

Course 3: Safety and Responsiveness

Vehicle for Hire



Overview

Course Description

This course aims to equip vehicle for hire (VFH) drivers with the necessary skills and knowledge needed to understand and respond to unsafe situations while driving.

Learning Objectives

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Identify key road safety laws
- Communicate effectively with passengers
- Explain how to avoid, improve, and solve difficult experiences during rides as a vehicle for hire driver

Module 1: Driver Safety

Introduction

As you work through this module, you will learn to:

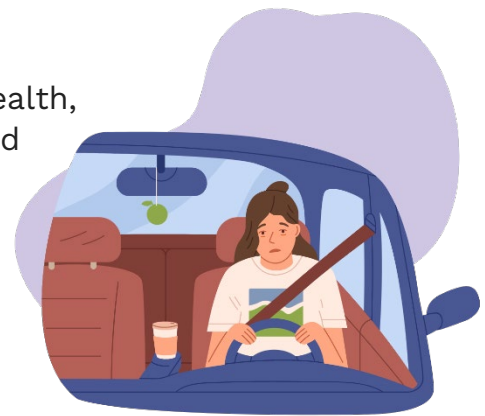
- Describe the role and responsibilities of vehicle for hire drivers
- Explore the possible risks involved when working as a vehicle for hire driver
- Identify common safety-related experiences that may occur when working as a vehicle for hire driver

Key Terminology

As you work through this module, you will encounter the following key term.

Fit for Duty

Fit for duty describes a person whose physical health, psychological ability (i.e., fatigue, impairment), and psychological condition (i.e., mental and emotional state) is such that they can complete their job or task (Energy Safety Canada, 2020).



Important Regulations

Working as a VFH requires that you be aware of and follow all the rules or regulations related to driving and road safety. **Regulations** are rules of law related to legislation.

- **Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)** is Alberta's health and safety regulations that strive to “[prevent] work-related injuries, illnesses and fatalities by working with employers and workers” (Government of Alberta, n.d.a). In the case of VFH, the workplace is a vehicle.
- **Traffic Bylaw 5590** includes the City of Edmonton's traffic laws.

- The **Traffic Safety Act** is Alberta’s road safety law that promotes and guides the safe use of roads and highways for all vehicles.
- **Vehicle for Hire Bylaw 17400** includes the City of Edmonton’s laws for vehicles that offer paid transportation services.

VFH Driver Responsibilities

Concerning these regulations, VFH drivers are expected to

- Arrive **fit for duty**, as per OHS regulations.
- **Drive safely** according to the City of Edmonton and the Province of Alberta's traffic safety laws.
- Demonstrate **quality customer service**, as per the Vehicle for Hire Bylaw
- Maintain a **clean, working vehicle** through repairs and servicing as needed to offer safe travel services according to OHS regulations.
- **Reduce driving-related risk** using OHS regulations.

Possible Driving Risks

Like with any job, there are risks to working as a vehicle for hire driver. Possible risks when driving a vehicle for hire include, but are not limited to:

- Conflict, discrimination, verbal or physical aggression, weapon use from passengers, and other road users such as cyclists, drivers, and pedestrians
- Low to high-impact collisions due to unsafe driving and pedestrian behaviours, hazardous weather conditions, or night-time driving.



Module 2: Road Safety

Introduction

As you work through this module, you will learn to:

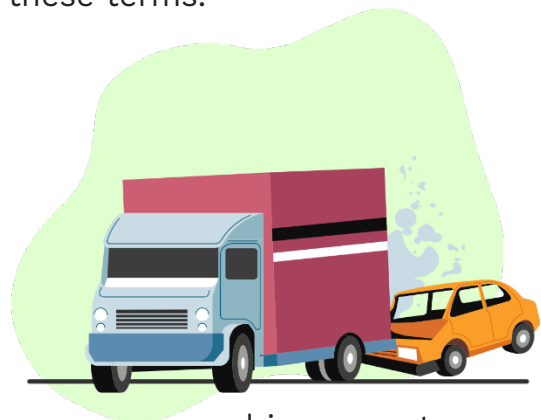
- Identify key road safety laws
- Interpret different road conditions to drive vehicles for hire safely
- Outline requirements for reporting collisions

Key Terminology

As you work through this module, you will encounter some important terminology. Let us take a moment to define these terms.

Collision

A collision involves a vehicle and other vehicles, people, animals, or objects.



Collision Reporting Center

A collision reporting center is a location where drivers must report a vehicle accident or collision that they are involved in where there is more than \$5,000 in total damages.

Note: Collision reporting centers are not meant for reports of incidents involving death, hospitalisation from injury, roadway blockages, or illegal behaviour. In these cases, emergency services should be contacted.

Drowsy

Drowsy describes the feeling of being sleepy.

Distracted Driving

Distracted driving involves driving while doing something else, such as using your phone, combing your hair, or doing your makeup.



Impaired Driving

Impaired driving involves driving while drowsy, tired, fatigued, or under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Snowplow

A snowplow is a vehicle that removes snow from the road.

U-Turn

A U-turn is when a driver turns their vehicle to drive in the opposite direction.

Distracted Driving

When we think of distracted driving, we probably most commonly think of texting or talking on the phone while driving.

However, distracted driving also includes:

- Texting or emailing on any electronic device, such as a phone or laptop
- Using electronic devices, such as laptops, video games, cameras, or portable audio players
- Reading print materials (i.e., newspapers, magazines, maps)
- Writing or sketching



- Personal grooming, such as brushing teeth, putting on makeup, combing hair, etc.

Besides the safety consequences of driving while distracted, it may also result in fines and demerit points.

Impaired Driving

Impaired driving includes driving (Government of Alberta, 2023)

- While drowsy, tired, or fatigued
- After drinking alcohol
- After taking drugs/substances, including over-the-counter (OTC) medications, prescribed medications such as cough or pain medication, and cannabis

Besides the safety consequences of impaired driving, it may result in fines, penalties, or suspension of driver's license.

Signs of Impaired Driving

Possible signs of impaired driving include (Government of Alberta, n.d.b; Government of Alberta, 2023):

- Yawning, slurred speech, mood changes, and forgetfulness.
- Difficulty reading road signs or difficulty focusing.
- Taking risks while driving or slow reaction and response times.
- Reacting aggressively or emotionally.
- Blinking or closing eyes for long periods.



- Falling asleep at the wheel.
 - In fact, falling asleep at the wheel makes up 20% of fatal car accidents in Canada.

Importance of Rest

Driver fatigue is a significant cause of road accidents, including rollovers and head-on collisions. As explained by Arrive Alive (2018), to prevent fatigue, drivers should get at least 6 hours of sleep per night. Lack of sleep affects brain function, visual perception, reflexes, and memory. For safety, drivers should start their journey **well-rested**, plan rest stops every 2 hours or 200 kilometres, and take breaks in safe locations (Arrive Alive, 2018).

There are physiological risks to driving. Driving for long hours can cause physical “discomfort, foot cramps, lower back pain, stiff neck, and sore shoulders”, to name a few examples (CCOHS, 2024).

Taking breaks and stretching every 1 to 2 hours is essential to reduce these risks, especially when driving longer shifts.

Traffic Safety Laws

Road safety is the responsibility of every person who uses the road: drivers, vehicle-for-hire drivers, bicyclists, pedestrians, and others.

As a core part of road safety, it is essential to remember the most basic element: **Ensure that you and your passengers are wearing seat belts and that children are in their appropriate car seats and boosters.**

Let us take a closer look at some other critical elements of road safety:

- Bicycles
- U-turns
- School and playground zones
- Emergency vehicles
- Roadside workers
- Snowplows

Bicycles

When driving with bicycles on the road, it is essential to understand the signs they may use to communicate with you.

Right Turn



Right Turn



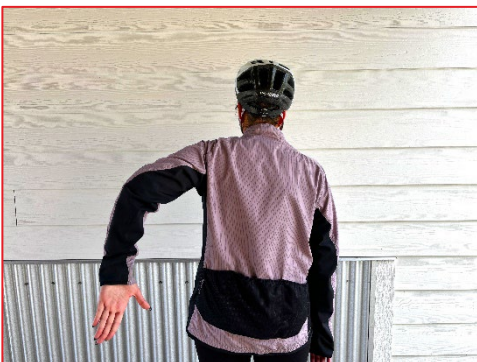
Left Turn



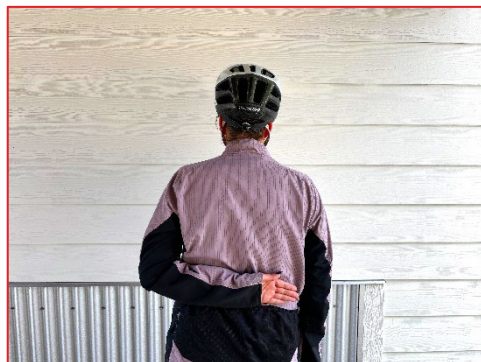
Moving Over



Slowing and Stopping



Slowing and Stopping



U-Turns

U-turns are allowed within Edmonton city limits, but only in specific situations. If a U-turn is done incorrectly or illegally, the driver may face fines and demerit points.

U-turns are **ALLOWED**:

- At intersections **without** traffic lights
- At intersections with a 4-way stop
- At intersections with a 2-way stop
- At T-intersections

U-turns are **NOT ALLOWED**:

- At intersections with lights
- At intersections with a crosswalk
- On any urban roadway between intersections
- Where there is a sign that says no U-turns
- Within 150 meters of the top of a hill
- On a roadway with access to an alleyway
- On a roadway with access to a commercial driveway

(Edmonton Police Service, n.d.a)



Legal U-turn at a 4-way stop.



Illegal U-turn at 2-way stop with crosswalks.

School and Playground Zones

Not every pedestrian crossing the road crosses safely or at an appropriate time. As reported by the City of Edmonton (n.d.a), children ages 4-15 are at the most significant risk of pedestrian-related deaths, and children ages 10-15 have the highest number of pedestrian-related injuries.

FACT

According to the City of Edmonton (n.d.a), there were 176 injury crashes involving children ages 15 or younger during the five years before Edmonton introduced playground zones.



School and playground zone signs are neon yellow and have a 30 km/h speed limit posted on them.

Playground zone sign without speed limit.

These signs alert drivers that they must drive no faster than 30 km/h from the moment they approach the sign until they see a notification that the zone has ended.

You may see a school or playground zone sign without a 30 km/h speed limit posted on it. “These signs mean a school is in the area or children may be playing nearby. Caution is required, but the 30 km/h speed limit does not apply” (City of Edmonton, n.d.a).



Be patient with pedestrians and allow them to cross to the other side. *Remember:* Some people, like children, may need more time.

School zone sign with speed limit.

Emergency Vehicles

When an emergency vehicle approaches your vehicle from any direction, drivers must (Edmonton Police Service, n.d.b):

1. SIGNAL the direction you plan to move

2. MOVE

- On roads with one or two lanes, move the right.
- On roads with three or more lanes, clear any intersection and move to the nearest side lane.

3. STOP UNTIL CLEAR

- This means you no longer see or hear an emergency vehicle coming from any direction.



Emergency vehicles include ambulances, fire trucks, and police vehicles.

If you are following behind an emergency vehicle, you **must keep 150 m between your vehicle and the emergency** vehicle with lights or sirens on.

Roadside Workers



When driving in a lane closest to construction zones (within or outside the City limit), you must move to the farthest right lane to give workers as much space as possible. If you cannot move to the farthest right lane, you must slow your speed to at least 60 km/h or the posted speed limit, whichever is lower.

Drivers who do not follow these rules to protect roadside workers could receive multiple fines and demerit points.

The **fine for speeding will be doubled** if it is in a construction zone.

You can always visit [511 Alberta](https://511.alberta.ca/) (https://511.alberta.ca/) or download the 511 Alberta app for updates on traffic delays and road construction.

Snowplows

You must not pass a snowplow if (City of Edmonton, n.d.b)

- You cannot see beside the snowplow
- Passing would prevent the snowplow from plowing snow
- It is not safe to do so

Patience is key. Snowplow operators will let you pass every 5-9 kilometres or when it is safe.

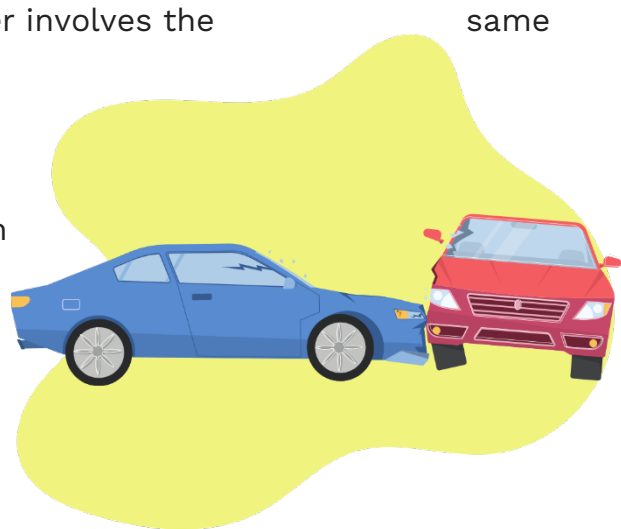
Drivers who do not follow the rules for passing snowplows may receive a fine and demerits.

Reporting Collisions

Collision reporting as a vehicle for driver involves the same requirements as any driver on the road.

According to the City of Edmonton's *Traffic Safety Bylaw* and Edmonton Police Service (n.d.c), drivers involved in a vehicle accident in the City of Edmonton have a duty to:

- Stay at the accident scene but clear the road to avoid blocking the road.
- Review the damage.
 - Incidents with \$5,000 or more total damage must be reported to a **Collision Reporting Centre** as soon as possible.
- Exchange driver's licenses.



- Exchange license plate numbers of the vehicles involved and collect the contact information of any witnesses who saw the accident.
- Visit a Collision Reporting Centre, if necessary.
 - Bring your driver's license, vehicle registration, and vehicle insurance.

If there is a major injury, death, hospital visit following an accident, illegal behaviour, the vehicle has been destroyed, or a roadway is blocked due to a collision, **call 911** for assistance and for the police to start an investigation.

As a vehicle for hire driver, you may also witness accidents while driving. If you witness a vehicle accident, please:

- Provide your personal information to those involved in the collision *OR*
- Call the *EPS Non-Complaint line* at (780) 423-4567 to file a witness report.

Module 3: Safe Driving

Introduction

As you work through this module, you will learn to:

- Identify health and safety requirements for vehicle for hire drivers
- Identify hazards, risks, and consequences of distracted and impaired driving

Key Terminology

As you work through this module, you will encounter some important terminology. Let us take a moment to define these terms.



Hazard

A hazard is any risk or danger (i.e., physical, biological, chemical, psychological).

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Personal protective equipment is anything that helps a worker do their job safely (e.g., sunglasses, face mask, seatbelt).

VFH Driver Health and Safety Requirements

As drivers who prioritise the safety of everyone on the road, we should do our best to be aware of all the risks and avoid unsafe situations.

Some OHS regulations are specifically related to VFH, include

- **OHS Code (Part 2)** – All workers, including VFH drivers, should identify, assess, and correct hazards at the beginning of every shift or if there is a change in the work situation.

- **OHS Code (Part 7 and 11)** – Drivers should Be aware of, prepare for, and practice emergency response, such as by having a fully equipped first aid kit in case of an injury.
- **OHS Code (Part 18)** - Drivers must wear PPE to reduce and remove the risk of hazards. Examples include wearing gloves when cleaning or wiping down vehicles (especially in the winter), wearing sunglasses to protect vision from the sun, and wearing appropriate driving appropriate footwear.
- **OHS Code (Part 28)** – Drivers should practice working alone strategies for increased safety by periodically checking in with loved ones and friends when pulled over and safe to do so.

Before, During, and After Safety Practices

There are proactive health and safety best practices drivers can use before, during, and after trips (Government of Alberta, 2022).

When health and safety are prioritised as customer service skills, not only does the passenger have a more comfortable ride, but it is also safer for both the driver and passenger.

Before You Enter Your Vehicle

- ☑ Always be mindful of the weather (i.e., bring sunglasses, wear gloves).
- ☑ Be aware of construction and traffic areas by checking before leaving.
- ☑ Ensure your side mirrors and the front and back of your windshield are clean from snow, ice, or dirt.
- ☑ Have appropriate tires on your vehicle.
- ☑ Clear the front, back, and top of your vehicle of snow or ice.
- ☑ Ensure your vehicle has an emergency kit with necessary items (i.e., blankets, winter gloves).

After You Enter Your Vehicle

- ✓ Checking your oil and fuel levels.
- ✓ Test your brakes before entering traffic.
- ✓ Test that your windshield wipers are working and that the fluid does not need to be filled.
- ✓ Test your parking brake before entering traffic.
- ✓ Confirm that your car horn is in working condition.
- ✓ Confirm that your heater and air conditioning are in working condition.

During Your Drive

- ✓ Be aware of wildlife.
- ✓ Be alert on the road (i.e., playground zones, pedestrians, bicycle bikers, motorcycle riders).
- ✓ Be mindful of your state of health (i.e., drowsiness, tiredness, needing to stretch).

After Trips and/or At the End of Your Workday

- ✓ Check your vehicle for any forgotten passenger belongings.
- ✓ Clean and wipe down your vehicle.
- ✓ Check your tires.
- ✓ Refuel, if necessary.
- ✓ Check under your vehicle for any damage.

Driving for the Road Conditions

Part of road safety is driving according to the road conditions.

The following tips have been adapted from McKay (n.d.), City of Edmonton (n.d.a), Davenport (n.d.), Government of Alberta (n.d.c).

Tips

- Always check the weather or 511 Alberta to monitor the road, traffic, construction, and weather conditions.
- Ensure your wipers are in good working condition and have enough washer fluid.
- Watch for emergency vehicles and prepare to move to the right despite the weather conditions.

When road conditions are **wet, slippery, slushy, icy,** or **covered with snow:**

- Dress for the weather.
- Clean off your vehicle's front and back windshield and side mirrors before you leave.
- Consider your speed and leave extra space between your vehicle and the vehicle in front of you.
- Do not use cruise control.
- Leave yourself extra space to stop.
 - 5 m extra at 30km/h
 - 10 m extra at 50 km/h
- Be gentle with the brake pressure.
- Try to maintain at least three vehicle lengths of driving distance between yourself and the vehicle behind you.



When driving in **foggy** conditions:

- Drive slowly and cautiously.
- Avoid high-beam headlights.
- Prepare to pull over to a safe area if fog conditions worsen and prevent you from seeing.

Defensive Driving

Using defensive driving strategies increases the safety of all drivers, passengers, and road users.

As explained by Smart Drive Test (2020), defensive driving is essential for safety on the road. It involves five fundamental techniques to become a safer and smarter driver (2020)

1. First, **manage the space around your vehicle**, especially in front, maintaining a two to three-second following distance and ensuring you can see the vehicle's tires ahead when stopped.
2. Second, **maintain situational awareness**, constantly observing your surroundings and anticipating potential hazards.
3. Third, apply the **MIT method**—mapping intersections and tracking road users to navigate safely through complex junctions.
4. Fourth, **exercise caution in parking lots** by driving through spaces when possible and checking all directions before moving.
5. Finally, adopt a **defensive driving attitude**, allowing other drivers to go ahead and avoiding confrontations.



Module 4: Human Trafficking

Introduction

As you work through this module, you will learn to:

- Define and recognise the signs of human trafficking
- Identify how to safely respond to and report human trafficking that occurs in VFH

DISCLAIMER

This module will discuss difficult topics related to the continued horrors and intergenerational trauma of genocide, settler colonisation, colonial violence, and racism.

Key Terminology

As you work through this module, you will encounter some important terminology. Let us take a moment to define these terms.

2SLGBTQQA+

2SLGBTQQA+ (pronounced by saying each number and letter and then “plus” at the end) is an acronym that stands for *Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, and any other sexual orientation and gender.*



Indigenous

Indigenous refers to any person who is First Nation, Inuit, and/or Métis.

Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is when a person or people are forcibly recruited, received, or transported and harboured for profit (UNODC, n.d.).

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW)

MMIW is the recognition of the violence practised towards Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, including by being taken or murdered (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Children, 2019).

What is Human Trafficking?

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (n.d.), “human trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of people through force, fraud or deception” to exploit individuals for profit.”

More simply, human trafficking can be understood as the “**trade of people**” (UNODC, n.d.).

Also known as **modern-day slavery** (Government of Canada, 2024), human trafficking can happen anywhere, including across Canada. In Canada, human trafficking is a criminal offence under the Criminal Code.

While human trafficking and human smuggling are confused, human trafficking and human smuggling are different.

Human trafficking can be local or international. Some of the most common types of human trafficking include (RCMP, 2024):

- **Sexual exploitation**
- **Forced labour**



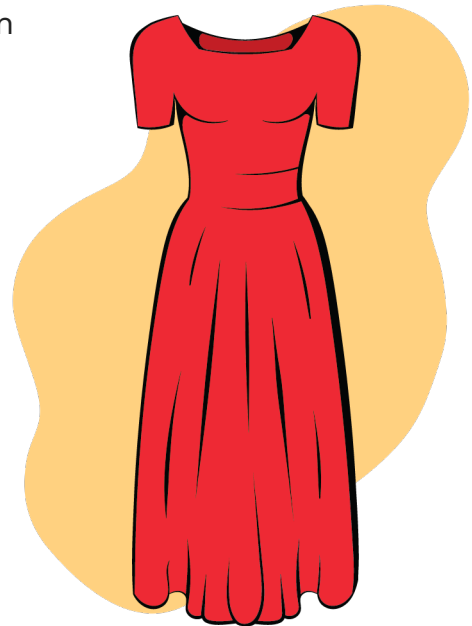
- **Organ removal**

Targeted Identities

According to Amnesty International (2021), **Indigenous women and girls** are at least **3x** more likely to experience violence and at least **6x** more likely to be murdered than non-Indigenous women and girls in Canada.

Other identities that are most targeted for human trafficking, in addition to Indigenous peoples, are (Government of Canada, 2022):

- **Racialized persons**
- **Migrants or new immigrants**
- **Young girls**
- **Persons with disabilities**
- **Isolated persons**
- **Persons with financial barriers**
- **Persons in foster care**



For human trafficking cases in Canada between 2010-2020, 91% of survivors knew their traffickers; they were their intimate partners, friends or acquaintances, criminal or business relations, or others (ALERT, n.d.).

Ongoing causes of this human rights crisis include:

- Racist and sexist stereotypes that lead perpetrators to believe they can get away with violence towards Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirited people (Amnesty International, 2021).
- Legacies of colonialism, such as impoverishment, lasting psychological and social harm from residential schools, and colonial legislation, increase the risk of Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirited peoples (Amnesty International, 2021).

Women and girls are not the only persons who are trafficked - **1 in 4 human trafficking victims are men** (ALERT, n.d.).

Signs and Impacts

Signs of human trafficking include, but are not limited to (Government of Canada, 2022):

- Fear, anxiety, intimidation, and hypervigilance
- Avoidance of eye contact
- Signs of physical abuse, bruises, or injuries
- Signs of branding or scarring
- Signs of being restrained, tortured
- Fear of law enforcement or authorities
- Being controlled by someone else or others
- Not having control of their own money or cellphone
- Not being familiar with the neighbourhood/area they claim to live in
- Not being allowed to contact family or friends
- Being prevented from speaking or someone speaking on their behalf
- Lying about personal information, name or age
- Use of slang, such as 'pimp'
- Signs of memory loss, malnutrition, mental health issues



There are many short-term and long-term effects of human trafficking, including but not limited to (Government of Canada, 2022):

- Unsafe living and working conditions
- Physical abuse

- Sexual abuse
- Financial abuse
- Psychological abuse and emotional trauma
- Sexually transmitted infections (STI)s

Human Trafficking and the VFH Industry

Human trafficking is a violation of human rights that affects 24.9 million people around the world (Ecker, 2022).

Traffickers rely on transportation services, especially taxis, rideshares, and rentals to carry out their business. Because of the significant role the transportation industry plays in human trafficking, VFH drivers need to understand how to identify and respond to human trafficking.

Human trafficking is a global problem that targets specific populations who are made vulnerable by social issues and their circumstances. While some populations are more vulnerable or targeted for human trafficking, human trafficking happens everywhere. For us to reduce or stop human trafficking, we all need to be aware of the signs.

Safely Reporting Human Trafficking Incidents

What can you do when you think someone is being trafficked in your vehicle?

Your safety comes first. It is not recommended that you get directly involved, but you should report signs of human trafficking that you observe. Safely report human trafficking by:

- Remaining calm and prioritising your safety first.
- When safe to do so, record details by writing down:
 - A summary of the situation or incident you observed.
 - The date, time, start and end location of the ride, and the location of the incident of concern.

- Description of individuals involved – hair colour, estimated height, estimated age, estimated weight, tattoos, clothing, names used, and any other details
- Then call 911, the 24/7 anonymous hotline at 1-833-900-1010, or email hotline@ccteht.ca.

Module 5: Understanding Passengers

Introduction

As you work through this module, you will learn to:

- Identify the differing needs and behaviours of passengers
- Describe the signs of alcohol and drug use
- Utilise trauma-informed language
- Explain safe practices for communicating with passengers who have weapons or are under the influence of substances (alcohol and drugs)
- Identify when to call for help during violent or health-related incidents

Key Terminology

As you work through this module, you will encounter some important terminology. Let us take a moment to define these terms.

Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication is any information a person indirectly communicates with another person or group. This can include facial expressions and body language.

Verbal Communication

Verbal communication is any information a person says or shares with another person or group.



Trauma-Informed Language

Trauma-informed language uses words that avoid harming people and recognises that people's behaviours are related to their childhood, current, or generational trauma.

Common VFH Communication Scenarios

In the previous course, we discussed some general communication expectations passengers have when using vehicle for hire services. Passengers expect transportation services to be safe, accessible, and positive.

To achieve these experiences, we must understand and appropriately respond to verbal and non-verbal communication.

As VFH Drivers, you may have already had various experiences with passengers. Some of the most common experiences include cases where passengers may:

- Not wanting to communicate.
- Want to talk with you a lot.
- Be busy communicating with others using their technology (i.e., cell phones, laptops).
- Be anxious or in a rush to reach their destination by a particular time.
- Be late arriving to your vehicle.
- Not being able to find your vehicle or the pick-up location.
- Leave behind their belongings.
- Ask that you take an alternative or preferred route.
- Eat, drink, or apply makeup inside your vehicle.



Outside of a passenger's control, some experiences may include vehicle issues like your vehicle breaking down, needing a tire change, getting stuck in the snow, or other vehicle-related issues.

Nonverbal Communication

Some nonverbal communication cues to consider include a passenger:

- Use of earphones.
- Reading books or paperwork.
- Using their phone, whether calling, texting, or scrolling.
- Typing on their laptop, tablet, or other device.
- Looking out the window for long periods.



These cues may indicate that the passenger is busy or may not want to spend their ride communicating.

Verbal Communication

Verbal or conversational communication cues that indicate a passenger may not want to communicate may include:

- Short answers.
- Silence.
- Not continuing a conversation.
- Not asking questions in response.

Difficult Behaviours

Sometimes, passengers may exhibit behaviours that may be difficult for you as a driver. These can include but are not limited to

- Requesting different routes.

- Passengers may request a different route based on a previous driving or riding route. It is important to be open to passenger recommendations or requests while also letting them know if there are construction or traffic obstructions they may not know of.
- Opening or closing their windows without asking.
- Asking for an additional stop
- Remaining or waiting in your vehicle, even after they have arrived at their destination.

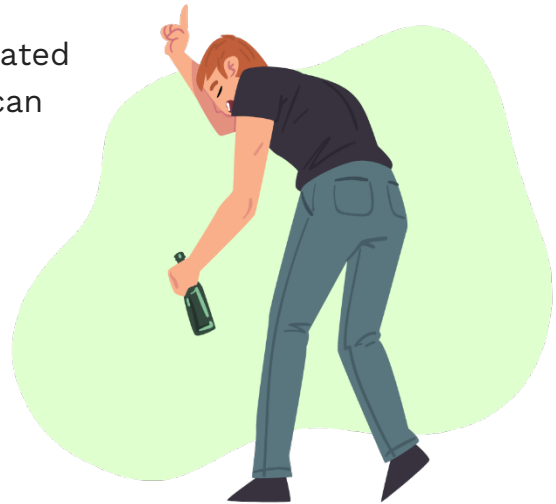
Alcohol and Substance Use

Alcohol Intoxication

Part of driving a VFH includes driving intoxicated passengers. Driving intoxicated passengers can happen during the day or night.

Some visible signs of intoxication due to alcohol use that drivers should be aware of and responsive to include (Government of Canada, 2021; California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control, n.d.):

- Slurred and or loud speech.
- Flush or red face.
- Smell of alcohol on a passenger or passengers.
- Difficulty concentrating or keeping attention (i.e., difficulty participating in a conversation).
- Slow reaction or response time and confusion (i.e., unaware of where they are).
- Nausea and vomiting.



- Clumsiness, tripping, falling, stumbling, or swaying.
- Problems with memory (i.e., forgetting directions).
- Drowsiness (i.e., difficulty staying awake or keeping their eyes open).
- Aggressive and violent behaviour (i.e., slamming the car door, threatening, yelling).

Alcohol Poisoning

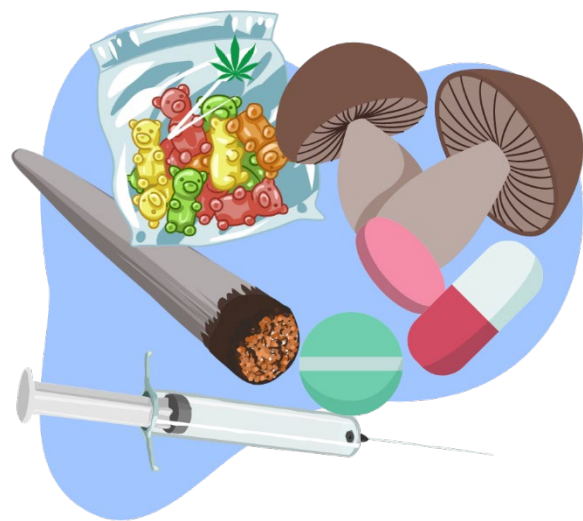
Alcohol poisoning should be treated as a health emergency (Mayo Clinic, n.d.). There are many causes of alcohol poisoning, such as binge drinking. It has the potential to cause choking while vomiting, disruption to breathing, brain damage, seizures, and even lead to death (Mayo Clinic, n.d.).

Calling for help can save someone’s life. If a passenger becomes unconscious, do not leave them alone. Call 911 and provide information about where they were picked up and who they are. That way, they can be supported by health professionals and provided a safe method home following treatment.

Drug Intoxication

Intoxication does not only refer to alcohol use but can also refer to drug/substance use. Some visible signs of drug or substance use include (Indiana Department of Health, n.d.):

- Red eyes
- Decreased coordination
- Dry mouth
- Slow reaction or response time
- Paranoid thinking
- Sense of euphoria or feeling “high”
- Hallucinations
- Nausea and or vomiting



- Confusion
- Increased heart rate and blood pressure
- Violent or aggressive behaviour
- Lack of coordination

Stigma of Alcohol and Substance Use

While symptoms of alcohol and or drug use can sometimes be visible, whether someone lives with addictions is not visible in the short time that you transport someone.

Addiction to alcohol and drugs is a mental health disorder. Refusing someone who appears to use, uses, or shares that they use drugs or alcohol can be considered discrimination and against their human rights, as protected by *Alberta Human Rights* legislation.

Though everyone holds some level of trauma, people who use alcohol or drugs have often experienced high levels of trauma and difficulties in their lives (Improvement Service, n.d.).

Using **trauma-informed language** that avoids re-traumatizing people who may be affected by alcohol or drugs can include:

Instead of	Use
Addict	Person who uses drugs
Drunk	Person who uses alcohol
Former addict	Person in recovery
Junkie	Person who is in active use/currently using

Incidents of Unsafety

Take all threats seriously.

If a passenger is aggressive, violent, threatens you, or attempts to use a weapon

- If possible and safe to do so, pull over immediately.
- Remain calm and friendly while telling the passenger that, because they have now become aggressive or violent, you can no longer complete their trip.
- Refer to your company's policies when refusing services, such as communicating with your dispatch company in an emergency.

Module 6: Conflict Management and De-Escalation

Introduction

As you work through this module, you will learn to:

- Identify origins of conflicting situations when offering VFH services
- Identify best practices for de-escalating conflict
- Describe how to resolve conflicts

Key Terminology

As you work through this module, you will encounter some important terminology. Let us take a moment to define these terms.

Conflict

Conflict can be a positive or negative disagreement between one person and another or a group of people.

Road Rage

Road rage is anger, frustration, and violence shown by a driver (i.e., swearing, threatening, throwing items at another vehicle, following another vehicle).



De-Escalation

De-escalation is when someone tries to make a conversation or situation less harmful or dangerous.

Identifying Conflict

Conflict happens in every workplace. It can be positive or negative.

When driving a VFH, conflict can occur with passengers or other road users (e.g., other drivers, bicyclists, pedestrians).

Positive and Productive Conflict	Negative and Harmful Conflict
Discussing the benefits and disadvantages of a topic.	Disagreements or judgements about a person's identity.
A driver and passenger communicating about the pickup location.	Political or religious disagreements.

Conflict Risk Scenarios

The table below identifies some conflict scenarios that can occur for VFH. It covers common scenarios based on the level of potential impact (**severity**) and likelihood of it occurring (**probability**).

Probability	Severity		
	Low Severity	Medium Severity	High Severity
High Probability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Misunderstanding Miscommunication Disagreement Conflict with passengers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Driving in busy traffic Night driving Driving in unsafe weather conditions 	
Medium Probability	Unsafe driving behaviours that cause low-impact collisions (i.e., parking lot accidents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discrimination Miscommunication with other road users (i.e., incorrect signal) Verbal aggression 	Vehicle issues (i.e., breakdown)

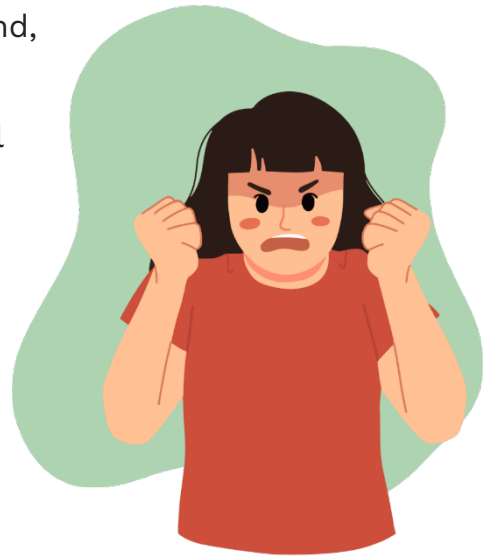
Low Probability	Unsafe pedestrian behaviours causing (i.e., jaywalking at night)	Unsafe driving behaviours, such as distracted driving that can cause low-impact collisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical aggression • Unsafe driving behaviours, such as impaired driving that can cause major collisions
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Signs of Conflict During Rides

Sometimes conflicts can happen unexpectedly and, what appears as, without cause.

Some visible signs to be aware of that may signal that conflict is developing include (Olsson, 2022):

- Heavy breathing.
- Change in tone or speaking louder and faster.
- Use of threatening or aggressive language (i.e., accusations).
- Clenching of fists, tightening jaw.



Body language to avoid demonstrating as a VFH driver includes (HSI, n.d.):

- Shrugging of shoulders
- Finger pointing

Safe and Appropriate Conversations

The best way to manage or resolve conflicts is to avoid the potential for conflicts to occur in the first place.

Safe, professional, and appropriate conversation topics to share with passengers include:

- **Pleasantries** – How are you? How is your day today?

- **General** – Discussions about the road conditions, such as the weather, traffic, construction, etc.
- **Ride Details** – The best areas for drop-off for their location if it is a high-traffic area.
- **Entertainment** – Local entertainment, events, movies, etc.

Strategies to Avoid Conflict

There is a time and place for all types of conversations, but rides are workplaces. Some strategies to avoid conflict with passengers include avoiding:

- Topics about local or international politics.
- Negative comments and disagreements about a passenger or another person's identity (i.e., race, gender, sexuality, etc.).
- Swearing and using slurs or derogatory slurs or comments.
- Making assumptions or judgements about the person's identity or actions.
- Making biased comments about any group's identities (i.e., "all people with disabilities...").
- Demonstrating road rage (i.e., swearing or threatening other drivers or pedestrians, using the middle finger, etc.).



De-Escalating Conflict

If you find that a topic of conversation is uncomfortable or feel it may cause conflict, you can:

- **Avoid disagreement** and, if needed, respectfully agree to disagree.
- **Use sentences that start with "I"** instead of "You" to avoid passengers feeling blamed. For example, "I don't see it that way because..."

- **Be calm.** Remember, you're driving, and your main priority is safely getting from point A to point B.
- Confirm any feelings shared during the conversation and **practice active listening**:
 - "That's interesting. I didn't think about it that way."
 - "Tell me more about...."
 - "I'm hearing you say.... That must have been challenging."
- **Avoid pushing your opinion** if the passenger states they disagree.
- End rides in a positive way using statements like:
 - "I appreciate you having that conversation with me."
 - "Thank you for trusting our company. Have a good day!"

De-Escalating Road Rage

Remember that you cannot control the actions of other drivers. Your safety should be your primary concern if faced with an aggressive driver or a road rage incident.

Some strategies during a road rage incident include to (Government of Alberta, n.d.d):

- Keep your doors locked and windows up.
- Avoid responding aggressively or retaliating, such as honking or using hostile gestures.
- If the incident escalates, alert your dispatcher's safety line or 911.
- Make note of the driver's license plate if you want to make a police report.

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