

BRITISH CONSULS

If you get into real difficulty contact the **British Consul**.

Consuls can:

- do their utmost to resolve difficulties with the local authorities;
- issue emergency passports;
- contact relatives, employers and friends and ask them to help financially;
- advise on how to transfer funds;
- at most posts, in an emergency, advance money against a sterling cheque for up to £100 supported by a banker's card valid for the relevant amount;
- in exceptional circumstances, and provided that certain strict criteria are met, make a repayable loan for repatriation to the United Kingdom. It does not follow that the repayable loan would cover the return to the UK of the truck. There is no law that says a Consul must do this, and the Consul will need to be satisfied that there is absolutely no one else who can help;
- provide a list of lawyers, interpreters and doctors;
- arrange for next of kin and employers to be informed of an accident or a death and advise on procedures;
- contact and visit British nationals who are arrested or in prison and arrange for messages to be passed to relatives and employers.

But, Consuls cannot:

- pay hotel, medical, legal and other bills;
- pay for travel tickets except in very special circumstances;
- undertake work more properly done by travel or insurance companies, airlines, banks or motoring organisations;
- get better treatment for drivers in hospital (or prison) than is provided to local nationals;
- give legal advice, instigate court proceedings, interfere in local judicial procedures or secure early release from prison;
- investigate a crime;
- formally help dual nationals in the country of their other nationality.

**THE BEST POLICY IS TO GET IT
RIGHT BEFORE YOU GO**

USEFUL ADDRESSES

The Department of the Environment,
Transport and the Regions
Road Haulage Regulation Division
Zone 2/22
Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DR

Tel: 020 7944 2774
Fax: 020 7944 2928

Road Haulage Association
Roadway House
35 Monument Hill
Weybridge
Surrey KT13 8RN

Tel: 01932 841515
Fax: 01932 852516

Freight Transport Association
Hermes House
St John's Road
Tunbridge Wells
Kent TN4 9UZ

Tel: 01892 526171
Fax: 01892 534989

Consular Division
Foreign & Commonwealth Office
Old Admiralty Building
London SW1A 2PA

Tel: 020 7270 1500
Fax: 020 7008 0155/0164

International Road Freight Office (IRFO)
Eastgate House
Kings Manor
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 6PB

Tel: 0191 201 4090
Fax: 0191 201 4040



Foreign &
Commonwealth Office

INTERNATIONAL ROAD HAULAGE



INTERNATIONAL ROAD HAULAGE

Every year more British trucks travel overseas on the roads of Europe and beyond. Thousands of international journeys are completed safely, but many are not. Accidents, theft of vehicles and documentation (truck and personal), and loss of money are common occurrences. With forethought and planning, many problems could be avoided.

The first step is proper preparation for the journey and improved support from companies. This would make drivers better equipped to tackle most routine problems. In case of serious difficulty British Consuls are ready to help.

This leaflet is a checklist of measures which road hauliers and drivers should build into travel plans. It gives good advice on how to avoid trouble and details what Consuls can and cannot do to help. It has been produced in association with the Department of Transport, the Road Haulage Association and the Freight Transport Association. Make sure you keep a copy with you. Our aim is to help you help yourself.

OPERATORS OF INTERNATIONAL TRUCKS

All owners and operators of trucks being used on international business have a responsibility to ensure that their vehicles and drivers have the relevant documentation, finance and other safeguards to ensure that they reach their destinations without difficulty.

Truck owners and operators should:

- ensure that their vehicle documentation – tax disc, operator disc, MOT certificate, vehicle registration and insurance certificate – is current and on the vehicle, together with cargo documentation;
- ensure that the vehicle has on board a valid certified blue copy of an EU Community Authorisation or appropriate own account paperwork and, if appropriate, relevant permits for all non-EU countries to be visited or transited;
- keep a complete set of duplicate documents, or details of them, for the vehicle and driver in case the originals are lost or stolen;
- know the latest requirements of countries being visited in respect of weight and vehicle dimensions, speed and driving restrictions and customs requirements;
- provide drivers with sufficient money, or other means, to cover fuel bills, motorway tolls, fines, telephone calls and incidental expenses;
- set tachographs on UK registered trucks to UK time and ensure that drivers carry their record charts for the current week and the chart for the last day of the previous week on which they drove;
- ensure that they have a letter of attestation to cover any recent period of inactivity (in the language of every country to be visited);
- avoid using trailers with supplementary tanks, especially in France and Italy;
- obtain appropriate documentation and warning signs for dangerous cargoes;
- retain a copy of the driver's itinerary.

DRIVERS OF INTERNATIONAL TRUCKS

All drivers of international trucks must take responsibility for safeguarding their own interests. They should be aware that in some countries drivers are held to be legally responsible for their loads, whether or not they know of the contents.

Before setting off they should:

- check any changes in documents needed;
- check they have all necessary personal documents, including full current passport and visas, and the Contributions Agency's form E128 (for free or cheaper emergency medical care) if travelling in Europe. Ensure they have personal travel insurance to cover accident, illness and repatriation. Keep all papers secure and leave copies with their company;
- carry spare bulbs and warning triangle;
- ensure that all documents relating to the vehicle and cargo are in order and that their company has copies;

- carry a list of useful telephone numbers;
- ensure they are aware of any customs and cultural differences in the countries they are travelling through. Check www.fco.gov.uk/travel

When travelling drivers should:

- obey the local laws. Laws vary from country to country; so does the treatment of offenders. Drivers should remember that the laws and procedures which apply are those of the country they are in, not those of the UK;
- comply with the Immigration Service 'Code of Practice';
- lock the vehicle and load space whenever it is left unattended, even when making a delivery;
- lock all doors and back the vehicle up against a barrier or wall to prevent access to rear doors when resting in the cab;
- have anti-theft devices fitted to the vehicle;
- be vigilant when returning to empty vehicles. Drivers should note suspicious people and vehicles in the vicinity and seek help from fellow drivers, ask for help from the company you have just loaded from or telephone for police support if seriously concerned;
- consider varying routes for journeys regularly undertaken;
- be suspicious of unsolicited offers of help;
- be aware of bogus officials or staff, particularly if you are carrying valuable loads. Ask for identification; carry a vulnerable load card in the appropriate language(s) if necessary;
- keep in touch with base depots;
- use major roads and motorways as much as possible;
- keep strict records of fuel and oil consumption.

Drivers should NOT:

- discuss the type of goods they are carrying, especially if they are of high value, nor should they chat about the load or intended route over the vehicle's radio;
- leave windows open when away from the vehicle;
- leave the vehicle unattended in lay-bys or insecure casual parking places. Where possible, pre-arranged secure parking areas for overnight stops should be used;
- carry unauthorised passengers;
- leave anyone else in charge of the vehicle at the destination;
- deliver the load to any other location unless convinced that such action is legitimate;
- leave valuables visible in the cab;
- get involved with drugs under any circumstances; penalties are severe. You can lose your vehicle, face massive fines and spend years in jail. The Consul cannot get you out of jail.

Remember: Ignorance is no defence. If you are found in possession of illegal contraband, illegal immigrants or drugs, penalties are high. Modern x-ray machines will show the cargo you are carrying.