



Pool vehicles - Shared use, means shared responsibility

In defining what is classed as a pool vehicle, HMRC is very clear. Pool vehicles should be viewed as asset available for shared use and driven for business purposes only.

Vehicles should not be made available for the exclusive use of one person and they should also remain on the business premises overnight. A certain amount of private use is allowed if it is 'incidental' to the business use, for example a pool vehicle is being used for an early morning business trip and is taken to the employees home overnight.

As pool vehicles don't attract any Benefit-in-Kind tax, an employee should not see them as a way of side stepping this tax.

Whether a vehicle is defined as a company vehicle or for pool use, it is important to remember that the vehicles must be maintained, regularly serviced and inspected, so that as an organisation, you are meeting the required duty of care standards.

All pool vehicle use should be well documented, with accurate records being kept on each vehicle. Employees should be encouraged to sign in and out of their usage so that the information is available for audit.

The provision of pool vehicles is one way an organisation

can tackle the risks associated with 'grey fleet', which is when an employee uses their privately owned vehicle for business purposes and claims back mileage expenses.

It is important to remember that allowing any employee out on the road in any vehicle regardless of ownership for business purposes carries the same amount of responsibility as far as the law is concerned in meeting your duty of care requirements.

Providing vehicles that you know are well maintained to employees for shared business use is one way to show that you have taken steps to demonstrate your commitment to mitigating your risk.

A well run scheme can benefit the whole organisation in terms of cost reduction, lowering emissions and reducing risk. Employees must also play their part and take ownership of their time spent behind the wheel of a pool vehicle - shared use means shared responsibility.

If an organisation is considering introducing hybrid or fully electric vehicles in to their fleet, providing them as part of their pool vehicle scheme is an excellent way to encourage more drivers to make to switch the electric.