



ENJOY DRIVING? LIKE WORKING WITH PEOPLE?

LOOKING FOR A NEW CAREER?

then join our

COACH DRIVER TRAINING SCHEME

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in our coach driver training scheme. If you are new to the coach industry and are thinking of a change in career, then you will of course have many questions concerning the practicalities of becoming a qualified coach driver. You will also be interested in the benefits in the job and your longer term prospects in the industry.

We have attempted in this leaflet to answer these questions in order to help you make your decision to take up coach driving as a professional career.

I have also enclosed our leaflet about training to become a coach driver which should enhance your understanding further.

So what does the job entail?

Coach driving is a professional vocation and is probably the most enjoyable and satisfying driving job there is. This is because you will be transporting different people and different age groups, from 4 year olds to 90 year olds, to different places every day. Your geographical knowledge of the UK and overseas will become exceptional ...and you will be getting great job satisfaction from providing friendly customer service along the way.

The hours are very varied and are set by the requirements of that particular days hire and of course every hire and every day are often very different. The coach industry is also very subject to seasonal demand, with all coach operators being much busier in the summer than the winter. Having said that, there are strict drivers' hours regulations in force, which are effective in the prevention of drivers becoming overworked and over-tired.

Furthermore, as mentioned above, working at Johnsons means that the type of work and the type passengers, will vary greatly every day. One day you could be transporting a party of school children to a Zoo, the next day it could be the local W.I. or National Trust Group going to visit some gardens or perhaps a stately home; and then the next day you could be transporting top level business executives to a conference!, Also, once you are more experienced you could be doing holiday touring work in this country or overseas.

One of the many benefits of being a coach driver, apart from the fact that the work, as highlighted above is so varied, is that you are more or less “your own boss” while you are out on the road, and your efforts to please your passengers will create tremendous job satisfaction.

Finally, we operate a top quality fleet of modern, well maintained coaches which are a joy to drive.

What basic qualifications and skills do I need to join the training scheme?

Age limits

- ❖ Firstly, you do need to be 21 years of age as a minimum, although there is a “young drivers” PCV Scheme, which allows you to train as a driver at the age of 18 or over. This scheme does have restrictions on the type of work you can undertake between the age of 18 and 21 and further details can be provided upon request. Furthermore, if you are already, or when you reach 45 during your career as a coach driver, you will need to undertake and pass a full PCV medical. This takes place every 5 years until the age of 60 and then every year from then on.

Driving licence requirements

- ❖ Ideally you need a clean driving licence for cars (category B). Convictions for road traffic offences are taken into account when the traffic commissioners ‘consider’ granting your PCV licence (Passenger Carrying Vehicle licence) once you have successfully passed your test.

Health requirements

- ❖ You must be in generally good health to undertake coach driving work. Prior to being accepted onto our PCV driver training course, you will be required to pass a full PCV medical examination. This can be carried out by your own doctor at a cost of approx. £100. This cost must be met by yourself. However, we do have a group agreement with our own local doctor who will carry out the examination for £75.

Driving a coach with up to 53 passengers on board is obviously a very responsible job and like any job it can be tiring at times. Therefore good health is essential.

What makes a good coach driver?

It is important right from the start that you view coach driving as a professional career and the ideal coach driver, due to the varying nature of the work, possess the following:

- a cheerful and friendly personality.
- a positive and enthusiastic attitude to work.
- a desire to please and help customers.
- good communication skills, both talking and listening!
- good geographical knowledge and map reading skills.
- high quality driving skills, with a strong awareness of hazard perception and a total commitment to safe driving.
- an acceptance of flexible working hours!

What are the stages to becoming a qualified coach driver?

Having been recognised as an “*Investor in People*” since 2000, we do take training very seriously at Johnsons. Consequently we have devised six clear steps or “stages” to the successful completion of the training course.

They are as follows:

- Stage 1** After reading this leaflet, just complete the application form and return it to us.
- Stage 2** Successful candidates will be offered a “try-out day”; an opportunity to experience first hand what it is like to being a coach driver. Put in the care of one of our experienced drivers for a day or half day, you will travel with him/her on a real coach hire.
- Stage 3** Candidates who pass the “try-out day” and are happy with the experience of a coach hire, are offered an interview at our offices. The interview includes a geography and map test, a highway code test, a mini bus (Ford Transit) driving assessment, as well as the formal interview itself.
- Stage 4** Successful candidates will be offered a place on our training scheme and be asked to read and sign a “training contract”. You are welcome to view this contract at any time and please ask to see a copy.

At this stage you will be required to undertake a PCV theory test, which you will need to pass before you can proceed to the next stage. You will also be issued with a PCV medical form, a provisional PCV licence application form, and a CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) form. All 3 forms need to be completed and sent off to the relevant authorities. *(Please note that the CRB check is required for all of our drivers, as your work will require you to be in contact with young people)*

Should you fail your PCV medical or your CRB check then your place on a training course will be automatically terminated.

Stage 5 This is where your training as a PCV driver commences, under the full instruction of our training team. You will also join the payroll at this stage. You will be issued with a training log with details of all the various elements of both your “in-vehicle” and “in-classroom” training. There will be regular appraisals of your performance and progress, requiring a “pass” before continuing to the next elements of the course. Please note that we reserve the right to terminate training and employment at any time, in the event of unsatisfactory performance and progress. This stage culminates in you successfully passing your PCV test.

Stage 6 The final stage and the start of a year as a ‘Newly Qualified Driver’ (NQD). You will remain at NQD status for one full year following your PCV test pass and during this time, although you are now a qualified coach driver, you will remain under the authority of our training team. This is due to the fact that the first year is a very steep learning curve, which must be carefully managed with additional support, help, and advice.

During this time you will also receive mentoring experiences for example, travelling on longer hires as a second driver, with an experienced driver to help you learn the ropes. There will also be further in-classroom training which will include subjects like drivers’ hours, customer care, first aid and disability awareness. Finally, during the whole year there will once again be performance and progress appraisals which you will be expected to pass.

This stage and the whole training course culminate in you “passing out” as a fully qualified coach driver, a full 12 months after passing your PCV test. Your training log will then be complete and a certificate will be issued to you.

Congratulations and welcome to the team!

What can you expect to earn as a coach driver?

An important question of course! All our drivers are graded according to experience, skills and performance. Therefore your earnings will start with our training grade, which is then followed by the NQD grade once you have passed your test. Following successful completion of your NQD year you will then be graded according to your acquired skills in the job and your driving and damage record.

Please note that during your NQD year, if your performance and progress is excellent then we may well reward you by up-grading you to one of the driver grades before your NQD year ends. The various grades for our coach drivers are as follows:

Grades	Rates	
	Basic	Overtime
Training G1	6.63	7.74
NQD G2	7.14	8.32
G3	7.37	8.59
G4	7.61	8.85
G5	7.85	9.13
G6	8.16	9.47

- ❖ Our most senior and experienced drivers are within the top grades, which means you have the opportunity of earning up to, and in excess of £25,000 per year. Basically the faster you learn, perform, and take on new challenges, the faster you will rise up through the grades.
- ❖ Your basic hours of work are 07.30 hrs to 17.00 hrs – Mon to Fri. (42.5 hours per week)
- ❖ The above 'standard rate' covers the above basic hours of work.
- ❖ The 'overtime rate' is paid for hours worked between 17.00 hrs each week day and 07.30 hrs the following morning, and from 17.00 to Friday, all weekend until 07.30 hrs Monday morning. Bank holidays also qualify for un-social hours rates.
- ❖ Please note that when you are away from our depot here, on a coach hire, you are paid for all hours worked, including all lunch hours and other breaks. This also includes all 'on location' time; this is the time during which your customers are at their destination. The list of these is of course endless and it may for example, be at a theme park, a seaside resort, a historic house or garden, a hotel conference centre or an educational attraction.

Additional Benefits

- ❖ Once you have reached NQD status you are also paid a performance bonus of £600 per year (£50 per month). This is a reward for excellent service and is paid with your December salary each year. Of course you can lose some of your bonus, in the event of poor performance, for example; damaging your coach, providing poor customer service, or for not wearing your uniform properly.
- ❖ After 5 years service we do include you in our company pension plan and provide a contribution of £25 per month.
- ❖ You are entitled to 20 days paid holiday per year plus bank holidays, that is 28 days paid holiday. Please note that we do strongly discourage holidays being taken in May, June, July, and September, as these are by far our busiest months.
- ❖ The industry does still have a tradition of tipping. The amount of these gratuities is entirely down to your own performance and on how well you have cared for your customers. All tips should be declared annually to the Inland Revenue.
- ❖ At some attractions, garden centres, visitor centres, and refreshment outlets you do sometimes receive a "commission" for bringing your passengers to their establishment. Again, these should be declared annually to the Inland Revenue.

From the above you can see that without any overtime or other benefits at all, you will start on the training grade and earn £276.25 per week or £14,365 per year. Please rest assured that even as a trainee, there are plenty opportunities for overtime! I can also advise and our payment records confirm, that provided you are happy to work some overtime, in your first full year as a coach driver, there is no reason why you should not earn in up to £21,000 before PAYE and NI deductions.

What are the conditions of employment and uniform allowance?

Yes of course we do have detailed Conditions of Employment which are too numerous to list here. They are not onerous and are simply based on our commitment to excellent customer service and commitment to continuous improvement. You are welcome to inspect them during any stage of your training with us, so please just ask. Furthermore, upon commencement of Stage 5, you will receive an in-depth 3 day induction course, which includes a fairly detailed look at conditions of employment and policies and procedures.

With regard to uniforms, we do provide a uniform which we expect you to wear at all times when driving. Once you have been accepted onto the training course at Stage 5, you will be provided with a full uniform issue.

What commitment is required and what are the longer term prospects?

The training contract provides details of your responsibilities during your training with us and you may ask to see a copy of it at any time. The most important item to bring to your attention is the fact that driver training is labour intensive and therefore expensive. We want you to stay for the long-term; however, we do need to claw back some of our costs if you should decide at any time to leave us during the first 2 years of employment.

Your "liability" therefore to Johnsons for your training is as follows:

- 1 - Your employment ends within 6 months from commencement - up to £1250
- 2 - Your employment ends within 12 months from commencement - up to £1000
- 3 - Your employment ends within 18 months from commencement - up to £750
- 4 - Your employment ends within 24 months from commencement – up to £500

"Commencement" means the start date of your employment, which is at the beginning of Stage 5. Furthermore, I would add that during these first two years, should we decide to terminate your employment for any reason as laid out in your contract of employment, then you would still be liable for training fees as detailed above.

At the end of these two years you are of course free from any liabilities and fees from your training.

I should also add here that as detailed in your contract with us, our training includes the cost of up to three PCV tests. After that, you yourself will be responsible for meeting the cost of further tests. (The current PCV test fee is £105).

We do of course hope that your career as a coach driver will be a long, successful and enjoyable one and of course, as mentioned previously, your long-term prospects are in your own hands. The better you are with your passengers, your coach, and with your commitment to increasing your geographical knowledge and experience, both in this county and abroad, the faster you will go up the grade ladder and the better the work you will receive as a coach driver.

Finally, we do encourage all staff to become members of the Institute of Advanced Motorists (I.A.M.) by taking an additional driving test. Entry to the Institute strongly encourages defensive driving and increased levels of hazard perception. We recommend it highly.

CONCLUSION

So there you have it, a quick introduction to a career as a coach driver. Yes, the job can be demanding at times, but every day you will meet new people, go to new places, and take in many new sights and experiences.

We hope you will choose Johnsons as your employer; we have been established since 1909 and are very much a friendly family company. The company is still very much an independent family run business and Peter and John Johnson who are still very much “hands-on” Directors. We take great pride in providing excellent customer service, and it is very much for this reason that we are now one of the Midlands largest and most successful coach operators. This success is highlighted by the fact that we have won “Coach Operator of the Year” twice for our vehicle fleet size category, plus there have been many other awards for us over the years for training, brochures, and holiday programmes.

Finally, our website does provide more information about Johnsons, you can visit it at www.johnsonskoaches.co.uk. Should you have any questions at all with regard to the above information, then please just call one of the contacts on the list below.

Thank you for taking the time to read this leaflet and thank you for your interest in Johnsons.

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Simon Smith, Quality Manager	“ “
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Travel with JOHNSONS – Travel with Friends

All information is correct at April 2010