

Managing Occupational Road Risk

Advice for small and medium sized organisations



Occupational road risk

Every week more than **20 people are killed and 250 are seriously injured** in at-work road crashes. The human and financial costs to families, businesses and the wider community are massive.

Employers have **clear duties under health and safety law** to manage occupational road risk in the same way that they manage other health and safety risks.

([Click here to view the HSE/DfT guidance 'Driving at Work'](#)).

Drivers too have clear responsibilities.

Taking action to ensure safer driving can:

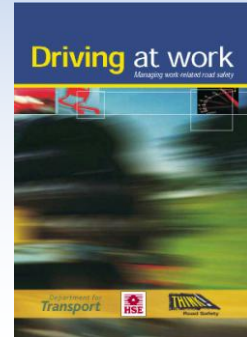
- Help to keep your employees and volunteers **safe while at work**
- Protect **other road users**
- **Save money** by reducing accidents and incidents
- Reduce **business interruptions**
- **Avoid adverse publicity** associated with accidents
- Help staff **stay safe while commuting** or driving in their leisure time
- Promote smoother driving which improves **fuel efficiency** and **reduces environmental impact**

And remember, your drivers are **your ambassadors** on the road!

The following advice, which is based on 'plan-do-check-act' management principles, is **aimed at directors, trustees, owners and managers** in small and medium sized organisations:

STEP 1: Plan

- Take an **overall look** at vehicle use in your business, including not only your own vehicles or those you hire but employees' own vehicles driven for work purposes. Look at annual mileages, incidents, their causes and costs. Also think about the safety of your staff who may be at work on the road as pedestrians or riding bicycles



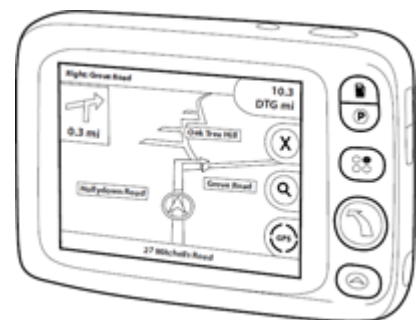
- **Consult** all members of staff about road safety. Listen to their views. Look at **what other organisations are doing**. Seek **information and advice** from outside sources (see list below)
- Develop a **short statement** about your organisation's approach to road safety at work and communicate it to all your staff so that they understand your aims and expectations. Make sure they know their responsibilities. Issue a short drivers' guide to all drivers which sets out clearly all the 'musts and must nots'
- Carry out a **simple risk assessment** to see where you may have road safety problems and if you are taking the right steps to control risk on the road and promote safer driving. Look at aspects of 1) your vehicles 2) journey tasks and 3) individual drivers that might tend to increase the overall level of risk. Identify areas for **priority action**. Keep a simple record of your findings

STEP 2: Do

- Can you **reduce road travel**; for example, by teleconferencing or using safer modes of travel like air or rail for longer journeys? (Remember, if you travel by plane or by train you may still be able to work during the journey)
- Consider drivers' **attitudes** and their driving **competence** on recruitment and as necessary thereafter. You can assess drivers while driving or by using online tools. Ask them about their crash histories and penalty points
- Consider investing in **extra driver training**, for example, for those covering the greatest mileages or with greater development needs such as young drivers

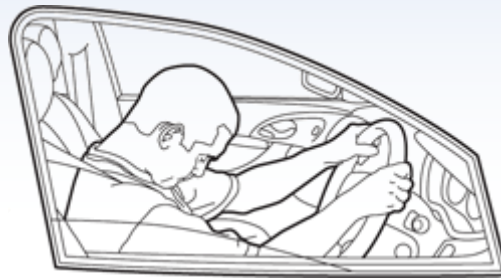


- Ensure drivers and their supervisors always consider safety before driving, for example by **planning journeys** which follow the safest routes, wherever possible avoiding congestion, crash sites and night and adverse weather driving. If a journey is excessively long, staff may need to travel the night before. Or they may need to stay overnight rather than driving straight home after working away. Plan stops of at least 15 minutes every two hours

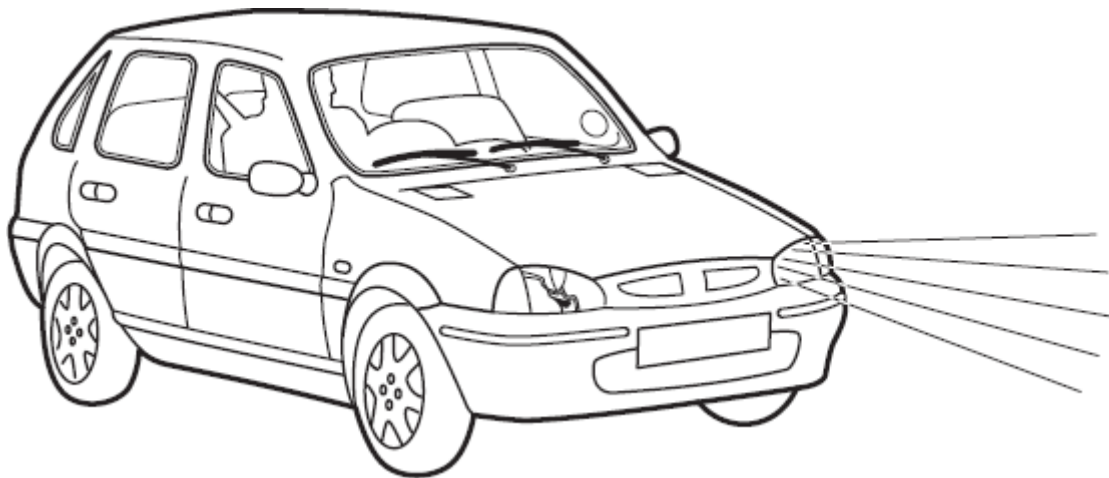


- Make it clear that **staff must not speed**. Don't set impossible schedules and deadlines. Avoid systems of work (for example, 'just in time' delivery, payment by number of calls made, 'job and finish', unrealistic guaranteed call-out or delivery times etc.) which may encourage speeding

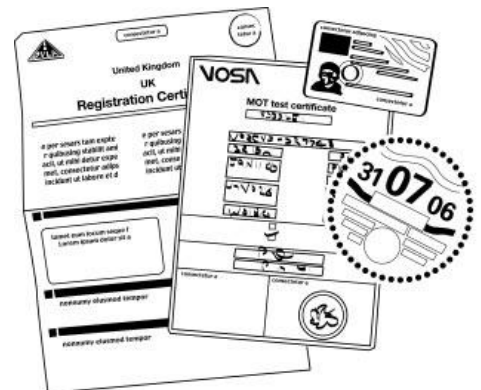
- Emphasise that staff must be **fit to drive**. Make clear that they must meet DVLA medical fitness requirements and that they must not drive when they have become excessively tired by work or when they are impaired, for example by alcohol or drugs. Make sure they are alert to the effects of stress, medicines which can affect their ability to drive safely, 'morning after' drink driving, and fatigue due to poor work/life balance or sleep deprivation, for example due to looking after sick children or frail dependants. Remind drivers about the value of 'caffeine and napping' to cope with sleepiness while driving. Make sure drivers have had eye sight checks



- **Ensure vehicles are right for the job** (for example, load carrying or accessing off-road locations) and that **drivers are familiar** with any new vehicles they are asked to drive (e.g. hire vehicles)
- Insist that they are **properly maintained and serviced regularly**, including when owned by employees themselves. Consider the value of additional safety features



- Ensure vehicles are taxed, MoT'd where necessary and that drivers have '**business use**' **insurance** when using their own vehicles
- Ensure they understand how to **manoeuvre vehicles safely**, for example during parking and reversing and that they know what to do when visiting **clients and other premises**
- Make sure all staff who drive know what they should do in an **emergency**, including on motorways



- Ensure they carry mobile phones to call emergency services if necessary **BUT** –
- **Prohibit all use of mobiles (hand held or hands free) while driving.** (Set mobiles to voice mail and retrieve messages during breaks from driving)
- And above all, ensure that you and your firm’s supervisors always **lead by example.** Set a pattern for others to follow by the way you drive yourself

STEP 3: Check

- **Check licences** to see that drivers are entitled to drive the class or type of vehicle to be driven. Monitor licences to track penalty points and crash histories (whether or not they were driving for work)
- Require staff to **report all road traffic offences** (whether at work or not). In the first instance, always consider help and support rather than disciplinary action
- Ensure all accidents and ‘near-misses’ while driving for work are **reported and investigated**
- Require drivers to do daily and weekly **vehicle safety checks**
- Ask for **claims data** and **safety related information** from vehicle providers (minor damage, cases of excessive brake/tyre wear etc.)



STEP 4: Act

- Make time and space to **review progress** periodically (asking ‘where are we now?’) to identify any further worthwhile steps you can take
- See to it that any lessons to be learnt from experience are **shared and fed back** to promote safer driving
- Develop a simple **action plan** with targets for further improvement
- Recognise, celebrate and **reward safe driving** achievements
- **Keep the topic live** by always focusing on road safety in meetings, internal memos, briefings, staff appraisals etc.

Sources of further information and support:

- **RoSPA** (www.rospa.com/roadsafety/resources/employers.htm)
- **RoSPA Driver Training** (www.rospa.com/drivertraining)
- **Health and Safety Executive** (www.hse.gov.uk/roadsafety)
- **Department for Transport** (www.dft.gov.uk/drivingforwork)
- **Occupational Road Safety Alliance** (www.orsa.org.uk)
- **Local Authority Road Safety (LARSOA)** (www.larsoa.org.uk)
- **Benchmarking** (www.fleetsafetybenchmarking.net/main)
- **Driving for Better Business** (www.drivingforbetterbusiness.com)
- **Police forces, insurers and brokers, employers' associations, trades unions...**