driving	<p>The units in this module outline the knowledge and skills required to engage in emergency response in various traffic situations. Drivers will demonstrate competency in a range of traffic situations utilising <i>RSA's ESDS Tactical Response Guide</i>.</p>

Module 7: Managing emergency response

This module requires drivers to acquire the important mental skills and attitudes for driving emergency service vehicles safely and calmly at all times while under emergency response conditions. By adopting such mental skills and attitudes, drivers will increase safety through enhanced information processing and decision making coupled with the driving skill set developed in ESDS Level 2.

Drivers are deemed to be in 'Emergency Response' when they are using any of the exemptions afforded to them by the relevant legislation, and/or using emergency warning equipment to facilitate progress.

Module 7: Units

This module includes the following units:

7.1	Mental skills for response driving
7.2	Evaluate response need
7.3	Dynamic risk assessments
7.4	Emergency plans/routes

UNIT 7.1 Mental skills for response driving

Objective

The driver must have the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitude to provide prompt service in response to an incident or task. Drivers must constantly monitor and reduce the amount of risk during each and every response. Safe arrival at the emergency scene shall be, and must always remain, the first priority of all emergency service drivers. Emergency service drivers also have a higher standard of care to provide to the public and must make every attempt possible to provide due regard for the safety of others.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Safety	Prioritise safety above the instinctive urgency to attend to an emergency incident or duty.
Professionalism	Maintain a calm, considerate and professional approach to emergency response driving.
Red mist	Identify and manage the symptoms of 'red mist' during emergency response.
Physical or physiological factors	Recognise and respond appropriately to the effects of fatigue, adrenaline, stress and other physical or physiological factors that may impair judgement, performance and decision making during emergency response.
Understanding of emergency response function	Recognise the importance of safety relative to administrative timelines. The overriding importance of the need to make progress safely notwithstanding any performance criteria which may be set for that service, e.g. turnout times or attendance time targets.
Self-assessment/ self-reflection	Accurately assesses own performance and applies the experience to develop competence.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



What is meant by red mist and how could it be managed?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



What emotions did you experience when the driver of the white van failed to offer you precedence?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



What would you do differently in a similar situation?
Do you think you manage your emotions appropriately?

UNIT 7.2 Evaluate response need

Objective

The driver must have the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitude to assess the nature of the emergency call/information provided and the prevailing conditions and respond in a justified, proportionate and accountable manner.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Response criteria assessment	Assess the justification, proportionality and accountability of any emergency response in relation to the nature of the emergency and the prevailing conditions and hazards.
Response criteria re-evaluation	Continuously re-evaluate whether the response should be maintained given developing information or changing conditions and hazards.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



What are the crucial items to consider when assessing the justification of an emergency response?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



When you commenced the emergency response do you think your actions were proportionate to the prevailing conditions?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



Were all your actions proportionate and accountable during the emergency response?

UNIT 7.3 Dynamic risk assessment

Objective

The driver must develop their knowledge, understanding and skills to improve their ability to carry out a dynamic risk assessment while driving on emergency response. Dynamic risk assessment is the continuous assessment of risk in rapidly changing circumstances in order to react as necessary.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Dynamic risk assessment	Accurately assess risks; React appropriately utilising the system of vehicle control (information, position, speed, gear and acceleration).

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



In the context of Dynamic Risk Assessment why is it necessary to continuously capture data while driving?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



What visual factors influenced your reactions as we exited the motorway at Portlaoise?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



Was your risk assessment of the school bus situation appropriate?
What would you do differently the next time in a similar situation?

UNIT 7.4 Emergency route planning

Objective

The driver must develop their knowledge, understanding and skills to plan and dynamically adjust an emergency response route having regard to safety, distance, road, weather, traffic and any anticipated hazards.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Route planning	Plan an emergency response route having regard to safety, distance, road, weather, traffic and any anticipated hazards.
Route adjustment	Dynamically adjust the route in the face of unpredicted hazards or conditions.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



What are the factors you would consider when evaluating an emergency response route to an incident?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



Could you have avoided the national school on your response route?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



Why might the shortest route not always be the most appropriate response route?

Module 8: Driving standards and vehicle assessment

This module requires drivers to consistently display the standards, skills and principles of Roadcraft as set down in ESDS Level 2 while undertaking emergency response driving. Drivers are expected to demonstrate the ability to assess an emergency service vehicle for its suitability for response through its performance, handling characteristics and warning equipment fitted. The response drive should then be adapted accordingly.

Module 8: Units

This module includes the following units:

8.1	Maintains driving standards
8.2	Vehicle assessment for response

Unit 8.1 Maintains driving standards

Objective

The driver must develop their knowledge and understanding to consistently display the highest driving standards and skills as set out in ESDS Level 2 and the competent operation of warning equipment while driving on emergency response.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Roadcraft and the System of Vehicle Control	Consistently display the highest driving standards and skills while driving on emergency response.
Warning equipment	The competent operation of all emergency service vehicles warning equipment whilst driving on emergency response.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



What are the 5 phases of the system of vehicle control?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



How do you think you applied the system of vehicle control when approaching the last junction?

Were you comfortable operating the warning equipment during the drive?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



Why is “information” the most important element in the system of vehicle control?

Were the benefits of the principles of cornering apparent to you during the drive?

UNIT 8.2 Vehicle assessment for response


Objective

The driver must have the knowledge and understanding of the characteristics and performance limitations of different vehicles and warning equipment and how it affects the emergency response.


Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Vehicle characteristics	The vehicle characteristics and performance limitations, and how it affects the emergency response.
Warning equipment	The effectiveness of the warning equipment fitted to the vehicle, and how it affects the emergency response.


Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills

	What is the meaning of “Vehicle Characteristics”? What is meant by centrifugal force?
---	--

Sample questions to promote self-assessment

	What are the unique characteristics of your vehicle?
---	--

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection

	How may the unique characteristics of your vehicle impact the way you plan your route? What could be the potential consequences of failing to carry out pre-drive checks on emergency service warning equipment? What could be the potential consequences of defective nearside/offside emergency lights?
---	---

Module 9: Emergency response driving

The units in this module outline the knowledge and skills required to engage in emergency response in various traffic situations. Drivers will demonstrate competency in a range of traffic situations utilising *RSA's ESDS Tactical Response Guide*.

Module 9: Units

This module includes the following units:

9.1	Use of legal exemptions
9.2	Progress and restraint
9.3	Anticipation
9.4	Emergency response tactics

UNIT 9.1 Use of legal exemptions

Objective

The driver must have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of all the relevant legislation in respect of emergency response driving. The statutory exemptions do not afford such drivers any protection against compromising safety.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Legislation	An in-depth knowledge of the relevant legislation including statutory exemptions and the limitations of same.
Duty of care	Give prime consideration to the safety of public, passengers/patients, colleagues and self.
Compliance	Drive while adhering to all legal requirements relating to emergency response driving.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



What is meant by the term “Duty of Care”

What are the limitations of the exemptions for the driving and use of emergency service vehicles under Road Traffic legislation?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



Do you think it was appropriate to drive availing of an exemption on the approach to the hospital?

Do you think it was appropriate to avail of a speed limit exemption while passing the national school?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



Did you think your use of legal exemptions was appropriate during your response drive?

Is there anything that you could possibly learn from your experience today when you overtook the cyclist?

UNIT 9.2 Progress and restraint

Objective

The driver must have the knowledge, understanding and skill to make appropriate progress and exercise restraint where necessary while driving on emergency response.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Progress	Make intelligent use of speed and make appropriate progress while driving on emergency response.
Restraint	Show restraint where necessary in the interest of safety while driving on emergency response.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



In terms of Emergency Response Driving what does “making progress” mean?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



Making progress involves the correct use of speed, and furthermore limit points, condition of the road surface and traffic conditions play an important role, would you consider any additional factors in the context of your driving today?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



Were there areas of your drive today where more restraint could have been applied?
Is the following statement reflective of your driving today – Always sacrifice speed and position for safety?

UNIT 9.3 Anticipation

Objective

The driver must have the knowledge, understanding and skills to correctly anticipate the potential reactions of other road users and hazards, including animals, using all available information and reacts appropriately while driving on emergency response.

Guidance


Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Anticipation	Assess and anticipate the likely reactions of other road users. Use observation links to identify unpredictable hazards.
Restraint – Reaction-Respond	Show restraint to gather information and be seen by other road users; Await reaction from other road users; and Respond confidently to other road users reactions to avoid confusion.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills




What types of observation links are valuable to help improve your anticipation skills?
What are the potential reactions from other road users to the use of emergency lights and sirens?
Discuss the benefits of showing restraint while driving an emergency vehicle?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



Would greater restraint have offered you more information on the approach to the playground?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



How well do you think you anticipated the reaction of the hired car on the motorway?
Did you respond appropriately to the reactions of other road users?
What would you do differently in a similar situation?

UNIT 9.4 Emergency response driving tactics

Objective

The driver must have the understanding and skills to effectively utilise *RSA's ESDS Tactical Response Guide*.

Guidance

Topic	The driver should know, understand and/or demonstrate (where applicable) how to:
Emergency response tactics	The appropriate tactics and positioning as per guidelines relevant to the prevailing conditions and hazards.
Warning equipment	Use audible and visual warning devices intelligently as per guidelines relevant to the prevailing conditions and hazards.
Environmental factors	The potential effect of weather, speed, traffic and road layout on the effectiveness of warning equipment as per guidelines.
Multiple vehicle/service response	The factors to be considered for multiple vehicle/service response as per guidelines.

Sample questions to check knowledge, understanding and skills



Why is correct positioning the key element of making safe progress?
When should you not use alternate headlights?
What is the advice regarding the most effective use of sirens when travelling in convoy?

Sample questions to promote self-assessment



Was it appropriate to use sirens when passing the horse and rider?
Why did you make use of the bus lane during response?

Sample questions to prompt self-reflection



When you were about to turn right across the path of on-coming traffic was it completely safe to assume the headlight flash from another vehicle coming in the opposite direction was a signal for you to proceed?











Údarás Um Shábháilteacht Ar Bhóithre

Road Safety Authority

Páirc Ghnó Ghleann na Muaidhe, Cnoc an tSabhaircín,
Bóthar Bhaile Átha Cliath, Béal an Átha, Co. Mhaigh Eo.

Moy Valley Business Park, Primrose Hill,
Dublin Road, Ballina, Co. Mayo.

locall: 1890 40 60 40 tel: (096) 25 000

fax: (096) 78 290

email: esds@rsa.ie

website: www.rsa.ie/esds