



Devon and Severn IFCA

Driver Handbook

September 2022

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In this booklet the Responsible Person is D&S IFCA's Chief Officer.

Policy Statement

Employees who drive in the course of their work are at risk of being involved in a road traffic accident. Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (D&S IFCA) is committed to reducing that risk as far as it can and has prepared this booklet which sets out its policy, rules and general arrangements in respect of company vehicles and driving in the course of work.

By adopting this strategy D&S IFCA aims to prevent loss of life, injury and property damage caused by driving accidents. Officers should familiarise themselves with the instructions and information in this handbook.

Allocation & Vehicle Arrangements

Before a D&S IFCA member of staff is allocated or permitted to drive one of D&S IFCA's vehicles they must be authorised to drive by D&S IFCA's responsible person (Chief Officer).

A copy of this Driver Handbook will be issued to every authorised driver who must make themselves familiar with the instructions it contains. A signed receipt is required (see end of handbook).

Subsequently:

- Changes to individual driving licences including endorsements and restrictions must be reported without delay to the responsible person.
- Driving licences will be subject to an annual check for endorsements.

Before taking a vehicle onto the road employees should inspect it for signs of damage or defects and ensure that the ancillary equipment (vehicle jack, wheel brace and spare wheel) is in place on the vehicle. These should be logged on IAuditor.

Falsification of any driving licence document will be dealt with as a disciplinary issue.

Authorised Drivers

To become an authorised driver, employees must show the Finance and Administration Manager their current driving licence together with any information regarding any endorsements. Authorised drivers will be required to provide a code from the DVLA which will be sent to the Finance and Administration Manager so that checks can be undertaken. These checks will ensure that an authorised driver is not disqualified, have no endorsements that might affect insurance cover and that the licence covers the vehicles to be driven. A copy of these checks will also be taken for D&S IFCA records.

No one will be authorised to drive any of D&S IFCA vehicles unless they have produced their driving licence for validation or provided the information required to allow D&S IFCA to make checks at the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) webpage <https://www.gov.uk/view-driving-licence>. D&S IFCA may also make periodic checks to ensure that employees remain licensed to drive and that any penalty points do not exceed limits imposed by D&S IFCA's insurers.

Emergency Authorisation to Drive

In the event of accident, breakdowns or illness, where the driver is unable to proceed, any competent and fully licensed driver is authorised (and will be insured) to drive the vehicle directly to its normal base, a garage or place of safety.

Excluded Drivers

- Anyone not in possession of a valid full UK driving licence for the category of vehicle to be driven.
- Anyone who is disqualified from driving.
- Anyone who has been refused motor insurance or renewal or has had a policy cancelled. These should be declared to the Finance and Administration Manager.
- Those who suffer from a listed medical condition. (see <https://www.gov.uk/health-conditions-and-driving/find-condition-a-to-z>) which must be disclosed on the Driver Medical Questionnaire.

Use of Company Vehicles

D&S IFCA's vehicles must not be used for any business or purpose of any kind except that of D&S IFCA unless authorisation has been given in writing.

The authorised driver is responsible for making sure that the vehicle is not overloaded, in passenger numbers or maximum weight.

None of D&S IFCA's vehicles are to be used to carry passengers for hire or reward.

The authorised driver is responsible for any fixed penalty charges or fines. They must keep detailed records of the vehicle's use.

Private Car Use for Business Purposes

Employees must seek prior approval before making any business journey in their private vehicle. The Line Managers responsible person will consider other methods of transport including the use of D&S IFCA's vehicles before granting permission and will consult with the Responsible Person if there is any uncertainty about granting permission..

A copy of the private vehicle's current Insurance Policy Certificate will be required and placed on file prior to an approved journey. The insurance must provide cover for the use of the vehicle for business purposes. Employees are responsible for ensuring that it is taxed and, if required, has a valid MOT test certificate. D&S IFCA may check that these are in place on the DVSA website <https://www.vehicleenquiry.service.gov.uk/Default.aspx>.

Employees can claim reimbursement for authorised business mileage. This is to be authorised by the Chief Officer.

Accessories Fitted to Vehicles

Accessories for work or private use must not be fitted to any of D&S IFCA vehicles without the authority of the responsible person. These items may include any vehicle approved equipment including roof racks, towing brackets and associated equipment, bicycle racks (rear and roof fitted) and ancillary fittings.

If approval is given, accessories must be fitted correctly by a competent person. When fitted they become part of the vehicle and will normally be covered by the vehicle insurance.

Private equipment is not insured, and employees will need to make separate arrangements. Damage caused to the vehicle by private equipment may be chargeable to the driver.

Wearing of Seatbelts

Drivers and occupants must wear seatbelts when travelling in D&S IFCA vehicles.

Alcohol and Drugs – Driving

Driving one of D&S IFCA vehicles at any time, or a private vehicle for business purposes, whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs is strictly forbidden and will be subject to disciplinary action.

Medical Conditions - Driving

Authorised drivers must inform the responsible person of any medical condition that may affect their driving ability.

Journey Times and Rests Breaks

- D&S IFCA expects authorised drivers to follow the rules set out in the Highway Code
- Authorised drivers should be fit to drive and not begin a journey when tired.
- Avoid driving long journeys between midnight and 6 am, when natural alertness will be at a minimum.
- Plan the journey to take sufficient breaks – 15 minutes after every two hours of driving is recommended.
- The authorised driver should take additional breaks if they feel tired. Stop in a safe place -not on the hard shoulder of a motorway.
- The most effective way to counter tiredness is to drink, for example, two cups of caffeinated coffee and to take a short 15-minute nap.

D&S IFCA does not expect employees to work excessively long hours. Overnight accommodation should always be considered if the total travel time and working day, including breaks, exceeds 12 hours. If an overnight stay is expected, accommodation should be booked in advance.

Vehicle Security

Vehicle security is important, particularly if carrying and delivering valuable goods. Authorised drivers are expected to;

- Lock and secure the vehicle whenever the vehicle is left and keep the keys with them. This will also apply during unloading and loading.
- Plan routes before setting out.
- Never carry unauthorised passengers or hitch hikers.
- Check the vehicle/trailer is correctly loaded.
- In the event of any suspect devices found on or around the vehicle immediately report to the police – dial 999.

Load Security

D&S IFCA employees must always be aware of the risks present during loading and unloading. Employees must not put themselves or others at risk. Instructions and training must be followed.

The authorised driver should also be aware of the additional risk of the load, or part of the load, moving in the course of a journey. This will apply to all vehicles and to all types of loads. The authorised driver is ultimately responsible for the load being carried whether or not they were involved in securing the load.

The Department of Transport Code of Practice 'Safety of Loads on Vehicles' sets the standard that should be followed.

Security Trackers

A Tracker System may be installed on D&S IFCA vehicles. The Tracker System may be installed for a number of reasons:-

- D&S IFCA has a duty to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable employees health, safety and welfare at work. Due to the mobile nature of some of the work undertaken, the tracking system will help us monitor movements ensuring health and safety.
- It may reduce D&S IFCA's insurance costs as stolen vehicles will be recovered.

Onboard Vehicle Cameras

For a number of reasons, including crime prevention, safety of employees and clients, reducing insurance and legal costs cameras are fitted to D&S IFCA's vehicles. The footage can be monitored retrospectively.

D&S IFCA Officers should be aware that footage from the cameras may be used and relied upon, where necessary, for insurance and disciplinary purposes. Similarly, if there were allegations of negligence or careless driving made by clients or third parties against D&S IFCA's drivers, or civil claims brought against any D&S IFCA employees, D&S IFCA may use the footage in dealing with them. There may also be cases where D&S IFCA is required to disclose the recordings to the relevant authorities.

The responsible driver should ensure that the onboard camera is working at all times the vehicle is being used.

Smoking or Vaping in Vehicles

Smoking or Vaping is not permitted in D&S IFCA vehicles or in private vehicles where other D&S IFCA officers are present.

Mobile Telephones

Handheld mobile phones should never be used when driving. The practice is illegal and it also an offence to use them when stopped at traffic lights or in a traffic queue.

Although it is legal to use a 'hands-free' phone drivers can be prosecuted if they are not in proper control of their vehicle whilst using them. Driving carelessly or dangerously when using a hands-free mobile could lead to prosecution and disqualification, a large fine or up to two years in prison.

The safest approach, which D&S IFCA expects authorised drivers to adopt where possible, is to find a safe stopping place and switch off the engine before making or answering a call or text message.

Satellite Navigation Equipment

Always programme the satellite navigation equipment before setting off, and do not input instructions whilst driving. If the authorised driver needs to set or adjust a journey avoid the risk of prosecution for dangerous or careless driving by pulling over to a convenient safe location.

Check the route selected by the navigation system to make sure it is practical. Planning a journey in advance will reduce the reliance on the satellite navigation system and will also prompt Officers to think about issues such as fatigue and the best time to do the journey.

Keep the navigation equipment updated with new maps, new road layouts and new one-way systems.

Position portable units where they can easily be seen; do not allow them to obstruct the view of the road. Do not put them in front of airbags.

Reporting of Incidents and Damage

All incidents, including accidents, thefts, vandalism and damage of any kind must be reported to the responsible person by the driver.

Road Traffic Accidents

At the scene of an accident:

- stay calm and act in a manner which does not expose anyone to danger.
- inform the emergency services and call for assistance if required.

If a D&S IFCA employee is involved in an accident they should not admit or discuss liability, but obtain the following information:

- date, time and location of accident.
- vehicle registration numbers of third-party vehicles(s)
- third party drivers' name, address and Insurance Company.
- third Party Insurers policy number.
- name and number of any Police Officer attending the accident.
- police incident number.
- sketches or photographs of the accident scene showing position of vehicles, road markings etc.
- names and addresses of any other witnesses.
- any other applicable information.

If the vehicle(s) involved in the accident have only suffered minor damage and it is safe to do so they can be moved from the immediate scene to a place of safety where details can be exchanged. As soon as possible after the accident the details must be reported to the responsible person.

If the vehicle cannot be driven arrangements will need to be made to remove the vehicle. If employees are unaware of the arrangements D&S IFCA has in place, contact the responsible person for advice.

Depending on the circumstances the vehicle may be recovered to D&S IFCA Offices, a garage or a storage compound. All valuables, company and personal property should be removed from the vehicle.

If the vehicle remains legally drivable and it is safe to do so return to the office.

Theft of Vehicle and or Contents

If the D&S IFCA vehicle is broken into, stolen or vandalised the circumstances must be immediately reported to the Police. A Vehicle Damage Report and a Crime number must be forwarded to the responsible person.

When left unattended vehicles must be locked and all alarms, immobilisers and antitheft devices activated. Valuable items including mobile telephones, computers, briefcases, handbags,

jackets etc. must not be left on display. They should be taken with the employee or can be put in the boot space.

When the vehicle is left unoccupied, including during refuelling, ensure that the windows are closed, keys are removed from the ignition and all doors are locked.

Ensure that spare wheels, ladders or other equipment carried externally are protected by suitable security devices. Do not leave tools and equipment in vehicles overnight.

Note that under the terms of D&S IFCA's insurance policy the loss of private items may not be covered. Employees should ensure that adequate insurance cover is in place for personal tools and equipment.

Vehicle Insurance

If the authorised driver is asked to produce a Certificate of Insurance for a company vehicle by the Police an original can be obtained from the responsible person.

Road Fund Licence and MOT Testing

D&S IFCA will arrange for company vehicles to be taxed and MOT tested for use on the road. Employees can check that the tax has been paid and that the test certificate is current on the internet at the DVSA website <https://www.vehicleenquiry.service.gov.uk/Default.aspx>. To complete the enquiry the vehicle registration number and make will need to be added.

If a private vehicle is used for work, it is the owner's responsibility to ensure that it is taxed and tested for road use. D&S IFCA may use the DVSA website to check.

Offences and Fines

D&S IFCA employees will always be responsible for parking offences and other road traffic offences.

Remember that in some cases D&S IFCA can also be prosecuted for offences committed by employees in the course of work. D&S IFCA therefore expect that the authorised driver will drive in compliance with the Highway Code.

Vehicle Operation and Controls

The authorised driver should be fully aware of the vehicle controls and their functions including the location and operation of the spare wheel, jack and brace and security system before driving the vehicle. The vehicle handbook will also provide useful information on the vehicle, its functions and capabilities in respect of safe driving. Seek advice if unsure about anything.

Drivers of commercial vehicles will have an induction period to instruct and familiarise them with all aspects of the vehicle before using them unaccompanied.

Care and Condition of Vehicle

D&S IFCA employees are expected to keep D&S IFCA vehicles clean and presentable both inside and out.

Vehicle Defects and Damage

Authorised drivers of D&S IFCA vehicles are responsible for checking that the vehicles are in a road worthy condition and must inform the responsible person about damage and defects to any company vehicle so that remedial action can be arranged. Those that are not urgent can be dealt with at the next service or another convenient time.

If employees use a private vehicle for work, it is their responsibility to keep it properly maintained.

Maintenance Checks by the Driver

Before using the vehicle, drivers are responsible for carrying out the following checks and any others specified in the IAuditor checklists.

- Windscreen integrity
- Visual exterior damage including road lights and mirrors
- Tyre checks for wear, cracks in walls and appearance including the spare
- Check first aid kit
- Any warning lights displayed
- Brake and control functions

Other regular checks:

- Tyre pressure
- Windscreen washer level
- Oil, coolant and fluid levels
- Check that a vehicle jack, wheel brace along with the inflated spare are available

Standards of Driving

D&S IFCA expects staff to uphold its reputation and standards in all aspects of their work; this includes driving in company business:

- Follow the Highway Code to avoid becoming involved in an accident. Take care to look out for cyclists and motorcyclists; be particularly careful when pulling out of a side road or turning left. See also Appendix 2.
- Do not drive in a way that causes road rage in other drivers and avoid being provoked into road rage by other drivers. If faced by a driver with road rage the situation must be immediately calmed. Do not react to provocation by using signs, foul language, aggressive behaviour or aggressive driving. If employees have sufficient details to do so they may wish to report incidents to the police.
- Where D&S IFCA receives a report of road rage by one of D&S IFCA's employees in the course of their work the incident will be fully investigated, and appropriate action taken.
- Take extra care when driving in wintery or other adverse conditions; see also Appendix 3.

Tyre Condition and Punctures

Ensure that tyre pressures are correct for the type of load and driving conditions. It is the authorised driver's responsibility to ensure that tyres are roadworthy. If they have concerns over the legality of the tyres these must be referred to the responsible person.

If employees use their own vehicle, they are entirely responsible for the condition of the tyres and must ensure that they meet legal requirements.

In the event of a puncture use the spare wheel; follow the instructions in the vehicle handbook. If this is not possible contact the breakdown services or a mobile tyre repairer.

Remember that if the spare is narrower than the standard tyre the maximum speed at which the vehicle should be driven will be significantly restricted. This will normally be displayed on the wheel and explained in the handbook.

Windscreen Damage and Replacement

If the windscreen suffers serious damage, the office or responsible person must be contacted for advice, and they can arrange a repair or replacement by an authorised person or approved listed company.

In the event of minor damage and if the vehicle can be safely driven the authorised driver can continue with their journey. On return contact an authorised repairer to see if it can be repaired or will need replacement.

Servicing Arrangements

- **Cars**

The responsible person will ensure the vehicle is booked in for a service in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendation, as service intervals are reached.

- **Commercial Vehicles**

Commercial vehicles must be serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendation or as soon as the vehicle needs attention. Ask the responsible person to make arrangements for servicing.

Breakdown and Recovery

In the event of a breakdown call the recovery service number provided to you, details are with the vehicle documents. If you are not aware of this number or how to proceed call the responsible person or office.

Bodywork Repairs

The course of action will be dependent on the circumstances and the extent of the damage to a vehicle. Take advice from the responsible person.

D&S IFCA may seek to recover the cost of repairing damage caused by driver negligence.

Safe Loading of Vehicles

Products, materials, equipment must be secured so that movement cannot damage the product or the vehicle or cause a danger to other road users and pedestrians. The maximum gross weight of the vehicle must not be exceeded.

The load must not affect the stability of the vehicle when braking, cornering or when acceleration takes place.

Where roof or side racks are in use the load must be spread evenly to reduce height or protrusion and strain on the securing straps. Straps should be of a sound and substantial construction, inspected weekly and replaced when worn or damaged.

The load must not extend beyond the front or rear end of the vehicle unless it is identified by an adequate warning device.

Always make sure that the load is secured before driving off. If the load appears to have moved or be unsafe in the course of a journey, stop and take remedial action to make the load safe.

For further details see Appendix 1.

Return of Vehicles

When a vehicle is returned to D&S IFCA Office the interior and exterior must be left reasonably clean and tidy and that all equipment belonging to D&S IFCA is accounted for and not left in or on the vehicle.

Any damage over and above wear and tear may be charged to the driver.

Ignition keys must be returned to the office.

Fuel Cards

Fuel cards may be issued. They are vehicle specific and carry the registration number of the vehicle with which they can be used. When using a fuel card, the authorised driver must make sure that the current mileage is entered on the sales receipt. Fuel cards can remain in the vehicle.

Appendix 1. The Hazards of Overloading

An overloaded vehicle will not be roadworthy; it will not perform as designed and drivers will experience problems including;

- adverse steering, road holding and stability
- an increase in braking distances
- poor tyre performance
- failure of axles or suspension.

Payload, Gross Vehicle Weight and Kerb Weight

Vehicle manufacturers specify a Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) or Maximum Authorised Mass (MAM), which is the 'all-up' maximum permissible weight, including the chassis, body, driver, passengers, ancillaries, tools and equipment and any load placed onto the vehicle. The axles are also given an individual maximum axle weight limit lower than but proportional to the GVW. Overloading either the GVW or the axle weight limit is an offence under Road Traffic Legislation.

The maximum permissible load is determined by subtracting the Kerb Mass weight of the vehicle (chassis and body without the driver, passengers, fuel, tools, equipment) from the GVW.

The payload is then further reduced depending on what tools and equipment is carried, how much fuel is in the tank, the weight of the driver and passenger and any other items that are carried on the vehicle. The maximum payload will be substantially lower than the maximum permissible GVW.

Safe Loading Principles for Officers:

- Know the payload capacity of the vehicle being driven.
- When loading calculate the weight of the goods (many products are marked with their weight) and materials and make sure that neither GVW nor axle weight limits are exceeded.
- Whenever heavier materials, products and items are carried the weight must be evenly distributed across the load area. The full load should never be placed between the rear axle and the tailgate.
- Secure any load that is likely to move before moving off.

Remember that axle weight limits can be exceeded without exceeding the GVW.

Visual Indication of overloading

The best indication of a vehicle being overloaded or unstable is visual –

- If the vehicle is not level (lower at the rear) or less tyre than normal is visible, then more than likely it is overloaded.
- If the vehicle is lower to one side or less tyre is visible, then the vehicle is incorrectly loaded and unstable.

In either case re-distribute or remove part of the load.

Responsibilities

When the vehicle is being driven on a public highway it is always the driver's responsibility to ensure that the load is secure and within weight restrictions. Penalties in the event of conviction will usually include a fine and endorsement of their licence.

Any work-related fines or endorsements are likely to affect the insurance premiums for employees' personal vehicles.

Appendix 2. Legal and General Information

Maximum Speed Limits

Do not exceed the maximum permissible speed limits set out in the following table.

Type of vehicle	Built-up areas ^A	Single Carriageway	Dual Carriageway (defined as having a central reservation barrier)	Motorway
	mph (km/h)	mph (km/h)	mph (km/h)	mph (km/h)
Cars & motorcycles (including car-derived vans up to 2 tonnes maximum laden weight)	20(32) or 30(48) ^A	60 (96)	70 (112)	70 (112)
Cars towing caravans or trailers (including car-derived vans and motorcycles)	20(32) or 30(48) ^A	50 (80)	60 (96)	60 (96)
Buses, coaches and minibuses (not exceeding 12 metres in overall length)	20(32) or 30(48) ^A	50 (80)	60 (96)	70 (112) ^B
Goods vehicles (not exceeding 7.5 tonnes maximum laden weight)	20(32) or 30(48) ^A	50 (80)	60 (96) ^D	70 (112) ^{C,D}
Goods vehicles (exceeding 7.5 tonnes maximum laden weight)	20(32) or 30(48) ^A	50 (80) England and Wales 40 (64) Scotland and N Ireland	60 (96) England and Wales 50 (80) Scotland and N Ireland	60 (96) ^D
<p>A The 30-mph limit usually applies to all traffic on all roads with street lighting unless signs show otherwise; but note that many residential roads have been restricted to 20 mph.</p> <p>B Where the vehicle is required to be fitted with a speed limiter the effective maximum speed will be 62 mph (100km/h)</p> <p>C 60 mph (96 km/h) if articulated or towing a trailer.</p> <p>D Where the vehicle is required to be fitted with a speed limiter the effective maximum speed will be 56mph (90km/h)</p>				

Stationary Vehicles

When a vehicle is stationary on a road (except in traffic) the engine should be switched off to prevent unnecessary noise or exhaust emissions.

It is an offence to leave a vehicle unattended unless the engine has been stopped and the handbrake applied.

Use of Horn

At night, between 23.30 and 07.00, it is an offence to use the horn unless it is as a warning to other drivers.

Hazard Warning Lights

Hazard warning lights may be used when the vehicle is stationary due to breakdown, for the purpose of warning other road users if the vehicle is causing a temporary obstruction, or on a motorway or un-restricted dual carriageway to warn approaching drivers.

Use of Lights during Daylight Hours

Where visibility is reduced vehicles must have side and rear lamps switched on.

Front and rear fog lamps may only be used in conditions where visibility is seriously reduced (at other times it is illegal to use front fog lights as driving lights).

Any projecting loads must also be lit.

Parking and Loading Restrictions

Statutory restrictions on parking, loading and unloading indicated by yellow markings on kerbs and in gutters are in force in most town and village centres and on busy roads.

- single marks at the pavement edge indicate no loading at peak hours or at other stated times.
- double marks at the pavement edge indicate no loading throughout the working day or if stated at any time.

If you have to stop on a Motorway

It is an offence to stop on a motorway other than in an emergency; the authorised driver should not stop to consult maps, use mobile telephones or to go to the toilet. If the authorised driver needs to stop in an emergency -

- use the hard shoulder as a deceleration lane.
- pull as far to the left as possible and park with wheels turned towards the nearside verge.
- turn on hazard warning lights.
- leave the vehicle by the passenger door and stand as far away as possible from the vehicle.
- use motorway emergency telephones.

Appendix 3. Winter Driving Precautions

During winter additional driving hazards have to be considered. These include adverse weather (rain, snow, frost, standing water) and long hours of darkness. Following the advice given below will help to ensure your safety when driving in these conditions:

- a. Make sure you have plenty of fuel.
- b. Allow extra time for the journey and reduce speed.
- c. Increase the distance between your vehicle and the vehicle in front – in ice and snow stopping distances are ten times larger.
- d. In reduced visibility such as driving in rain or fog, use dipped headlights and rear fog lights. Use the windscreen wipers to keep the windscreen clear, even in fog.
- e. Remember to turn fog lights off when no longer required as they can distract other road users in normal visibility.
- f. Remember snow is visible but ice, especially black ice, is often invisible.
- g. Avoid sudden braking or harsh acceleration or steering manoeuvres.
- h. Keep all windows and mirrors clean, clear of snow and ice and free of mist. Keep lights and indicators clean.
- i. Carry a torch, a spade, extra warm clothing, Wellington boots, a blanket, a snack and a hot drink, especially if you are driving through isolated areas.
- j. If you are planning a long journey advise someone of your destination and approximate expected arrival time. If you have one, carry a mobile phone with you, ensuring it is fully charged. Do not use it while driving.
- k. If you feel unsafe or uncomfortable driving in adverse weather conditions, consider whether your journey is necessary at that time or whether it can be postponed. Consider whether an alternative method of transport would be better.
- l. If stranded by bad weather, try to ensure that you are not blocking access for emergency vehicles. Remain with the vehicle unless there is shelter nearby. Maintain your circulation by moving your body. If you can, use the engine to keep warm; but do not use the engine if the exhaust cannot vent safely. If you are snowed over, ensure that an airway is maintained.



Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Confirmation of receipt of Driver Handbook

Employee Name:.....

Job Title:.....

Please read the note below and sign this form

I have read the D&S IFCA Driver Handbook and understand, accept and will comply with the contents. I understand that compliance with the rules and conditons set out form part of my contract of employment. I will keep myself aware of its content and any updates that are brought to my attention

Employees signature:.....

Date:.....