

Causing death by careless or inconsiderate driving

Road Traffic Act 1988 (section 2B)

Triable either way

Maximum: 5 years' custody

Offence range: Community order – 4 years' custody

STEP ONE**Determining the offence category****CULPABILITY**

The court should determine culpability by reference only to the factors below, which comprise the principal factual elements of the offence.

High

- Standard of driving was just below threshold for dangerous driving and/or includes extreme example of a medium culpability factor

Medium

- Unsafe manoeuvre or positioning
- Engaging in a brief but avoidable distraction
- Driving at a speed that is inappropriate for the prevailing road or weather conditions
- Driving whilst ability to drive is impaired as a result of consumption of alcohol or drugs
- Driving vehicle which is unsafe or where visibility or controls are obstructed
- Driving in disregard of advice relating to the effects of medical condition or medication
- Driving whilst ability to drive impaired as a result of a known medical condition
- Driving when deprived of adequate sleep or rest
- The offender's culpability falls between the factors as described in high and lesser culpability

Lesser

- Standard of driving was just over threshold for careless driving
- Momentary lapse of concentration

HARM

For all cases the harm caused will inevitably be of the utmost seriousness. The loss of life is taken into account in the sentencing levels at step two.

STEP TWO

The starting points and category ranges below relate to a single offence resulting in a single death. Where another offence or offences arise out of the same incident or facts, concurrent sentences reflecting the overall criminality will ordinarily be appropriate.

Where more than one death is caused, it will be appropriate to increase the starting

point within or above the relevant category range before consideration of other aggravating features. In the most serious cases, the interests of justice may require a total sentence in excess of the offence range for a single offence. See the Totality guideline and step five of this guideline.

Starting point and category range		
Culpability	Starting point	Range
High	2 years	1 – 4 years
Medium	1 year	26 weeks – 3 years
Lesser	26 weeks	Medium level community order – 1 year

Below is a **non-exhaustive** list of additional elements providing the context of the offence and factors relating to the offender. Identify whether a combination of these or other relevant factors should result in any upward or downward adjustment from the sentence arrived at so far.

Factors increasing seriousness

Statutory aggravating factors:

- Previous convictions, having regard to a) the **nature** of the offence to which the conviction relates and its **relevance** to the current offence; and b) the **time** that has elapsed since the conviction
- Offence committed whilst on bail

Other aggravating factors:

- Victim was a vulnerable road user, including pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders
- Disregarding warnings of others
- Driving for commercial purposes
- Driving LGV, HGV, PSV
- Other driving offences committed at the same time as the careless driving
- Blame wrongly placed on others
- Failed to stop and/or assist or seek assistance at the scene
- Passengers, including children
- Serious injury to one or more victims, in addition to the death(s) (see step 5 on totality when sentencing for more than one offence)
- Offence committed on licence or while subject to court order(s)

Factors reducing seriousness or reflecting personal mitigation

- No previous convictions or no relevant/recent convictions
- Impeccable driving record
- Alcohol or drugs consumed unwittingly

- The victim was a close friend or relative
- Actions of the victim or a third party contributed significantly to collision or death
- Offence due to inexperience rather than irresponsibility (where offender qualified to drive)
- Genuine emergency
- Efforts made to assist or seek assistance for victim(s)
- Remorse
- Serious medical condition requiring urgent, intensive or long-term treatment
- Age and/or lack of maturity where it affects the responsibility of the offender
- Mental disorder or learning disability
- Sole or primary carer for dependent relatives

STEP THREE

Consider any factors which indicate a reduction for assistance to the prosecution

The court should take into account section 74 of the Sentencing Code (reduction in sentence for assistance to prosecution) and any other rule of law by virtue of which an offender may receive a discounted sentence in consequence of assistance given (or offered) to the prosecutor or investigator.

STEP FOUR

Reduction for guilty pleas

The court should take account of any potential reduction for a guilty plea in accordance with section 73 of the Sentencing Code and the Reduction in Sentence for a Guilty Plea guideline.

STEP FIVE

Totality principle

If sentencing an offender for more than one offence, or where the offender is already serving a sentence, consider whether the total sentence is just and proportionate to the overall offending behaviour in accordance with the Totality guideline.

STEP SIX

Compensation and ancillary orders

In all cases the court should consider whether to make compensation and/or other ancillary orders.

Ancillary orders – Crown Court Compendium

STEP SEVEN

Reasons

Section 52 of the Sentencing Code imposes a duty to give reasons for, and explain the effect of, the sentence.

STEP EIGHT

Consideration for time spent on bail (tagged curfew)

The court must consider whether to give credit for time spent on bail in accordance with section 240A of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 and section 325 of the Sentencing Code.