



**THE
VEHICLE
CERTIFICATION
AGENCY**

**TRAVEL PLAN
2009**

July 2009

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What is a Travel Plan?

A Travel Plan is a set of measures tailored to suit the individual circumstances of the different locations, but with the common aim of reducing the impact of travel to work and transport activity during work.

A Travel Plan can produce real benefits for:

- ❖ **the individual** – through improved health, reduced stress and potential cost savings;
- ❖ **the organisation** – through a healthier, more motivated workforce, reduced congestion and improved access to sites for employees and visitors;
- ❖ **the community** – by organisations demonstrating their commitment to environmental priorities and setting an example to others; and
- ❖ **the environment** – through improved air quality with less noise, dirt and fumes, as well as reducing the impact of other national and global environmental problems such as photochemical smog, and global warming.

VCA's senior management are fully committed to this plan and encourage all staff to consider their travel arrangements before setting off on their journey.

To help staff commit themselves to the plan, VCA will raise awareness of this plan and Green Travel issues through its intranet and regular team briefings.

Site Details

- a) VCA Eastgate is located on the multi-occupancy site of Eastgate Office Centre in Bristol. The site is approx. 3 miles from Temple Meads and 5 miles from Parkway Train Stations, and 0.5 km from M32. The city centre is well served by bus routes and several bus services run near to the site.
- b) VCA Midlands is located just off the A5 (Watling Street Road) with easy connections to M42 and M69. Unfortunately the nearest bus stop is approx. 1 mile from the office. The site is approx. a 3 mile taxi ride from the Train Station in Nuneaton. Cycle connections to the rail station are good and there is ample cycle storage at the station which has good links to Birmingham and London.
- c) VCA Dangerous Goods Office is located in a small office within the PIRA (Packaging Industry Research Association) site at Leatherhead. The local train station is just over a mile away and the office is easily accessible by foot.

Number of Staff	Eastgate: 95 members of staff Midlands: 39 members of staff Leatherhead: 4 members of staff
Video Conferencing Facilities	VC facilities no longer in place; replaced by Skype at the Eastgate Office Centre and at Midlands Centre. However, VCA can use the VC facilities at nearby VOSA HQ, Bristol if necessary.
Parking Facilities	Eastgate Office Centre has approx. 31 car parking spaces of which one space is provided for Finance, two spaces can be provided for Disabled/pregnant staff (not used at present), two spaces for visitors and two spaces for motorcycles. Midlands Centre now has 40 spaces to accommodate the increased staff and visitors on site. Leatherhead: No allocated spaces but ample parking available on the PIRA site.
Bicycle Facilities	VCA operate a Cycle Purchase Scheme. The scheme enables staff to purchase a bicycle at a cheaper rate than normal, as they get the Income Tax and National Insurance back on the full price of the bicycle and any safety equipment purchased through salary sacrifice re-payments.

	<p>Eastgate has a covered bike rack that holds approx. 8 spaces. Locker and shower facilities are available.</p> <p>Midlands now has cycle storage for approx 8 bikes and has shower facilities.</p> <p>Leatherhead: Good facilities on site for cyclists, with PIRA often holding “cyclist breakfasts”.</p>
Public Transport	<p>Eastgate: There are two bus stops outside the Eastgate Office Centre. A 10% discount has been arranged with Bristol City First Bus Company for staff purchasing a 6 month or 1 year season ticket. Staff can apply for an advance of salary to help with the purchase costs which is repayable within the life of the ticket by equal monthly deductions from salary.</p> <p>Midlands: There is no easy access to public transport.</p> <p>Leatherhead: Local train station is within 10 minutes walking distance from the office.</p>
Walking	<p>Bristol: Staff who live within walking distance are encouraged to walk. It is healthy (improves circulation, lowers blood pressure and burns off weight). Bristol City Council have improved the footway outside Eastgate and have built a pedestrian island to make crossing the road safer. The CAAS team can issue personal attack alarms if staff wish to carry these for their additional safety. Street lighting is good in the adjacent area to the building.</p> <p>Midlands: Walking to work is not an option for Midlands staff due to its location (off dual carriage way)</p> <p>Leatherhead: Easily accessible by the footpaths leading to site.</p>
Visitors	<p>Location maps for visitors are available from the Bristol office, including travel information. Maps can also be found on the VCA internet site.</p>

Ways of reducing the need to travel and use of the car

VCA has a flexible working hours agreement in place, some staff also work condensed/compressed hours and some staff are home based. With advances in IT home working is more practical than ever with requests for home working being treated on a case by case basis. The Agency provide hire cars for official travel so staff do not have to bring their own cars to work on those occasions. The Agency also has a number of pool cars at its Bristol and Nuneaton sites.

Car Sharing

More than 80% of commuter journeys by car are made by people driving alone. Therefore, car sharing can be an appealing first step towards doing something positive – some drivers will be more readily persuaded to travel this way rather than switch to public transport or cycling, and it is a flexible option because journeys can be shared every day or some days and can be arranged with one or more colleagues. The benefits include shared costs and the chance to socialise. However, the barriers include the need to keep to set schedules and the fear of being let down or unable to get home in an emergency. VCA's last travel to work survey, carried out in June 2008, indicated that some members of staff would consider car sharing where practical.

Business Travel

Introduction

VCA staff are often required to travel as part of their work. Travel on official business is usually viewed as essential and is regularly reviewed, particularly the costs, as it forms a significant part of the Agency's budgets. Journey times and work patterns should also be taken into account. CAAS have improved their systems of recording mileage and fuel consumption so that accurate monitoring against VCA's SOGE targets can be assessed.

Agency Policy

As much of VCA's business is conducted off site at manufacturers' premises, use of a car is essential. However, it is important (from a working practice and financial viewpoint) that these journeys are undertaken in the most cost effective manner and make efficient use of staff time. Where feasible and cost effective (in all senses) business journeys should be made by public transport. VCA's T&S arrangements and the rates are covered in the Staff Handbook. The latest T&S rates are accessible on the Intranet. Guidance on driving has been issued. A guide to Sustainable Travel was made available to all staff in July 2008, which

raised awareness of how staff can reduce the transport impact of VCA operations on the environment and VCA's overseas travel guide has been revised encouraging the use of cost effective travel.

Pool Car / Hire Cars

VCA's Eastgate and Nuneaton offices have a number (4) of pool cars in order to reduce the costs associated with early terminations of hire cars and bookings to cover uncertain events, also to try to satisfy urgent /last-minute requirements. It is not intended that this facility replace our usage of hire cars altogether, but the pool car option must be considered before use of a hire car or own car.

Identify New Opportunities

The increased use of electronic communications such as e-mail, audio conferencing, Internet/Intranet, mobile phones and laptop PCs should reduce the need for some business travel in the future. The CAAS team are due to attend a regional Green Travel Planning event in Oct 09 where the focus will be on sharing best practice covering both commuting and business travel. Ideas from this event will be fed into VCA's 2010 Travel Plan.

Key responsibilities of the Travel Co-ordinator

1. Obtaining support of Senior Managers, employees and union representatives.
2. Promoting the benefits of the Travel Plan.
3. Acting as an information focal point for staff and exchanging good ideas and best practice with other Government Departments and organisations.
4. Liaising with local authorities and transport operators to improve facilities and services.

Annex A

Action Plan

Issue	Recommended Action	Target Date
Green Travel Training	Attend local Green Travel Planning event and take forward best practice.	Oct 09
Increase use of public transport	Promote local transport links on the VCA Intranet for personal and business use; Business Travel: Ensure staff are aware of the sustainable travel guide.	Jul 09 Nov 09
Increase cycling	Promote cycle scheme and cycle paths on the VCA Intranet.	Jul 09
Encourage car sharing	Reconsider establishing a suitable scheme by engaging staff and obtaining advice from Green Travel event.	Nov 09
Staff Feedback	Issue Travel Survey	June 2010