



University of
St Andrews

Minibuses - safe use of minibuses

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Guidance notes on safe use of minibuses

1. Introduction

This guidance applies to the use of motor vehicles, operating within the UK, which can carry more than eight passengers, but less than sixteen.

The guidance should be implemented by the Head of the Schools/Units/Residences who own, or hire, minibuses for teaching, research or other university activities.

The guidance set standards which are designed to minimise the risk of accidents to passengers and ensure compliance with relevant legislation. Schools/Units/Residences may impose any additional requirements which they consider to be necessary.

The term 'Head' in the following sections refers to the Head of the School/Unit/Residence.

2. Administration

The Head is responsible for implementing this guidance. The Head may delegate specific duties relating to the 'day-to-day' management of minibuses to members of staff but cannot delegate responsibility.

3. Risk assessment

The School/Unit/Residence should carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment for the use of minibuses. This risk assessment can be a 'Generic' type where there is extensive use of minibuses by the School/Unit/Residence in low risk activities. Generic risk assessments may be incorporated into the local health and safety policy. If minibuses are used infrequently, the minibus risk assessment can be part of the assessment for the project.

The assessment should identify all relevant hazards, determine who will be at risk, what is the probability of the hazards causing harm to human health or the environment (i.e. the risks) and identifying appropriate control measures to eliminate or minimise these risks. This assessment should be made available to all relevant employees who may operate or use the minibuses. The assessment should also be reviewed at regular intervals.

4. Vehicle permits

All minibuses must have relevant Department of Transport Permits, for example, a full Public Service Vehicle (PSV) Operators Licence or a Section 19 (Transport Act 1985) Permit (see [Appendix 1](#)).

If the minibus is to be used for 'Hire and Reward' a full PSV Operators Licence will be required. The term 'Hire and Reward' is defined as:

'Any sort of payment which gives the person the right to be carried on a vehicle regardless of whether a profit is made or not'.

Note: This definition includes payment in cash or kind and the interpretation of 'Hire and Reward' can be wide ranging.

Guidance on the licencing requirements for minibuses can be obtained from the DVLA at URL: http://www.direct.gov.uk/prod_consum_dg/groups/dg_digitalassets/@dg/@en/@motor/documents/digitalasset/dg_4011275.pdf

The Regulations state that, if the minibus is used by a non-profit organisation, where services are not available to the public and not for 'Hire and Reward', a Section 19 (Transport Act 1985) Permit may be required instead of a full PSV Operators Licence. Under a Section 19 Permit, fees may be charged for the upkeep of the minibus, but not to make a profit.

Further guidance on applying for vehicle permits (and application forms) can be obtained from Environmental, Health and Safety Services.

5. Driving licence requirements

If the minibus is to be used for 'Hire and Reward', that is taking payment in money or kind, for the use of the minibus, then a Passenger Carrying Vehicle (PCV) - Category D Licence is required.

The driving licence requirements for driving a minibus in the course of employment and where there is no 'Hire and Reward' are:-

EITHER

The driver must be aged 21 or over and hold a full United Kingdom driving licence to drive a car and this licence **must have been issued before 1st January 1997**.

OR

If the driver's licence was **issued after 1st January 1997** then, to drive a minibus, the driver must hold a Passenger Carrying Vehicles (PCV) - Category D1 driving licence issued either by the United Kingdom or by another member state of the European Community.

The minimum driving licence requirements for driving a minibus, with up to sixteen passenger seats, for social purposes are different from those where the minibus is being used in the course of employment. Before any employee uses a minibus under these requirements, written approval of the Head of the School/Unit/Residence must be obtained.

The minimum requirements for driving a minibus for social purposes are:

1. The driver must provide his/her service on a voluntary basis; **and**
2. The vehicle is used for social purposes by a non-commercial body, but not for hire or reward; **and**
3. The driver must be aged 21 or over; **and**
4. The driver must have held a full driving licence (Category B) for at least two years; **and**
5. The maximum weight of the minibus is no more than 3.5 tonnes, excluding any specialist equipment for the carriage of disabled passengers.

All drivers are required to inform the Driver Vehicle Licencing Agency (DVLA) in Swansea of any disability which might affect their fitness to drive any vehicle. Details on the medical conditions which have to be reported to the DVLA are given in URL: http://www.dft.gov.uk/dvla/medical/~media/pdf/medical/at_a_glance.ashx

Where a driver of a minibus is do so for 'Hire and Reward' under a new D1 licence, the driver will have to undergo a specific medical prior to the issuing of a D1 licence.

Any driver with such a disability, also intending to drive a minibus in the course of his/her employment, should also inform the Head.

Note: Under legislation, no insulin-dependent drivers may drive a minibus or similar vehicle over 3.5 tonnes. Drivers where diabetes is treated with tablets, or by diet, are unaffected by the new legislation.

Note: All licence endorsements should be reported to the Head by minibus drivers.

The Head may put additional restrictions on drivers of minibuses at his/her discretion, for example, requiring that all drivers within the School/Unit/Residence eg must undertake specific minibus driving training, must have two years driving experience before they can drive a minibus, unless they have a Category D1 driving licence. A list of all minibus drivers approved by the Head should be held by the School/Unit/Residence.

6. Vetting drivers and escorts

Heads may take into account whether drivers or escorts have 'one to one' contact with children or 'vulnerable adults', the level and nature of their supervision and the length and duration of their contact. Under specific legislation (see URL: <http://www.disclosurescotland.co.uk/publications/>), an appropriate check via 'Disclosure Scotland' must be undertaken. This is organised through Human Resources. Any such check **must** be with the consent of the employee(s) concerned.

For details on how to arrange such checks, the Head of the School/Unit/Residence should contact the Director of Environmental, Health and Safety Services.

7. Journey and driving times

Tiredness of the driver has often been a significant factor in minibus accidents. It is therefore vital that drivers take breaks and do not drive for excessively long periods.

The recommended maximum periods for driving a minibus are:-

	Recommended limits for driving only	Recommended limits for driving plus other work	UK legal limits
Maximum time driving without a break from work	2 hours (or sooner if tired)	2 hours (or sooner if tired)	5.5 hours
Minimum length of break	15 minutes **	15 minutes **	30 minutes
Maximum length of working day ++	13 hours	10 hours	16 hours
Of which, spent driving	9 hours	4 hours	10 hours
Daily rest period	11 hours	11 hours	10 hours
Weekly Rest period	45 hours	45 hours	-----

++ Taking account of other work undertaken before starting a journey

** After 4.5 hours of driving, the accumulated length of breaks from driving should be at least 45 minutes.

(Recommended limits derived from guidance produced by Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents in their publication entitled: 'Minibus Safety - A Code of Practice')

These recommendations apply to journeys within the United Kingdom only. There are different rules for driving minibuses in other countries (see [Section 15](#) on Overseas Travel).

N.B. It is vital that, if a driver feels tired, he/she should stop at the nearest appropriate stopping point regardless of how long they have been driving.

8. Second drivers

If the risk assessment of the journey requires it (e.g. due to a long journey), the School/Unit/Residence should provide two drivers for the journey. This will allow drivers to have an appropriate rest period.

9. Consumption of alcohol or drugs by a driver

The consumption of alcohol or drugs during, or in an 8 hour period before any journey, is **strictly forbidden**.

As the effects of alcohol consumption may significantly impair driving ability up to 8 hours after the last drink, no University driver is permitted to commence driving until 8 hours after consuming alcohol.

Certain medications can also severely impair driving ability, particularly medications that have sedative properties. It is therefore vital that the Head is informed of any medication (prescribed or non-prescribed) which may be required to be taken by a minibus driver. Guidance on the possible effects of prescribed medications can be obtained through the Occupational Health Adviser.

10. Communications - mobile telephones

It is recommended that a mobile telephone should be taken on all journeys using minibuses. This is to obtain help in an emergency and to communicate any problems with the journey to a nominated person at the School/Unit/Residence.

NOTE: *Mobile telephones **must not** be used by the driver when the minibus is in motion.*

11. Health of drivers

All drivers are required to inform the Driver Vehicle Licencing Agency (DVLA) in Swansea of any disability which might affect their fitness to drive any vehicle.

It should be appreciated that certain medications can severely impair the ability of drivers, particularly medications that have sedative properties. It is therefore vital that the Head is informed of any medication (prescribed or non-prescribed) which may be required to be taken by a minibus driver. This is good practice and the Head cannot ask a person to divulge any medical information. Guidance on the possible effects of prescribed medications can be obtained through the Occupational Health Adviser.

Drivers are also required to judge on a journey basis whether, due to a temporary impairment, they are capable of driving. Where drivers believe they are not capable of driving (e.g. due to severe headaches, flu etc.), they should stop driving till they have sufficiently recovered.

12. Planning journeys

All journeys should be carefully planned before the trip. This includes identifying the route to be taken and if traffic jams can be foreseen, then identifying alternative an route(s).

The planning should also include details of where breaks in the journey will occur and also identify appropriate rest periods for the driver (e.g. overnight stops). The most likely times for drivers to feel tired are:

- Long monotonous roads;
- Between 2.00am and 6.00am
- Between 2.00pm and 4.00pm (after eating)
- After having less sleep than normal;
- After taking medicines that may cause drowsiness.

13. Passenger details

Where it is reasonably practicable to do so, a list of all the names of the passengers, with a contact address, should be lodged with the School/Unit/Residence, before a journey begins.

The names of all those travelling on the journey should be held by the driver or escort. This register should be used to ensure that nobody is left behind.

The School/Unit/Residence may request any passenger with a medical condition that may need treatment on journey to notify the Driver. The School/Unit/Residences cannot demand passengers divulge this medical information they may only request it.

14. Insurance

All drivers of minibuses must ensure that they have suitable insurance cover for the vehicle. The Head or nominated person should also consider providing additional insurance cover for the drivers, escorts and passengers. Advice on such matters can be obtained from the Director of EHSS.

If the minibus is owned by the University, the Head (or the employee with the delegated duty of managing the School/Unit/Residence minibus(es)) should contact the Director of EHSS, to arrange or verify appropriate insurance cover for the relevant driver(s).

15. Roadworthiness of the minibus

All minibuses owned by Schools/Units/Residences must be regularly maintained and kept in a roadworthy condition. All minibuses must have suitable up-to-date roadworthiness test certificates, for example, MOT Certificate or, if the minibus is being run under a PCV Licence, then a suitable PCV Test Certificate.

Before starting a journey a driver of a School/Unit/Residence minibus (or a hired minibus) should perform certain checks on the minibus to ensure that there are no obvious faults with the minibus and then make a written record of the results. A sample checklist is given in [Appendix 2](#).

If, during the inspection, any item is found to be faulty, then it should be reported immediately to the person with the duty of managing the minibus. The minibus should not be used until the fault has been repaired.

It is essential that any alterations to a minibus are performed by an approved organisation and that the company providing insurance cover has been notified.

16. Seat belts

All new minibuses purchased, leased or hired should have seat belts fitted to all seats. These should be, as far as is reasonably practicable, lap and diagonal type belts. Where this is not feasible, lap type belts will suffice. Advice on the installation of seat belts in minibuses already in use should be sought from the manufacturer.

If the minibus is to be used for the transport of children, seat belts or appropriate child restraints (for very young children) **must** be installed.

Where seat belts have been installed in minibuses, they must be worn at all times and this must be ensured by the most senior member of staff present, or the driver.

17. Loading of the minibus

The total weight of travellers and luggage, must not exceed the maximum weight limits specified by the manufacturer of the vehicle.

Luggage may shift during a journey and should therefore be safely secured. The use of roof racks should comply with the guidance provided by the manufacturer of the vehicle.

N.B. Drivers should be made aware that storage of luggage on a roof rack will alter the centre of gravity of the minibus and will therefore make it less stable.

18. Towing of trailers

Towing a trailer can make emergency evacuation of a minibus difficult. If a trailer has to be towed behind a minibus, and the minibus only has a rear exit, **no passengers may be carried except in the seating immediately next to the driver**. If there is a side entrance to the minibus, as well as an emergency exit at the rear, passengers may be carried in the minibus while it is towing a trailer.

When towing a trailer, drivers should be cautious about the vehicle speed. Vehicle/trailer combinations can become unstable even at speeds below the legal maximum, particularly when being passed by fast moving large vehicles, in windy conditions or when manoeuvring. On a long journey, the trailer and vehicle should be checked every two hours.

Before towing a trailer specific checks should be made (see [Appendix 3](#)).

Further guidance is available from Environmental, Health and Safety Services.

19. Speed limits

	Speed
For minibuses, not towing a trailer, the speed limits are:	
Motorways	70 mph
Dual Carriageways	60 mph
Other roads where a lower limit is not sign posted	50 mph

For minibuses, towing a trailer, the speed limits are:

Motorways	60 mph
Dual Carriageways	60 mph
Other roads where a lower limit is not sign posted	50 mph

20. Emergency equipment

All minibuses should have at least one foam fire extinguisher which has a minimum fire rating of 8A or 21B and a first aid kit that complies with the relevant regulations (see [Appendix 4](#)).

It is recommended that the operator of the minibus should have other appropriate equipment that may be required in an emergency (see [Appendix 4](#)).

21. First aid and emergency procedures

If the vehicle is involved in an accident:-

1. Make sure all passengers are safe and, if necessary, summon the relevant emergency services;
2. Obtain the registration number(s) and insurance details of any other vehicles involved;
3. Take the name(s) and address(es) of any witness(es) and the number/base station of any police officer who attends the accident;
4. Write down all the details of the accident in a precise manner;
5. Report the details of the accident to the Head (or to the member of staff who manages the minibus).

If you are involved in an accident you are legally required:

1. To stop at the site of the accident;
2. To give your own and the vehicle owner's address and the registration number of the vehicle to anyone having reasonable grounds for requiring them;
3. If a person is injured, to report the accident to the police as soon as practicable (within 24 hours);
4. If a person is injured, to produce your driving licence and insurance certificate to the police when reporting the accident or, if this is not possible, at least within seven days to a Police Station you select.

NOTE: All accidents or dangerous occurrences/near misses should be reported on the relevant University form to the Director of EHSS via the School/Unit/Residence Safety Co-ordinator.

22. Overseas travel

Travelling in a minibus overseas may involve different transport regulations from the United Kingdom and different insurance requirements. Transport regulations for overseas trips can be obtained from the Department of Transport (International Office). The insurance requirements can be obtained from the Director of EHSS, or from the operator hiring the minibus.

All the necessary requirements must be met before the journey starts.

23. Documentation

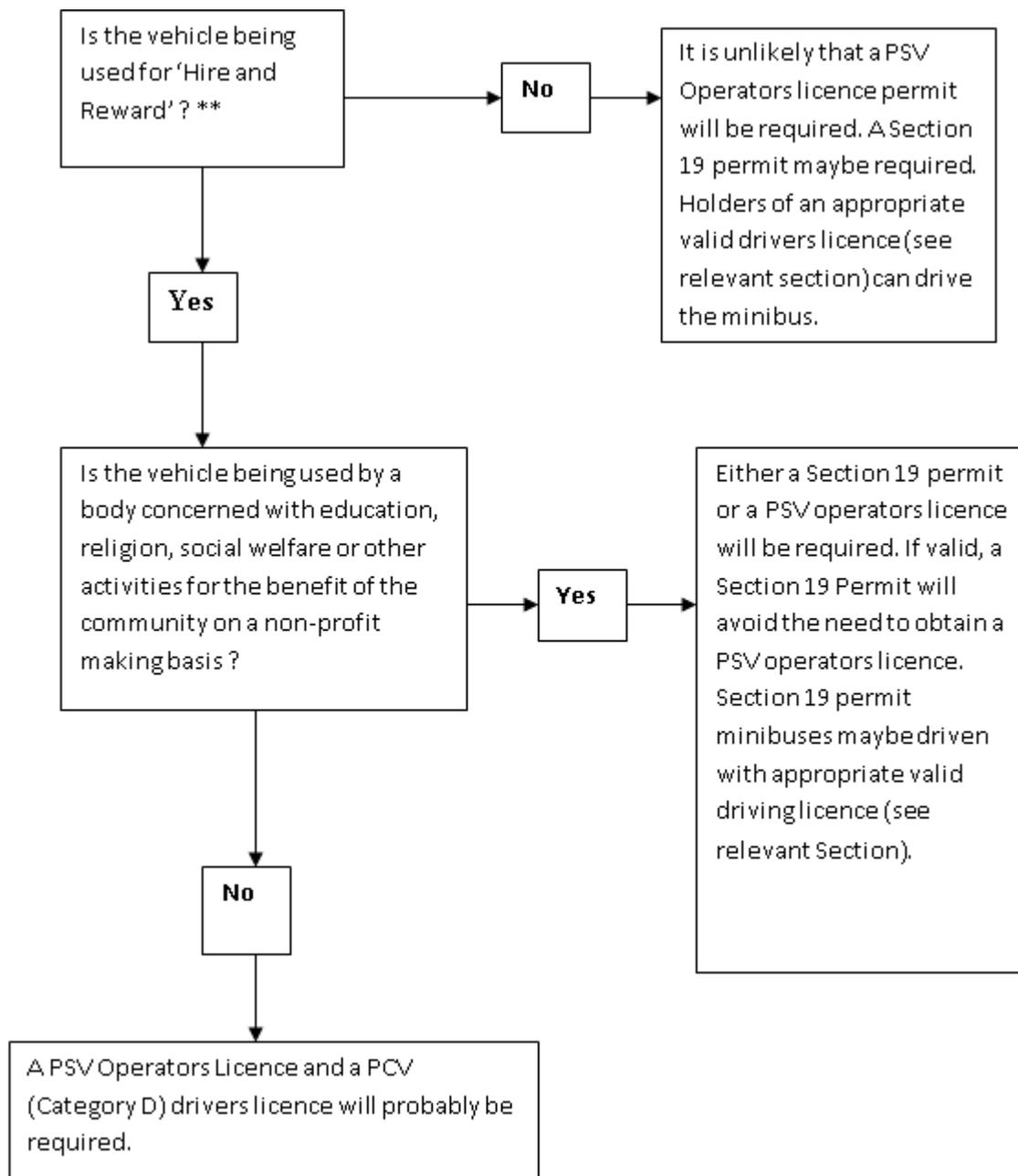
When driving a minibus, drivers should always carry appropriate documentation (see [Appendix 5](#)).

24. References

- **Minibus Safety - A Code of Practice.** Published by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA). (2002).
- **Passenger transport provided under Section 19 or Section 22 permits (PSV 385).** Published by the Department of Transport (2009).
- **Driving a Minibus in Great Britain (INF 28).** Published by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) (2012).
- **Minibuses - A Guide for Users and Operators.** Published by the Freight Transport Association (1997).
- **The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 (and Amendments).**

Appendix 1

Minibus Permit Requirements



**** = 'Hire and Reward' is defined as 'any sort of payment which gives a person a right to be carried on a vehicle regardless of whether a profit is made or not'.**

You should contact the University Safety Adviser if you are unsure if the use of the minibus may constitute 'For Hire and Reward'.

Appendix 2**Vehicle checklist**

Exterior Check	OK	Faulty
Brake check (on moving vehicle)		
Oil level (once only at the start of the day)		
Coolant level (once only at the start of the day)		
Windscreen washer fluid level (once only during the day)		
Brake fluid (once only during the day)		
Windscreen and windows are clean and undamaged		
Wiper blades are clean and undamaged		
Lights including brake lights and indicators are clean and working		
Tyre pressures including the spare (and inner tyres and tyres on a trailer if applicable)		
Tyre tread including the spare tyre, inner tyre and tyres on trailer if applicable. There should be at least 2 mm of tread across the centre three quarters of the tyre.		
Any cuts and bulges in the tyres		
Doors open and close properly		
Trailer brake and indicator lights work properly		
Lift (if fitted) works properly		
Ramp (if fitted) fits and works safely		
Roof rack or trailer is properly fitted and all luggage is securely held		
Damage or sharp edges.		
Interior Check	OK	Faulty
Mirrors are correctly adjusted, clean, undamaged and unobstructed		
Position and function/purpose of all dashboard controls are known and understood		
Position of driving seat is adjusted so that all controls can be operated comfortably		
Check for pressure on brake pedal		
Wipers and washers are working properly		
Fuel level (and what type of fuel is used by vehicle)		
Seat belts (where fitted) are undamaged and working properly		
Location of wheel brace and jack are known to driver		
Location of fire extinguisher and first aid kit is known		
Location of relevant documentation (permit disc, insurance, upto date road tax, MoT, emergency numbers and driving licence)		
Change for parking or telephone (or phonenumber or presence of a mobile telephone)		
Luggage is securely stowed and aisles and exits are clear		
Damage or sharp edges		

Appendix 3

Towing trailers

Before towing a trailer, the following checks should be carried out to ensure:

- the vehicle being used is appropriate for this use (seek professional advice through the Environmental, Health and Safety Services Office, if in any doubt);
 - the gross weight of the vehicle, plus the trailer, is within the vehicle gross weight limit;
 - that the kerbside weight of the towing vehicle is clearly marked on the front of the nearside of the vehicle;
 - the downward force from the loaded trailer on the towing ball is within the limits imposed by the towing vehicle manufacturer;
 - the axle loads of the towing vehicle are not exceeded;
 - that a breakaway chain is in use, which will activate the handbrake should the coupling break. Advice on this matter should be sought from the trailer manufacturer or approved dealer;
 - the unladen weight of the trailer and tyre pressures are clearly marked on the trailer;
 - that the total gross weight (trailer plus maximum load to be carried) is clearly marked on the front of the trailer;
 - that the trailer handbrake/over-run brake functions properly;
 - that the trailer lights function properly;
 - that the load is securely lashed to the trailer body or frame;
 - that there is suitable marking of any rear overhang greater than 1 metre by using a 'Long Vehicle' sign or other approved method or approved light in the hours of darkness (guidance is available on this matter from Environmental, Health and Safety Services).
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Appendix 4

Emergency Equipment

First aid kit

- 10 Antiseptic wipes (foil packed)
- 1 Conforming disposable bandage (not less than 7.5cm wide)
- 2 Triangular bandages
- 1 Packet of 24 assorted adhesive dressings
- 3 large sterile unmedicated ambulance dressings (not less than 15 x 20 cm)
- 2 Sterile eye pads with attachments
- 12 Assorted safety pins
- 1 pair of rustproof blunt-end scissors
- Disposable gloves
- Mouth mask for resuscitation

Fire extinguisher

At least one foam fire extinguisher which has a minimum fire rating of 8A or 21B.

Other equipment

- Pen and paper
 - Organisation's internal instructions and contact details
 - Insurance details
 - Driver's licence
 - Motoring Breakdown policy
 - Mobile phone, phonecard or money for the telephone
 - Webbing cutter
 - High visibility coat complying with British Standard BS EN 471
 - Emergency warning triangle or a flashing beacon (not fitted to the vehicle)
 - A working torch (and spare batteries)
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Appendix 5

Documentation

The following documentation should be kept by the driver during the journey:

- Risk assessment for the use of the minibus and for the purpose of the journey
- Up to date road tax disc
- If appropriate, a relevant Permit disc
- Driver's licence
- Insurance
- List of passengers' names
- Contact address and telephone numbers for a nominated person in the relevant School/Unit/Residence
- Motoring breakdown policy
- Vehicle checklist before the journey and after the journey
- Planned journey route (and if necessary an alternative)
- Appropriate documentation if travelling overseas

Contact details

Environmental Health and Safety Services contact details

University of St Andrews
Bute Building Queens Terrace
St Andrews
Fife
KY16 9TS
Scotland, United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)1334 462750

Email: ehss@st-andrews.ac.uk

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