

west midlands driver improvement course



west midlands driver improvement course

- a positive alternative to prosecution
- lasts one-and-a-half days
- course fee to be paid in advance

Driver Improvement is a national scheme with local centres operating in Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

Within the West Midlands County, the course is co-ordinated by local authority road safety officers under an agreement with West Midlands Police.

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overview

1. The course ---

The West Midlands Driver Improvement Course lasts one-and-a-half days:

Day 1 Morning - indoor session based around group discussions and problem solving.

Afternoon - on the road in your trainer's car.

Day 2 Morning - on the road in your trainer's car.

about the scheme

answers to some common questions

2. Why have I been sent this booklet? _____

The booklet explains how the West Midlands Driver Improvement Course is organised. This will help you to decide whether to accept the option of taking part in a course as an alternative to prosecution.

If you believe you were not at fault in your incident, you should decline the offer. The police will then proceed with the prosecution process and you will be able to defend your case in court. However you should be aware that, in giving you this option, the police believe they already have sufficient evidence to prosecute you successfully.

3. What is the point of the scheme and why should I take up this offer? _____

Driver Improvement Courses are not run as a punishment. If your case goes to court, you may get a fine and points on your licence. However, this will not give you an opportunity to take extra, relevant training.

Driver Improvement is a positive alternative which could help you reduce your chances of being involved in a road collision in the future. It frees up police time and court time and will help reduce future levels of injury on the roads. The scheme is run in the interests of road safety.

4. Who will run the course? _____

In this area, the police have asked the local authorities to provide and deliver the course. It is not run with police staff and it is not run for profit. The fee we charge helps to cover the cost of each course.

The trainers we have selected are experienced and qualified driving instructors. They have received additional training in working with qualified drivers, such as yourself.

preparing for the course

answers to some common questions

5. Do I need to practice my driving, or revise the highway code, before I attend the course? _____

It is up to you what thought you give to your driving before the course.

You could take some time now to identify for yourself specific areas of your driving that you feel need attention. You will then be able to make best use of your time with your in-car trainer.

We will send you a copy of the Highway Code in advance of the course. This will help you find out about the latest traffic regulations and safe driving advice.

6. Do I need to bring my own car? _____

No, you will be using your trainer's car for the drive, which will have dual controls. There is no need to bring your car at all, and you may prefer to arrive by public transport.

We are able to provide automatic cars on request, if that is what you usually drive. You may be able to use your own car if it has special adaptations which cannot be transferred to the trainer's car.

7. What happens if I drive a motorcycle? _____

You have the option to take the course in a car, if you also hold a driving licence for a car. If you want us to provide a motorcycle for the course we can do so, but we will pass the hire cost on to you. If you take the course on your own motorcycle, there is no extra cost.

8. What time do I need to arrive? _____

You will need to make sure you arrive in good time for the start of your course on both days. Check-in time for the first day of the course is usually between 9.00 and 9.15 am, and for the second day between 8.45 and 9.00 am.

If you arrive after the course is fully underway you will not be admitted. If you then ask us to book you on a future course, we will first need to check if one is running within your deadline, which is given to us by the police. You may then have to pay an additional charge. This would be at least 50 per cent of the course fee.

9. What happens when I check in for the course? _____

On arrival, we will ask to see your driving licence. You **must** prove that you have a valid licence to be able to take part in the course.

We will also ask you to read a number plate at a distance of 67 feet (20.5 metres). This is the minimum standard of eyesight required by law for you to drive. If you need to wear glasses or contact lenses to do this, you must bring them with you. If you suspect that your eyesight does not reach this standard, you should visit your optician before you come on the course.

After these formalities, we will offer you refreshments and show you into a lounge, where you can relax or chat with the other clients before the course starts.

10. Do I have to talk about my accident during the course? _____

No, you don't have to. We are interested in how you drive in the future, not the past. You will not be put into a position of having to talk about your accident / incident unless you choose to.

You may want to talk about this voluntarily, as the information could help your trainers to help you. This is **your** course and a chance to receive additional training relevant to **your** needs.

about the course

answers to some common questions

11. Who will be on the course with me? _____

Most people attending Driver Improvement Courses have been referred to us by the police. However, courses are also open for voluntary attendance. A typical course will have between 10 and 16 clients and will include drivers of every age and background.

12. What is the indoor session like? _____

We aim to provide a programme of activity which encourages safer driving and is both interesting and informative.

On the morning of the first day, you will take part in discussions and group exercises. These will explore how crashes are caused, who is at fault and what drivers can do to avoid them. The course will also focus on how to recognise and avoid hazards.

Responses to exercises are usually made verbally as a group. No-one will have to produce individual written work. The trainers will try to create a relaxed and non-judgemental environment.

13. What happens out on the road? _____

The afternoon of the first day, and the second morning, will be spent mainly on the road with one of our trainers. You will probably share the car with one or two other clients.

During this time, you will put into practice what you have learned in the classroom, under the guidance of your trainer.

As with the classroom session, the on-road training is delivered in a relaxed and friendly way.

14. Is there a test? _____

There are no tests during either the indoor or on-road sessions. The emphasis is on improving your performance, not on reaching a set standard.

Your trainer does not have a set route to follow when out on the road. He or she will take you on roads most suitable to help diagnose any problems with your driving and then give you practice in improving.

You should set as your own goal the improvement of your driving from day one to day two. Your trainer will help with this by giving you a written report to show how your driving has improved over the two days and where it still needs attention.

To complete the course as an alternative to prosecution you **must**:

- attend (on time) all parts of the course.
- actively co-operate and contribute to the course.

course administration

answers to some common questions

15. Where are courses held and on which days? _____

If you decide to opt for a Driver Improvement Course, you should state your preferred centre on the form sent to you by the police.

West Midlands courses last one and-a-half days. Day one is usually from 9am - 5pm and day two is from 8.45am - 1pm. Generally, courses are organised as shown in the chart below. Sometimes, locations or days of the week can change, and you may be offered the nearest alternative. All centres have off-street parking.

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Birmingham | $\frac{1}{2}$ mile north of city centre, B6 Thursday full day plus Friday half day |
| Coventry | $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of city centre, CV3 Tuesday full day plus Wednesday half day |
| Dudley | 4 miles west of town centre, DY6 Monday full day plus Tuesday half day |
| Sandwell | $\frac{1}{2}$ mile west of Oldbury, B69 Wednesday full day plus Thursday half day |
| Solihull | 5 miles north-east of town centre, B37 Thursday full day plus Friday half day |
| Walsall | $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles north of town centre, WS3 Friday full day plus Saturday half day |
| Wolverhampton | 2 miles north-west of city centre, WV6 Wednesday full day plus Thursday half day |

If you live outside the West Midlands, we will (on request) try to place you on a course nearer to your home. Please note that, although Driver Improvement is a national scheme, the information in this booklet relates only to the course provided in this area. Courses in other areas will not be organised in exactly the same way and the fees may vary.

16. What will be the date of my course? _____

If you opt for Driver Improvement, we will write to you with details of the time, place and date for your course. The date we offer will be within a deadline provided to us by the police.

Within this time limit, we will try to avoid offering you a course on a day when it will not be convenient for you to attend (e.g. because of a holiday or hospital appointment).

Please take the initiative now by listing carefully on the enclosed response form any dates when you would prefer **not** to attend a course during the next three months. We cannot guarantee that we will be able to meet your preferences for days of the week, dates or centre.

17. How do I confirm the offer when I receive it? _____

To confirm your place you will need to fill out the booking forms which we will send to you and then return them to us.

All fees must be paid in full before the start of the course. Methods of payment and final payment deadlines vary from centre to centre. A note of these arrangements and conditions will accompany the booking form.

18. What happens if I can't make the date offered? _____

If you cannot attend on the date we offer, you should phone your course administrator. It is often possible for us to offer you an alternative date.

If you ask for a course to be rescheduled at short notice, an additional administrative charge of at least 50 per cent of the course fee may be made. The period of notice required to avoid this charge varies from centre to centre.

19. What happens if I do not complete my course? _____

Some clients are unable to take up the course dates we offer; some change their mind and decide they do not want to attend a course after all; some find they are unable to pay in full in advance of attending; some clients only attend for part of their course.

In such cases, we inform the police that we are unable to put the client through a course. The police will then continue with their prosecution.

feedback & queries

20. Some comments from previous clients _____

At the end of the course, clients are invited to complete an evaluation form. Below are some of their comments:

"I was agreeably surprised, quite enjoyed it"

"It certainly made me think about my driving more, and was a positive thing to do"

"Very good"

"The course was simple and easy to understand"

"Very helpful and informative. The staff are very friendly, which provides a relaxed atmosphere"

"Good interaction in classroom and vehicle. I felt we had all taken part"

"All aspects in classroom were handled well, with the information being easy to understand"

21. Contact details

**West Midlands Driver Improvement Providers Group,
c/o Dudley Borough Council
Directorate of the Urban Environment
The Council House
Mary Stevens Park
Stourbridge
West Midlands
DY8 2AA**

If you have any queries or would like further information please telephone: **01384-814569**.

If you would like a summary of this booklet in another language or format (eg audio cassette) please enquire about availability using the telephone number above.

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