

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

*from the Minister of State*



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FROM: PAUL MURPHY

DATE: | DECEMBER 1998

TO: FIRST MINISTER  
DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER

**USE OF OFFICIAL CARS BY MINISTERS IN THE NORTHERN  
IRELAND ASSEMBLY**

**Issue:** Guidance on the provision of official transport for new Ministers and the officials who work directly with them.

**Timing:** Two weeks, to facilitate negotiations with contractors.

**Recommendation:** That the First and Deputy First Minister endorse basic principles and the practical application of those principles, governing the provision of official cars

**Detail:**

1. Arrangements need to be put in place with contractors to ensure that incoming Ministers are facilitated with official transport which will meet their needs and which can also be defended in terms of public accountability. The following guiding principles are proposed:
  - (a) Official cars are available to Ministers for official purposes only.

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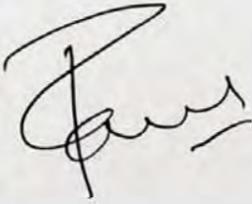
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- (b) The objective is to provide secure and reliable transport which expedites the transaction of official business by effecting a saving in time for Ministers and by allowing them to work on official papers in transit.
- (c) For the same reasons and in the same circumstances official cars are made available, on a limited basis, to Permanent Secretaries and to other senior civil servants on a "subject to availability" basis.
- (d) Civil Servants on official business, including Private Secretaries and special advisers, are normally expected to make their own transport arrangements, for which travel expenses can be claimed. Those who are accompanying a Minister on official business can of course make use of the same official car as the Minister. Officials (including Private Secretaries and special advisers) who need to be in attendance on Ministers at official engagements etc but who cannot, for whatever reason, travel with their Minister will be facilitated, again on a "subject to availability" basis, by the provision of official transport where this will secure a saving in time or is essential for the discharging of official business.

## 2. Application of the Guiding Principles

- (a) Official cars should not be used for party, constituency or private business (unless the event is immediately and directly between two official engagements).
- (b) Ministers' spouses may use official cars for official engagements and, when accompanying Ministers on official business, will be welcome to travel in the official car; separate transport will not normally be made available.
- (c) Ministers who, for whatever reason, do not make use of official transport may claim personal expenses on the same basis as civil servants.

3. If the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister are content, I will instruct the Department of Finance and Personnel to put arrangements in place.



**PAUL MURPHY  
MINISTER OF STATE**

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