

RSA



Approved Driving Instructor

VOLUNTARY CODE OF PRACTICE

Údarás Um Shábháilteacht Ar Bhóithre
Road Safety Authority

Version 1

CONTENT

SECTION 1: PERSONAL CONDUCT	2
1.1 Customers should at all times be treated with respect and consideration.	2
1.2 When delivering any lesson, the ADI should teach their students “best practice” driving skills.	2
1.3 ADIs are professional people and should at all times present themselves in a clean and tidy manner.	2
1.4 ADI’s must be ‘fit to drive a vehicle’ or ‘ride a motorcycle’ (as appropriate). ..	2
1.5 The ADI should avoid physical contact with a customer except in an emergency or in the normal course of greeting.	3
1.6 The ADI will at all times behave in a professional manner towards customers.	3
1.7 The ADI has a duty of care to his\her customers.	3
1.8 The ADI may reserve the right not to offer instruction to a particular student.	4
1.9 ADIs may advise customers when to apply for their practical driving tests.	4
SECTION 2: BUSINESS CONDUCT	5
2.1 The ADI must display his/her ADI Permit so as to be clearly seen by the customer throughout the lesson.	5
2.2 The advertising of driving instruction will be honest.	5
2.3 Financial dealings will be honest and transparent.	5
2.4 The ADI must check a student’s entitlement to drive the vehicle.	6
2.5 The ADI has a responsibility for road safety.	6
2.6 The ADI will comply with RSA\ADI branding guidelines.	6
2.7 Training Routes.	7
2.8 Complaints.	7
SECTION 3: LESSON STRUCTURE	8



Voluntary Code of Practice

INTRODUCTION

The Minister of Transport made regulations in 2009 making the Road safety Authority the regulatory body, responsible for the driving instruction industry here in Ireland.

The work of driving instructors is now regulated in so far as it relates to learner drivers. Driving instructors have passed initial qualification tests and have been awarded a level 6 FETAC Special purpose awards, all of which relate to their knowledge, skill and teaching ability.

Whilst the RSA has set standards in relation to the initial qualification, and ‘ongoing fitness’ to be on the register of approved driving instructors, this document attempts to set out standards within which, learner drivers can reasonably expect their driving instructors to operate within. These standards have been jointly agreed between the ADI Stakeholders representatives and the RSA. It is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive but merely attempts to raise awareness of the expectations that the RSA, your colleague ADIs and your customers may have of you.

It has three main headings: Section 1 looks at: Personal Conduct, Section 2 looks at: Business Conduct and Section 3 looks at: Lesson Structure. Most of the guidance offered is advisory, however, as an accompanying driver; a business man or woman and trainer, there are some legal responsibilities that you must be mindful of. As already mentioned this document is not exhaustive, and will be reviewed from time to time, the latest version will be available from the RSA website at <http://www.rsa.ie/Utility/Driving-Instructors1/Tools-for-ADIs/>.

SECTION 1

PERSONAL CONDUCT

An ADI has many opportunities to portray his/her professionalism. The 9 topics covered here are only a sample of the variety of issues that fall under this heading and the list is not exhaustive. Some issues may carry legal responsibilities, others simply make good sense. By being professional ADIs will help to improve their standing within their community.

1.1 CUSTOMERS SHOULD AT ALL TIMES BE TREATED WITH RESPECT AND CONSIDERATION.

The ADI's training vehicle is considered his/her place of work and as such it is illegal to smoke inside the vehicle. Apart from the health issues, any ADI who presents a vehicle smelling of stale smoke or has ash scattered around the ash tray shows little consideration for his/her customers. Training vehicles should make use of the RSA branding guidelines on the display of the ADI logo be clean and well maintained.

1.2 WHEN DELIVERING ANY LESSON, THE ADI SHOULD TEACH THEIR STUDENTS "BEST PRACTICE" DRIVING SKILLS.

The ADI should at all times, to the best of their ability, endeavour to teach the customer best practice driving skills according to RSA's recommended reading material. In particular ADIs should not refer to 'doing it this way for the test and you can revert to your own way once the test has been passed'.


1.3 ADIs ARE PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE AND SHOULD AT ALL TIMES PRESENT THEMSELVES IN A CLEAN AND TIDY MANNER.

Due to the nature of driver training, an ADI works in a confined space in close proximity to his/her students. As such, the ADI must pay particular attention to the cleanliness of the training vehicle and his/her own personal hygiene. Body odour, a dirty unkempt appearance or bad breath can all distract from an otherwise positive learning experience, as can an untidy or unclean vehicle.

It is recommended that all ADIs carry at least two Hi viz vests or jackets for emergency use and wear one themselves in appropriate circumstances. It is recommended that ADI's also carry two emergency warning triangles, for use as appropriate.

1.4 ADIs MUST BE 'FIT TO DRIVE A VEHICLE' OR 'RIDE A MOTORCYCLE (AS APPROPRIATE).'

Due to the nature of an ADI's work he or she will need to drive or ride the vehicle at some stage either before, during or after a lesson. As such ADIs need to ensure they are 'fit



to drive' whilst at work. Being 'fit' to drive involves, amongst other things, not being under the influence of alcohol, drugs or otherwise impaired including fatigue. Apart from being a very poor example to learners, students will complain if their Instructor or vehicle smells of alcohol. ADIs are asked to promote the RSA slogan 'never ever drink & Drive' both by word and example.

A conviction for driving under the influence or refusing to provide a specimen will result in immediate withdrawal of a driving instructor's permit.

1.5 THE ADI SHOULD AVOID PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH A CUSTOMER EXCEPT IN AN EMERGENCY OR IN THE NORMAL COURSE OF GREETING.

It is important to respect a student's personal space. Other than a friendly handshake, at the start and finish of the lesson, the ADI should avoid direct physical contact with the student. This can be of particular concern where a male ADI is giving instruction to a female student or vice versa. Use a demonstration or verbal instruction to convey your message but on no account should you repeatedly touch the student, for example, touching hands or knees when showing a student how to operate controls. This type of behavior may be misinterpreted and distract from an otherwise positive learning experience.


1.6 THE ADI WILL AT ALL TIMES BEHAVE IN A PROFESSIONAL MANNER TOWARDS CUSTOMERS.

When giving instruction the ADI should give his/her customer their undivided attention, this precludes the use of hands-free or Bluetooth devices. Please refer to the RSA publication 'Mobile Phones and Driving' for further information. Best practice is to switch the phone to 'silent'.

1.7 THE ADI HAS A DUTY OF CARE TO HIS/HER CUSTOMERS.

The ADI should ensure that the training vehicle is fit for purpose i.e. roadworthy with dual controls fitted, and "L plates" used correctly. It is expected that all ADIs will carry safety equipment in their training vehicles. This should include a fire extinguisher, first aid kit, warning triangle, fluorescent vests and where applicable, additional mirrors. Without such equipment to hand it would be more difficult to provide care to students in the event of an emergency. The need for these items in a vehicle should be covered during the training. Showing a 'safety first' attitude should impact positively on your student's attitude and behaviour.

In particular ADIs should avoid having items such as laptops or other training aids loose in the vehicle whilst it is moving. All such items should be safely stowed whilst the vehicle is in motion.



Stationary driving instruction vehicles should always be parked or stopped in accordance with legal requirements and very best practice, eg. Vehicles should not be parked illegally, in ‘hard shoulders’, or left in places that cause inconvenience, distraction or danger to other road users.

Particular attention should be paid to the safety of the learner, student & ADI whenever entering or exiting the vehicle or getting on or off a motorcycle.

1.8 THE ADI MAY RESERVE THE RIGHT NOT TO OFFER INSTRUCTION TO A PARTICULAR STUDENT.

Whilst an ADI has the ultimate right not to offer any lessons, an ADI who decides against giving instruction to a particular student must not act in any way which contravenes the legislation on discrimination.

1.9 ADIS MAY ADVISE CUSTOMERS WHEN TO APPLY FOR THEIR PRACTICAL DRIVING TESTS.

The ADI may give advice or guidance to students on applying for their practical driving test, taking into account the customer’s potential for achieving a pass. In the event of the ADI’s decision to withhold the use of the training vehicle for the driving test, the reasons for doing so must be given to the customer in good time to avoid loss of the applicant’s RSA test fee. Good notice will help to prevent disappointment and annoyance on the part of your student and potential loss of a customer.

The ADI should be punctual for all lessons and be available (if at all possible), to debrief his/her student after a Driving Test. This is an integral part of the learning process and the opportunity should not be missed.

SECTION 2

BUSINESS CONDUCT

There can be many legal requirements to providing a service. ADIs should be aware of those requirements not just in terms of the law but also in relation to how their practice is viewed by their customers. The 8 topics listed here cover some of the operational issues that ADIs are dealing with every day of the week. Customers will consider these and other topics when deciding whether or not to book further lessons, or recommend their ADI to friends.

2.1 THE ADI MUST DISPLAY HIS/HER ADI PERMIT SO AS TO BE CLEARLY SEEN BY THE CUSTOMER THROUGHOUT THE LESSON.

It is an offence not to display the ADI permit on/in the vehicle in such a way that the face of the card is clearly visible to the driver under instruction. Many ADIs make a special effort to point this out and show their students and this in turn improves awareness of the ADI scheme and the need to use only qualified ADIs. On a Motorcycle the ADI must have the permit on his/her person available for inspection by either the student or an authorised person (Garda or RSA officer) on request.

2.2 THE ADVERTISING OF DRIVING INSTRUCTION WILL BE HONEST.

Advertising that refers to customers' pass rates should not be open to misinterpretation and the basis on which the calculation is made should be made clear. All claims made must be capable of verification and shall comply with codes of practice set down by the Advertising Standards Authority for Ireland, see www.asai.ie for further information. A registered ADI using the RSA ADI Logo must comply with the 'Branding guidelines' sent out with the permit. Copies of the guidelines are available from the ADI Unit in Ballina, telephone: 096 25007 or email: adi@rsa.ie on request. Many ADIs use the ADI on the outside of their vehicles, this again helps to promote awareness of the ADI scheme among the general public.

2.3 FINANCIAL DEALINGS WILL BE HONEST AND TRANSPARENT.

The ADI will clearly state the cost and duration of lessons at the start of the training program. He\she will safeguard and account for any monies paid in advance by the customer in respect of driving lessons and will make the details available to the customer on request. The terms under which cancellation by either party may take place should also be fully explained.

Best practice includes the use of either a receipt or an appointment card that can also act as a record of payments. Policies on fees, refunds length of lessons, and other terms and conditions should always be made available to customers in writing and via your website (if any).

2.4 THE ADI MUST CHECK A STUDENT'S ENTITLEMENT TO DRIVE THE VEHICLE.

The ADI should check and record the validity of the customer's learner permit or driving licence (as applicable). ADIs should make certain that the learner brings his/her learner permit with them on each lesson (this is a legal requirement). When presenting a customer for the practical driving test the ADI should ensure that the learner has all the necessary documentation and that it is valid to enable him/her to take the test, and also check that the vehicle being presented is in a roadworthy condition. This will help reduce the number of cancelled driving tests, reduce the waiting times and avoid inconvenience/annoyance for your student & the RSA.

Under no circumstances should Learners in vehicles Categories B, C, D, EC or the sub-categories be allowed to drive the vehicle without the ADI being inside it and maintaining proper control & supervision. Some ADIs have been allowing Learners to travel to or from the driving test centre in the ADI's vehicle whilst un-accompanied, this is potentially dangerous and against the law.

For Motorcycle ADIs - following the introduction of Initial Basic Training (IBT) a Learner may not ride his or her machine unless they have completed all modules of their IBT course or are under the direct radio control of the IBT trainer who is following them on a motorcycle.

2.5 THE ADI HAS A RESPONSIBILITY FOR ROAD SAFETY.

While each ADI is expected to teach best practice driving skills, they must be seen to practice what they preach. As a professional driver, every ADI can encourage care, courtesy and consideration on our roads. In this business, decisions on safety must always take precedence over financial gain. As such ADIs must always take the time to properly evaluate students before making their training vehicle available for hire for the purposes of taking a practical driving test. In addition to cars, this is especially important for the use of Motorcycles and large vehicles such as trucks or busses.

Please remember that your vehicle is your place of work or business and that other people are continuously watching/seeing your vehicle and take example from your own personal driving habits. Since regulation the RSA have received a number of complaints on this topic.

2.6 THE ADI WILL COMPLY WITH RSA\ADI BRANDING GUIDELINES.

The ADI may use the RSA\ADI logo provided they meet the branding guidelines. For example, where the ADI logo appears the ADI permit number must also be clearly visible. In the case of multiple ADIs sharing a training vehicle, each ADI should be supplied with copies of their permit number on magnetic strips which can be applied to metal bodied vehicles during lessons and removed afterwards. For further information please refer to RSA\ADI Branding Guidelines provided with your permit. Copies of the guidelines are available from the ADI Unit in Ballina on request.



2.7 TRAINING ROUTES

ADIs should avoid using test routes for driving lessons. In particular using official test routes can interfere with the efficient conduct of a practical driving test and can contribute a great deal of annoyance on the part of the local residents. The RSA are regularly contacted by residents or their associations complaining of continuous and sometimes un-safe use of the road networks in their area.

Students will benefit from a wide and varied experience of driving situations and should not need to become familiar with test routes. RSA examiners report that familiarity often adversely affects a candidate's performance during the test. On occasion applicants park up their vehicle and then ask the driver tester 'do you want me to do a turnabout here?' saying "my driving instructor always does it here". A candidate then asked to drive on without doing a turnabout can become distracted which may then affect their driving performance.

2.8 COMPLAINTS

From time to time the RSA receive complaints about ADIs from learners (often an ADI's own clients). Complaints can, amongst other reasons be about;

- Not turning up for a pre-arranged lesson,
- Conduct, including offensive language or actions,
- Smoking in the training vehicle etc.

As regulator the RSA has a duty to investigate such complaints and we attempt to resolve them without the situation deteriorating into a 'legal' battle. In order to deal fairly with such complaints we firstly ask the person making a complaint if they wish to formally pursue the matter and inform them that this may lead to their details being provided to the ADI (as a matter of due process). If they decide to proceed we then write to the ADI informing them of the nature of any complaint and requesting a written response. Often these issues can be dealt with quickly, and when possible this avoids making matters worse.

If however the matter cannot be resolved at that stage, the RSA may inform an external agency (if appropriate) or convene ADI advisory panel to consider the matter and advise the authority how to proceed.

This process attempts to deal with legitimate concerns and also protect the rights of both ADIs and the person complaining.

Quality customer care requires that a prompt response is made to all requests for information, whether by a learner, the RSA, or another interested person, this is particularly important when dealing with complaints.

2.9 INSURANCE

ADIs must ensure that they hold and maintain motor Insurance in accordance with relevant legislation.

SECTION 3

LESSON STRUCTURE

Each lesson should be prepared before the session begins and should broadly follow a structure typically based on the competencies outlined in your RSA\ADI Check test report. The lesson should be structured so as to have a beginning, middle and an end, and should follow the general guidelines below.

1. The lesson should be set up in a courteous manner, for example, a friendly introduction and an emphasis on the student being pro-active. The introduction should include an introduction into today's lesson, this will help your student to focus on the task at hand.
2. The lesson plan should be clearly stated at the start of the lesson and this lesson plan should normally be covered ensuring along the way that the student understands all information given.
3. The level of on-going instruction/coaching used should generally suit the student's stage/ability while using a range of teaching techniques as required.
4. Faults in a student's driving should be identified, analysed and corrected in a safe and timely manner, encouraging where possible a student to self analyse. Self analysis is an important part of the process and should be used by the ADI to support the learning process. Advice on how to incorporate this is available from your ADI examiner.
5. Feedback for any piece of changeable behaviour should be given in a balanced, timely, effective, and supportive manner.
6. All necessary information for the lesson should be provided. This information should be accurate, up to date, and suitable for the student's stage of learning with all jargon used being checked for understanding. Using plain language may be particularly necessary when helping foreign nationals learn to drive.
7. All directions should be given clearly and in good time while showing a concern for the safety of all road users. The student should be given time to practice each new skill in the given time. Allowing for any possible changes, a student should normally be able to perform the skills targeted in the original lesson plan by the end of the lesson. The plan may need to be adjusted to suit an individual learner's rate of progress.
8. A complete wrap up should be carried out at the end of each lesson. At the end of each lesson it can be helpful to evaluate your own performance as an ADI by asking yourself what new knowledge or skills has the student learned?
9. The vehicle used should be clean, fit for purpose, and carry safety equipment and learning supports.
10. ADI's should keep proper records covering their activities and make entries on relevant logbooks, appointment cards, certificates of completion (IBT – Motorcycles) as required to do so.

Working To Save Lives

Údarás Um Shábháilteacht Ar Bhóithre Road Safety Authority

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