

HIGH LEVEL GUIDANCE FOR RECOVERING OCCUPANTS IN THEIR VEHICLES FROM VULNERABLE SITUATIONS AT THE ROADSIDE BY MEANS OF FLAT BED RECOVERY VEHICLES

Note: When undertaking this practice, the following three principles should be adopted.

- Operators should take a pragmatic approach and only use this procedure as a “last resort” where all other options have been exhausted, and following a dynamic risk assessment, taking account of the level of risk at the location and the customer needs - every effort should be made to arrange reasonable alternative means
- This procedure should only be used where the casualty vehicle is potentially in a “vulnerable situation at the roadside”, particularly on motorways and other high-speed roads
- Recovery should be to the “nearest appropriate safe location”

To avoid the use of this recovery method where possible, the following alternative approaches could be appropriate.

- Customer to make alternative arrangements to be collected in another vehicle
- A “Flat Tow” with a ridged tow pole
- Delivery of a courtesy/hire car
- Mobile tyre fitting/repair service
- During periods of pandemics, the installation of screening panels fitted where practical, in the recovery vehicle and use of PPE such as face masks

General Points / other considerations:

- A safe location should be selected where onward travel arrangements can be met. The safe location could also be the customer’s home if local
- Recovery operators should check with their insurers that they are covered for this activity
- Clear instructions should be given to all occupants of the casualty vehicle to remain in their vehicle and wear seat belts, whilst the vehicle is safely loaded, and contact maintained with the recovery technician during the journey
- The casualty vehicle should be fully secured to the recovery vehicle bed
- The recovery vehicle should be driven at an appropriate speed for the circumstances
- Occupants should not be allowed to exit the casualty vehicle until it is fully unloaded and back on the ground