

Risk Assessment – Coach Travel

Updated 31st August 2025 - Next Update 31st August 2026



This risk assessment has been compiled based on experience of operating coaches. It covers issues which are relevant to every group travelling on coaches, but is by no means an exhaustive list. Groups travelling (particularly with children or other vulnerable passengers) should undertake their own additional risk assessments for these situations.

Risk Assessment - Coach Travel Passengers, Driver & Staff



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This risk assessment has been prepared drawing on practical knowledge and extensive experience of operating coaches in a variety of circumstances. It is intended to highlight the common risks and considerations that apply to all groups travelling by coach, regardless of the size of the party or the purpose of the journey. The assessment outlines general issues that organisers and passengers should be aware of in order to promote safety, comfort, and smooth operation throughout the trip.

It is important to note, however, that this document is not intended to be a fully comprehensive or definitive list of every possible risk. Travel situations can vary significantly depending on the nature of the group, the duration of the journey, and the particular needs of those on board. For this reason, groups - especially those travelling with children, elderly passengers, or other vulnerable individuals - are strongly encouraged to prepare their own supplementary risk assessments. These should address specific requirements, potential hazards, and practical measures tailored to their circumstances. By doing so, organisers can ensure a higher level of preparedness and provide additional reassurance for the wellbeing of all passengers.

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Potential Risk	Who	Safety Procedure	Risk
Passengers with Special Needs or Requirements Added potential for difficulties or danger for certain group members. Risk of allergic reaction.	Passengers, Driver & Staff	Obtain details of any passengers with Special Needs where wheelchairs are used. Ensure that means of access is provided to both the coach and at the accommodation/venue. Check the itinerary and conduct additional risk assessment to cover any areas where the particular special needs may give rise to hazardous situations. Highlight in the booking conditions and booking documentation, the need for the group to inform Ashcroft's of any special needs/requirements at the time of the booking.	LOW
Group Movement Loosing party members.	Group Leaders	Group leader and supervisors must be familiar with the members of the group prior to the trip. Head counts must be performed regularly when the party is getting on or off the coach and on entrance and exit from buildings or areas of interest. Groups can be divided into accountable groups, or to employ a buddy or chain system to alert absentees. The group leader must have a mobile phone enabled to operate at the location of the visit.	LOW
Group Movement Journey Stops.	Group Leaders	The coach should only stop at suitable service areas. The driver is to brief the group on the facilities at the stop location, given duration of stop and the latest time that the party must return to the coach. Advise appropriate movement around the location and specific hazards to be avoided.	LOW
Group Movement Hazardous Areas.	Group Leaders	Driver to brief group to take extra caution whilst in town centres or trafficked areas, particularly where traffic will be approaching from an unfamiliar direction. Group to be divided into accountable groups, or to employ a buddy or chain.	LOW

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Potential Risk	Who	Safety Proceedure	Risk
Possession of Illegal Goods Offensive weapons e.g. Knives, Intoxicating substances (alcohol, tobacco, solvents etc.). Other e.g. fireworks, laser pens.	Leaders, Pupils	Driver to brief outline acceptable levels of behavior. Group leader to establish and make known clear instructions and guidelines. Possible sanctions to be available.	LOW
Illness (passengers).	Leaders, Pupils	Children to put their hand up if feeling unwell or another child is to alert an adult's attention. Adult to deal with the issue if possible (sick bucket, move the child near the front) Make sure all staff have access to the sick bucket! If sickness is more severe, phone 999 then contact the emergency contact. Stop the coach then 2 adults are to accompany the child to the hospital and remain there until the parent or guardian arrives or the patient is released.	LOW
Illness (passengers whilst abroad).	Leaders, Pupils	All passengers should have European Health Insurance Card. Group Leader to ensure travel insurance is in place. Medical forms should be completed for all students and be in possession of the group leader, so that all pre-existing medical conditions are identified. The group leader should review the medical status of students before departure and check that they have the necessary medication with them. Group Leaders should report any illness requiring treatment or admission to Ashcroft's and the travel insurance company.	LOW
Loss of Possessions	Leaders, Pupils	Group Leader/Driver to brief regarding security of possessions. Group leader should report any loss to Ashcroft's Ltd and the travel insurance company.	LOW

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Potential Risk	Who	Safety Procedure	Risk
Crime (Theft, assault).	Leaders, Pupils	Group Leader/Driver to brief regarding security of possessions. Group leader to brief regarding personal safety. Group leader should report any loss to Ashcroft's Ltd and the travel insurance company.	LOW
Behaviour Problems	Driver, Leaders, Pupils, Other Persons, Passengers	Driver briefing to outline acceptable levels of behaviour. Age, excitability and personality of group members to be considered and behaviour/relationships monitored. Leaders should disperse amongst the group and not sit together. Any individual(s) giving cause for concern to be reported to the group leader for them to deal with immediately.	LOW
Changing Circumstances (weather conditions, changes in itinerary, incidents, illness or unusual circumstances).	Driver Leaders, Pupils, Other Persons	Have in place a back-up plan. Driver and group leader to co-operate and perform 'on going risk assessment' to consider changing circumstances. Identify the hazard, which might be affected, a level of risk and implement appropriate control measures. Keep a record of significant hazards identified and controls implemented.	LOW
Safety Awareness of Passengers	Leaders Pupils	Driver must provide briefings on basic safety provisions, welfare facilities and advise of the location of emergency exits and emergency equipment. Driver must communicate effectively with the passengers throughout the trip to inform and provide awareness of hazards as they become apparent.	LOW

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Falls and Collisions (with furniture or other passengers inside the coach).	Leaders, Pupils	Passengers should be discouraged from leaving their seats and moving about (unless necessary) whilst the coach is in motion. It is mandatory for passengers to wear seat belts whilst on a moving vehicle.	LOW
Access/Egress (use of steps).	Leaders, Pupils	Driver safety briefing. Well maintained vehicle floor surfaces, step nosing, hand rails, lights. Ensure that the group leader or another supervisor is present by the coach door when pupils are entering or leaving the coach. On double decker vehicles, when Children are being loaded – a responsible adult must be positioned upstairs during the loading procedure.	LOW
Access/Egress (to the coach).	Leaders, Pupils	Ensure that the group leader or another supervisor is present by the coach door when pupils are entering or leaving the coach. Emergency exits must not be used except in an emergency.	LOW
Access/Egress (To the coach – whilst abroad). (vehicle door opening onto the wrong side).	Driver, Leaders, Pupils	Driver to brief passengers to take extra caution and beware that traffic will be approaching from an unfamiliar direction. Driver to use designated drop off areas or parking spaces where possible. Where the vehicle is fitted with a continental door, this should be used whenever appropriate. Driver to avoid disembarking the group onto a trafficked road if possible.	MEDIUM

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Potential Risk	Who	Safety Procedure	Risk
Objects Falling (from overhead luggage racks).	Driver, Leaders, Pupils	Driver to give safety briefing. Ensure heavy items are stowed away in the luggage hold or under the seats. Monitor isles/emergency exits for obstructions and ensure a clear way is kept at all times.	LOW
Obstructions (in gangways and blocking emergency exist).	Driver, Leaders, Pupils	Driver to give safety briefing. Ensure heavy items are stowed away in the luggage hold or under the seats. Monitor isles/emergency exits for obstructions and ensure a clear way is kept at all times.	LOW
Manual Handling of Luggage	Driver, Leaders, Pupils	Driver and others handling heavy luggage should take care to minimize the risk of injury to themselves (especially to the back) by observing good manual handling practice Group leaders should be aware of a weight limit of 20kgs for a driver to be lifting – any weight over, the driver is not to move or lift.	LOW
Vehicle Reversing	Driver, Leaders, Pupils	Minimize the need for reversing; seek assistance from a reliable third party. Vehicle fitted with reversing horns, camera or detectors.	LOW
Vehicle Refueling (risk of slips, trips, risk of fire, explosion, risk of being struck by another vehicle).	Driver, Leaders, Pupils	Passengers should not normally be in the vehicle during refueling. If this cannot be avoided, passengers are to remain seated in the vehicle while fueling is in progress. No smoking while refueling is in progress. Drivers wear appropriate footwear.	LOW
	Driver, Leaders	Remove keys when leaving the coach or otherwise when not required. Ensure that an unlocked coach is being supervised at all times. Perform duty checks and vehicle inspections.	LOW

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Potential Risk	Who	Safety Procedure	Risk
Road Worthiness of Vehicle (risk of catastrophic vehicle failure).	Driver, Leaders, Pupils, Other Persons	Emergency and breakdown procedures detailed in the driver's handbook in accordance with best practice including local procedures abroad. Passengers removed to a place of safety and warning lights and triangle used. A First Aid kit and fire extinguisher is provided in all vehicles and all equipment dates are regularly checked. The driver has means of communication with Ashcroft's Ltd office or on call Transport Managers.	LOW
Other Road Users (Vehicles – risk of collision with vehicle while the coach is motion, with possible subsequent injury to staff and passengers).	Driver, Leaders, Pupils, Other Persons	Competent, well trained drivers. Seat belts fitted in accordance with legal requirements. Passengers briefed to remain seated as much as possible and to wear seatbelts.	LOW
Other Road Users (Vehicles – risk of stationary coach being struck by another vehicle)	Driver, Leaders, Pupils, Other Persons	Driver parks vehicle away from moving traffic or pulls off the road as far as possible. Passengers alight to a safe place away from the vehicle. Vehicle lights maintained in working order and hazard warning lights fitted in accordance with legal requirements. Coach parked in designated parking bays when left unattended.	LOW
Adverse Weather and Traffic Conditions	Driver, Leaders, Pupils, Other Persons	Monitor weather and traffic reports for news of adverse conditions and congestion. Establish the likely effects on the journey and amend the itinerary where appropriate in consultation with the group leader.	LOW

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Driver Competence	Driver, Leaders, Other Persons	Drivers must hold a current PCV licence and Driver's CPC Qualification valid for the type of vehicle being driven. Ashcroft's Ltd checks all drivers at recruitment and provides training and assessment, utilising a mentor system to gain experience. Drivers licences are checked every 6 months Drivers are trained in accordance with the VOSA requirements.	LOW
Impaired Driver Performance (Illness)	Driver, Leaders, Pupils, Other Persons	Drivers must notify the Ashcroft's office or the on-call Transport Manager of any illness or medical condition immediately. Replacement and or cover provided.	LOW
Impaired Driver Performance (distratction)	Driver, Leaders, Pupils, Other Persons	Pre-journey safety briefing in accordance with 'best practice'. Passengers must not be allowed to distract the driver by talking to him/her unnecessarily, or by moving about excessively or interlining in horseplay or pranks. Group leader or the other nominated person is to sit near to the driver. Drivers briefed not to use hand held microphone or speak directly to any person when the vehicle is in motion. The driver is prohibited from using his mobile phone while the vehicle is in motion – driver needs to pull over and the vehicle to stop to engage in a conversation.	LOW

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Impaired Driver Performance (Fatigue)	Driver, Leaders, Pupils, Other Persons	Ashcroft's ensure drivers hours are limited and monitored to comply with the EU Regulations. Routes are carefully planned, taking into account distance and time required for each leg of the journey. Tachograph records are completed and handed into the Transport Office. Two drivers will be used where appropriate or the Group leader briefed on driving hours and time limits.	LOW
Impaired Driver Performance (stress)	Driver, Leaders, Pupils, Other Persons	EU Regulations regarding driver's hours and daily rest periods and driving breaks are adhered too. Monitoring of tachograph records Route Planning to avoid excessive traffic and potential delays. Two driver operations utilised where appropriate Passenger code of conduct enforced by the driver and Group leader. 24-hour contact number available in accordance with best practice.	LOW
Impaired Driver Performance (Influence of alcohol and drugs)	Driver, Leaders, Pupils, Other Persons	Ashcroft's operate a policy for the prevention and detection of impaired driver performance due to the effects of alcohol and prescribed and illegal drugs. Drivers shall carry breathalyzer testing kits when driving in France, to comply with the EU rules and regulations.	LOW

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Sea Crossings (Ferry/Tunnel)	Leaders, Pupils	Group to be subdivided and accountable to specific supervisors. The group's attentions to be drawn to the safety briefings and safety arrangements provided by the Cross Channel Carrier (ferry or tunnel). On Ferry Crossings, access to the coach by the group is prohibited. On Eurotunnel transits, the group should be advised to remain with the coach.	LOW
Additional Risks Most visits have no extra risk associated with them and are therefore covered by this generic Risk Assessment...	Driver, Leaders, Pupils, Other Persons	Visits are categorised according to the hazard they present. Nearly all have a basic rating (1) and are therefore, not considered to present any additional risks for a group. In a few places where particular hazard is identified a specific risk assessment is carried out.	LOW