Commissioning

Commissioning refers to the process of bringing vehicles and users up to the required point of readiness for movements implementation. Commissioning can encompass the following matters:

- Installing required equipment.
- Driver and user briefing and training.
- NGO Visibility/identification.
- Compliance and administrative matters.

Required Equipment

For operating in a given context, additional equipment and vehicle customisation may be required. Typical modifications for harsh road conditions may include:

- Bull bar with mosquito mesh.
- Reinforced front and rear bumper with high-lift jack supports.
- Second spare wheel mounted where safe and appropriate.
- High-lift jack mounted where safe and appropriate.
- Flagpole.

These modifications can be done by vehicle supplier if properly specified during the procurement process. If not, modifications should be performed by a specialised workshop.

For movement tracking purposes and security, reliable communication with the vehicle may be required. This can be addressed by mobile phone with adequate connection, satellite phone, or radio. Depending on the technology and models, certain radio equipment may require specialised installation. The modifications may include: antenna support bracket, grounding wires installed on bonnet, dash mounted installations, and internal wiring and cabling.

For safety purposes, basic equipment may include a fire-extinguisher and a first aid kit.

Briefings and Training

Given the risks incurred while operating in certain environments, a proper induction to both drivers and users should be done. For the new drivers, this can be addressed by the fleet manager or other drivers. For the people making use of the fleet, other profiles in the organisation can be assigned to deliver the briefing. In any case, the time needed to instruct drivers and users shouldn't be neglected.

Topics to be covered for driver's induction may include:

- Driver responsibilities (see the box below).
- Humanitarian principles.
- Communication protocols.
- Reporting procedures in case of accident or break down.
- Internal driving regulation (the organisation's regulation could be more restrictive than the national).
- Movements standard operational procedures.
- Hygiene and infection control.
- Programs and activities.
- Administrative arrangements: how to deal with overtime, contractual arrangements with per diem, etc.

- Use of visibility/identification material such as t-shirts, vests.

Standard Driver Responsibilities

- Ensure safety and security of the persons and goods being transported.
- Respect traffic rules.
- Respect speed limits as defined by the agency.
- Adapt speed according to the conditions of the road, to the carried load, and pedestrian on streets.
- Wear safety belt at all times and ensure all passengers do the same.
- Use correct and secure loading for transported goods, and ensuring cargo is tied down.
- Properly report and notify any mechanical problems.
- Update daily logbooks.
- Take care of the tools and spare parts in the car.
- Ensure cleanliness of the car.
- Proper notification of accidents, break downs, or other incidents.

Extracted from MSF Logbook

Topics to be covered for user's briefing may include:

- Journey: schedule, duration and stops in the trip.
- Safety and security: main threats, hot spots and expected behaviour.
- Roles and responsibilities during the movement. Roles of the driver, and assigned movement focal point within the vehicle(s)and at the office level.
- Communications protocol.

Visibility/Identification

Vehicles are a very visible part of the humanitarian operations. When operating in volatile context or in areas with restricted access, clearly displaying the humanitarian nature of the movement may enable access or increase security. For this purpose, specific colours and visibility material such as stickers or flags, can be displayed on the vehicle.

It is recommended that - based on a risk assessment -basic criteria are established for the use of visibility material. Why, what and when identification material should be used, and where in the vehicle they should be located are among the basic questions to be answered.

Paint, magnetic banners, or stickers are the typical solutions for the body of the vehicle. For obvious reasons, permanent logos shouldn't be the option if there is a risk of car-jacking. When requiring vehicles to carry flags, assess the environment to ensure a proper balance between adequate flag visibility and the impact on other objects such as trees or street furniture.

If requiring intensive use of visibility material in a vehicle, make sure there is enough stock to replace them regularly. If using rental vehicles, ensure that the visibility material is returned once the service is terminated.

Compliance and Administration

There are certain liabilities related to the use of vehicles that must be considered by any agency managing a fleet of vehicles.

Drivers

Drivers should have a valid driving license for the specific vehicle they operate. The driving license has an expiry date and should be renewed on a regular basis. Other permits could be required for the transportation of certain categories of goods, such as a commercial license or special permit for transporting some cargo items. Refer to the local/national regulation to learn which are applicable to your activity.

Except for limited bilateral or regional international agreements, national driving licenses are not recognised in foreign countries. For driving in a country where the driving license is not recognised, an international driving license should be obtained. Visit *internationaldrivingpermit.org* to learn about bilateral or regional international agreements on driving permit recognition and how to get an international driving permit.

Vehicles

Whether the vehicles are owned, hired, or are managed by a third-party, it is important to ensure that all local laws are adhered to. There are different norms that are commonly applicable:

Registration	The use and ownership of motor vehicles are strongly regulated by most countries. All vehicles must be officially allocated to a physical person or organisation who will be liable for any duties or responsibilities linked to the vehicle. It is therefore important to go through the required registration process when acquiring a new vehicle or when decommissioning an old one.
Circulation Permit	Depending on the local regulation, annual license fees may be required for every motor vehicle used on the road. The fee is normally proportional to the gross weight or the engine power of the vehicle, but can be specific to its purpose and type of loads such as oversized or hazardous goods.
Insurance	Insurance is a legal requirement for motor vehicles which aims to provide financial coverage against physical damage or bodily injury resulting from traffic collisions or other incidents. Vehicle insurance may also cover theft, weather or natural disasters and damage sustained by colliding with stationary objects. Vehicles should be insured to at least the minimum level required by the local law. Different organisations will have internal policies regarding the extent to which their own vehicles should be insured. This must be established according to the operational context and a risk assessment.
Technical	Vehicles may also require a technical clearance certifying that the vehicle is safe for operation in public spaces. Technical clearance may include environmental considerations such as type of fuel used or levels of CO2 emitted by the exhaust. Technical inspections may be related to the type of vehicle and its purpose, certifying the maximum permissible passengers and weights in terms of gross vehicle weight, axle weight and payload.

Fitness to Drive and Medical Clearance

Fleet Forum provides the following guidance on medical testing and medical clearances for drivers:

" Driving a motor vehicle is a complex task requiring perception, good judgement, responsiveness, and reasonable physical capability. A range of medical conditions, as well as some medical treatments, may impair driving ability. Common examples include blackouts or fainting, sleep disorders, vision problems, diabetes, epilepsy, psychiatric disorders, heart disease, and age-related decline.

It is advised that professional drivers pass a fitness test every year and to install bi-annual checks for staff that drives occasionally. All staff should be advised to

undertake a health check whenever they suspect they have a problem. Eye tests should be carried out by qualified optometrists, and should include a test of the driver's horizontal and vertical range of vision.

It's important to ensure that your drivers are mentally and physically fit to drive using a process of self-declaration. Drivers should notify management if they have disabilities or conditions that could prevent them from driving safely.

Movement Planning and Resource Allocation

Movement planning and resource allocation are key activities for successful fleet management. The aim of movement planning is to respond to all movement requests while making the most efficient use of resources. Planning must take into consideration elements such as destination, number of passengers, cargo, and match them with available drivers and vehicles ensuring that their condition fits for purpose and is compatible with maintenance schedule.

To ease the planning process and avoid poor resource allocation, inefficiency and discontent among users, a weekly plan is recommended. Transport requests should be completed, approved and delivered to the person in charge of planning movements before an agreed deadline (sufficient time to allow a proper planning).

[Template weekly movement request](#):

Department and/or Office: _____   From (date): _____   to (date): _____

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Movement focal point							
N° of passengers							
Destination							
Estimated Time of Departure							
Estimated Time of Return							
Purpose							
Items to carry							
Remarks							

Prepared by: _____   Date: _____   Approved by (head of department) : _____

Adapted from Action against Hunger Logistics Kit

Once requests are collected from different departments/services/users, a weekly movement plan can be defined. the fleet manager will organise the movements according to the availability of vehicles, to their capacity (weight, and passenger number) and to road conditions. The following criteria have to be considered:

- Context of the movement and available communications coverage.
- 4x4 or 2x4.
- Experience of the driver under the required conditions. The plan can take several shapes depending on the level or granularity required.

When destinations for several departments coincide, a combined movement can be organised using the same vehicle or moving in convoy. It may happen that there are not enough available vehicles on any given day, so the organisation may have to set priorities and change the program in order to cancel or combine movements or look for an additional vehicle.

The weekly plan can be outlined in different time frames: weekly, daily, or other operationally relevant time frame.

Template weekly movement plan:

WEEKLY MOVEMENTS PLANNING   From (date): _____   to (date): _____

Regular vehicles on the base:

Vehicle	Driver	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday	
		Morning	Afternoon	Morning	Afternoon	Morning	Afternoon	Morning	Afternoon	Morning	Afternoon

Temporary additional vehicles:

Adapted from Action against Hunger Logistics Kit

Template daily movement plan:

DAILY MOVEMENT SCHEDULE

DATE: _____

	Driver	Vehicle	Max. Capacity	06:00	07:00	08:00	09:00	10:00	11:00	12:00	13:00	14:00	15:00	16:00	17:00
1															
2															
3															
4															
5															
6															
7															
8															
9															
10															

For proper planning it is necessary to know all itineraries and road conditions in advance. In unknown areas, a route assessment could be necessary to collect information on distances, timings, intermediary milestones, indications, communication networks coverage, etc. For this purpose, the use of road-books is recommended. A road-book is a matrix with basic indicators about different legs of a journey between two different locations.

A typical road-book will have the following example outline:

ROAD:	Blantyre - Lilongwe		Duration:	4h 30min	LAST UPDATE: 24/5/2010

LOCATION	CONTIN. TIME	CONTIN. KM	GPS	Comms coverage	Remarks
			Distance:	305 Km	
Blantyre	**0:00**	**0 km**			
Round about	0:10	7 km			
Lunzu	0:17	15 km			trading centre
Lirangwe	**0:31**	**31 km**			trading centre
Mdeka	0:40	42 km			
Zalewa	0:48	52 km			police station
Cross M1 - M6	0:49	53 km			
Phalula	1:09	81 km			
Senzani	1:20	99 km			
Manjawira	1:25	108 km			
Chingen	1:30	115 km			police station + 1st petrol station
Kampebuza	1:48	137 km			trading centre
	1:58	147 km			Border Ntcheu DC
Ntcheu	**2:01**	**149 km**			Capital District - Hospital DC
Tsangano	2:20	158 km			Police station + border Malawi-Moç
Lizulu	2:46	195 km			Trading centre
Bembeki	2:54	207 km			Diversion secondary Rd to Mangochi
Dedza	**3:05**	**219 km**			Police station + petrol station
Chimbiya	3:35	243 km			Trading centre
Kampata	3:55	272 km			
Nathenje	**4:04**	**283 km**			Customs police
Nanjiri	4:12	292 km			Trading centre
	4:16	295 km			Border Lilongwe DC
Mitundu	4:18	297 km			Police station + petrol station
Lilongwe	**4:30**	**305 km**			Town entry

Extracted from MSF OCBA Logistics Library

The road-book has indications or milestones based on data points form along the route: distance, time and other relevant information for the journey, such as communications coverage, hospitals, police stations, petrol stations, etc. Road-books can also help for briefing during driver's induction or to determine communication points for movement tracking purposes.

Movement Implementation and Monitoring

Knowing the whereabouts of the vehicles at all moments is essential for a coordinated and reactive fleet, especially when the size of the fleet is large, simultaneous movements take place, and when operations are deployed in volatile contexts.

Different vehicles must have the capability to communicate with organisational offices at any moment, allowing the reporting of any incident or event. Organisational focal points should

also have the capability to contact any vehicle at any moment to communicate about changes in plans or the latest contextual updates requiring a change in the route. Having functional communication equipment and a basic communication procedures specifying when to communicate, to whom and with which means is highly advisable for any planned movement.

On some occasions having a specific person to track the movements and record the current location of the vehicle and last contact made is highly advised. When relying on radio communication systems, this role is usually assumed by a designated and trained radio-operator. In locations with sufficient mobile phone coverage and where communications rely on mobile networks, instant messaging applications can be the mean to monitor movements.

Tracking devices are another option to monitor movements. Tracking devices vary in their functionality, but generally they gather information such as vehicle's position, speed, heading and other data using GPS, sensors and other accessories, and sends tracking data via mobile phone or satellite networks to a remote server enabling authorised fleet managers to monitor performance in real time. The information collected is generally used to improve driving patterns, movements plans or fleet performance. In addition, some tracking devices can also send alerts to specific phone numbers when a predefined event happens: high speeds, locations reached, or even crashes. Tracking devices do not substitute communication devices and in all cases, an operational communication device should still accompany the vehicle movement.