



Policy	Northumbria Blood Bikes Policy: Emergency Calls – Including Use of Blue Lights		
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A. Why do we need this Policy

This Policy lays out some dos and don'ts regarding the handling of 'Emergency category calls including the use or otherwise of Blue Lights.

B. Who is Responsible for this Policy

The Rota Manager of the group is responsible for the maintenance of this policy.
The Executive Committee is responsible for approving this policy.
All Riders, Drivers and Shift Controllers must be familiar with the contents of this policy.

C. When will this Policy be reviewed

The policy will be reviewed a maximum of two years following its approval.

D. How will changes be notified

The latest version of the policy will be made available via the members' library on the group website. New versions will be announced via email to all members and to the executive committee.

1. Aim of Policy

- 1.1. All members to be aware of this policy and be able to follow it thus ensuring most rapid, safe collection and delivery of items and compliance with all legal and regulatory duties.

2. Emergency Calls

- 2.1. It is for the individual Hospital Trusts to declare that a particular 'job' requires an emergency response from NBB.

3. Actions

- 3.1. The lead clinician dealing with the case will authorise a call to NBB as an Emergency and their name will be recorded in all NBB systems and paperwork. Response is likely to be delayed if the caller does not have the authorisation prior to the call being made, this is laid out in the SLA with Trusts.
- 3.2. The shift controller receiving the call will advise on an *estimated* response time.
- 3.3. If the caller wishes the job to go ahead the shift controller and allocated rider or driver will prioritise the call over other urgent and standard calls, however:
 - 3.3.1. It will be for the rider or driver to determine whether to use blue lights for all or part of the collection and delivery runs taking into account weather, road conditions, etc.

4. Further Information

4.1. 'Blue Lights'

THE TERM BLUE LIGHTS USED HERE IS DEEMED TO INCLUDE HEADLAMP FLASHERS AND OTHER WARNING DEVICES.

The use of blue lights is to inform and warn of your presence and help you make safe and effective progress through traffic.

Northumbria Blood Bikes vehicles gain no exemptions from speed limits or Traffic Law through the use of blue lights. It is therefore Northumbria Blood Bikes policy that riders will at all times ride safely, to the advanced riding standard, within the law, observing the rules of the Highway Code, and will not assume that any exemptions apply. You should be fully conversant with this policy document.

You must have attended a NBB blue light training session (periodically at the discretion of the committee) to use blue lights. These training sessions are arranged when required.

NBB's policy is that we use blue lights on Emergency calls only to facilitate our safe and effective progress through traffic and expect our riders to act accordingly. Riders are reminded that our primary concern on emergency calls is the safe arrival of rider, items and bike, and that with no exemptions; it is the rider who risks any legal penalties they may incur by infringing traffic law.

Using blue lights without the exemptions applying to some other emergency vehicles is liable to cause confusion and unpredictability among other road users. Riders should be mindful of this and especially be willing to turn blue lights off, whenever in the course of an emergency call the lights are not helping or may cause confusion to other road users.

For the sake of clarity it is emphasised that the following exemptions to the road traffic act (which apply to most blue light users) DO NOT apply to Northumbria Blood Bikes:

- ability to treat a red traffic light as a give way sign
- ability to pass the wrong side of a keep left sign, including keep left bollards and roundabouts
- exemption from obeying speed limits
- ability to use the hard shoulder of a motorway

However most traffic laws apply to all blue light users just as to everyone else, notably including:

- No entry,
- stop and give way signs
- one-way streets;
- traffic lights controlling railway crossings or fire station entrances.;
- unbroken white line systems (except in the same circumstances as everyone else - to pass a stationary vehicle, slow-moving cyclist or horse, or a road maintenance vehicle.).

Blue Light users are still obliged to drive with care and consideration for other road users and can face charges of careless or dangerous driving.

Anticipating the unpredictable responses of other drivers is one of the biggest challenges of driving under blue lights. Remember:

- Present your vehicle where it can be seen and your intention is clear
- Confirm what response other road users will make, before you commit to a course of action

5. Bus Lanes

- 5.1.** Emergency use (whether under blue lights or not) gives no exemption for NBB vehicles to utilise Bus Lanes where these would otherwise be prohibited.

6. Exceptions and Variations

- 6.1.** An exception to 5.1 above is that NBB vehicles registered with Newcastle City Council can use Bus Lanes in that City when responding to an authorised Emergency call.

- 6.2.** The Tyne Tunnel Authority has specific rules and procedures for vehicles using the Tyne Tunnel on Emergency runs. The following guidelines for NBB vehicles have been agreed with the Tyne Tunnel operators (TT2), and must be adhered to:

- The shift co-ordinator will contact TT2 to let them know a “blue light” vehicle is approaching.
- During normal passage, whilst traffic is free flowing, through the tunnels, NBB vehicles shall turn off blue lights and adhere to the speed limits and road signage.
- Southbound vehicles are to use toll lane 1, (extreme left hand lane). TT2 staff will endeavour to ensure this lane is clear.
- Northbound vehicles are to use toll lane 8, (extreme right hand lane). TT2 staff will endeavour to ensure this lane is clear.
- Emergency vehicles should only proceed through the barrier when presented with a green traffic signal. Emergency vehicles shall comply with instructions given by Tunnels Officer.

- 6.3.** Members are also authorised to use blue lights in exceptional circumstances, primarily at the scene of an emergency to warn other road users of their presence, or under the instructions of the emergency services.

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Version Control and History

Date	Version	Author:	Reason For Change
16.10.2015	1.0	Peter Robertson	First Version
11.10.2016	2.0	Mike Thompson	Change of Charity Number and timed review
07.01.2020	2.0	Ronnie Paton	Document Review