

Driving for work: Safer speeds



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Driving is the most dangerous work activity that most people do. It is estimated that around 150 people are killed or seriously injured every week in crashes involving someone who was driving, riding or otherwise using the road for work purposes. The majority of these tragedies can be prevented.

HSE Guidelines, "Driving at Work", state that **"health and safety law applies to on-the-road work activities as to all work activities and the risks should be effectively managed within a health and safety system"**.

Therefore, employers must assess the risks involved in their staff's use of the road for work and put in place all 'reasonably practicable' measures to manage those risks. Such measures will more than pay for themselves by reducing the organisation's accident costs, many of which will be uninsured.

Inappropriate Speed

One of the most significant risks your staff face, and create, is driving or riding at inappropriate speeds on work-related journeys. This includes both exceeding the speed limit and driving* within the limit but still too fast for the conditions (for example, twisting rural roads, poor weather, poor visibility or high pedestrian activity).

At higher speeds, there is less time to identify and react to what is happening, it takes longer to stop and impacts are more severe, causing more serious injuries to vehicle occupants and others. Higher speeds also magnify other driver errors, such as close-following or driving when tired or distracted, thus multiplying the chances of causing a crash.



Drivers who 'speed' crash more often than those who don't. They are also more likely to commit other driving violations, such as red-light running and driving too close. Company car and van drivers often exceed speed limits in order to get to appointments on time, are less likely to view speeding as risky and more likely to think that being on time is more important. Company car drivers, and people who drive high annual mileages for work, are up to 50% more likely to crash than private motorists.

Every year, around 350 people are killed in crashes involving someone exceeding the speed limit and over 200 people die in crashes involving someone travelling too fast for the conditions.

This guide gives simple advice on how employers and line managers can help to ensure that their staff are not tempted or pressurised into driving at inappropriate speed.

A sample 'Safer Speed Policy' is included. It can be adopted as written or adapted to suit your organisation's needs, as a stand-alone policy or as part of a wider 'Safer Driving for Work' policy.

*The terms 'driver' and 'driving' include 'rider' and 'riding'.

What employers can do

Expect Safe Driving

All staff, including directors, senior managers and line managers, should understand that the organisation expects everyone who drives for work to drive safely for their own, and other's, benefit.

Consult Staff

Staff and/or their safety representatives should be fully consulted about the organisation's policy on safe speeds.

Respect Speed Limits

In particular, emphasise that staff should never drive faster than road conditions safely allow, should obey speed limits at all times (including variable limits and temporary limits at roadworks) and that persistent failure to do so will be treated as a serious matter. Good progress on the road does not depend on driving as fast as you can.

Raise Awareness

As part of recruitment, training and staff appraisal, remind drivers and line managers about the:

- increased dangers caused by driving at inappropriate speed
- need to allow sufficient time to complete journeys within speed limits
- things that tempt or pressurise drivers to speed
- things they can do to avoid speeding (See the Top Ten Tips below)
- human, legal, financial and reputational consequences of speeding
- organisation's policy on work related road safety, including safe speeds
- benefits of driving at appropriate speeds (saves money, risk and stress)
- need for employees to co-operate in carrying out the policy and to report any speed related problems.

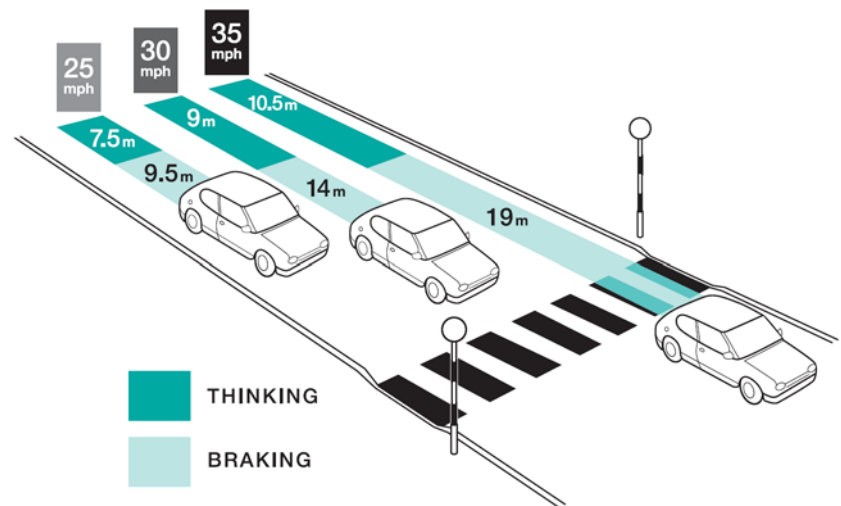
Top Ten Tips

Many drivers unintentionally exceed the speed limit, often without realising it. Modern cars are so powerful and comfortable they give drivers little sensation of their speed. It is too easy to creep above the limit, and in particular, many drivers seem to believe it is difficult to drive a modern car at less than 30 mph. There are simple and practical things drivers who find it difficult to stay with speed limits can do to help themselves.

1. Check your speedometer regularly, especially when leaving high speed roads
2. Know the limits – look for signs, especially at junctions
3. Assume lamp posts mean 30 mph, until signs say otherwise, but remember it could be 20 mph
4. Remember, speed limits are a maximum, not a target
5. 20's plenty when kids are about – and may even be too fast
6. Try no higher than 3rd gear in a 30 mph limit
7. Recognise what makes you speed - keeping up with traffic, overtaking or being tailgated
8. Concentrate – distracted drivers speed
9. Slow down when entering villages
10. Give yourself time – there's no need to speed and you won't get there quicker

Further details of the advice on which these Tips are based can be found at:

www.rosipa.com/roadsafety/adviceandinformation/driving/speed/toptentips/



Lead by Example

Senior Managers, from the head of the organisation down, should lead by personal example and follow the guidance in this leaflet, both in the way they drive themselves and in encouraging colleagues to drive safely.

Plan Safer Journeys

Ensure that journey schedules, distances and plans allow sufficient time for drivers to complete their journeys (including delivery stops, rest breaks and foreseeable weather and traffic conditions) at safe speeds and without needing to exceed speed limits. For further advice see "Driving for Work: Safer Journey Planning" which is available free from:

www.rospa.com/roadsafety/info/worksafejourney.pdf

Avoid Incentives to Speed

Review work targets and practices (e.g., 'job-and-finish' or payment by customer contact) to ensure they do not inadvertently pressurise or encourage staff to travel at unsafe speeds or to exceed speed limits.

Assess Drivers

Assess the driving attitudes and competence of all staff who drive for work, whether they use a company or personal vehicle, at recruitment and regularly afterwards. There are many options for doing this from psychometric questionnaires to in-car assessments. See "Driving for Work: Driver Assessment and Training", available free at:

www.rospa.com/roadsafety/info/drivertraining.pdf

Train Drivers

Provide driver education and practical training for your drivers, based on the needs identified through driver assessment and targeting those at greatest risk first. See "Driving for Work: Driver Assessment and Training", available free at:

www.rospa.com/roadsafety/info/drivertraining.pdf

Promote Eco-driving

Driver training will help to reduce risk and improve fuel efficiency. The driving techniques and style that make drivers safer are exactly the same as those that make drivers more fuel efficient, giving both individual drivers and the organisation a double benefit.

Allocate Suitable Vehicles

Company cars tend to be larger and more powerful than privately owned ones. Drivers of higher performance cars are more likely to speed and to have speeding convictions. Employers should ensure that the performance characteristics of vehicles are matched to the competence level of their drivers. When choosing vehicle fleets, try to offer a choice including smaller-engined vehicles and ensure staff understand that they may pay significantly less tax for choosing one.

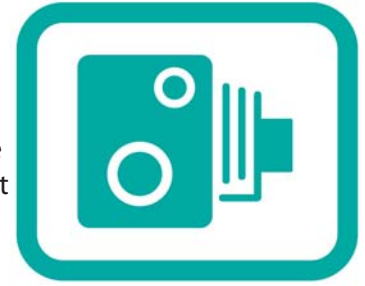
Record and Investigate Crashes and Incidents

Require staff who are involved in a work related crash or damage-only incident to report this to their line manager so that it can be investigated to determine whether inappropriate speed was a contributory factor, and what (if any) action is necessary to prevent repeat occurrences. It is essential to ensure that the organisation's insurers are kept informed as failure to do so may invalidate the insurance policy. If possible, also record and analyse near misses, as they can provide valuable information.



Track Speeding Convictions

Require employees to notify their line managers immediately of impending prosecutions and penalties associated with unsafe driving, including speeding, whether these resulted from at-work or personal driving. Again, the organisation's insurers must be informed. An easy way of tracking endorsements is to check driving licences (at appointment and regularly afterwards); the most cost-effective way of doing this is usually via the DVLA's online checking facility (each driver must sign a mandate allowing you to do this).



Trends in speeding penalties should be reviewed to identify driving activities where further action to improve safety may be needed.

Provide Remedial Training

Interview staff who have received a speeding conviction, or been involved in a crash, to establish the details and to identify what lessons can be learned. In the first instance, the approach should be positive and helpful, rather than punitive, although it should be made clear that repeat offending may lead to disciplinary procedures. Remedial driver training should be considered, especially for staff involved in a crash as they may be suffering post-traumatic stress or a loss of driving confidence, and for staff accumulating more than six penalty points for speeding offences.

Liaise with the Police

Make it clear that the organisation will co-operate with police enquiries or fixed penalty notices resulting from an incident or alleged speeding offence and will supply to the police the name and address of the employee to whom the vehicle was allocated at the time.

Monitor and Review

In-vehicle telematics ('black boxes') are increasingly used in fleets to monitor how drivers are driving. They can be very useful, especially, at identifying training needs, but be sure you have someone who can analyse and understand the reports generated by the telematic device. If used, their purpose should be clearly explained to staff through a consultation process.

Managers should discuss at-work driving with their drivers during periodic staff appraisals and team meetings. The circumstances of individual speeding offences should form part of an individual employee's performance appraisal, leading, where appropriate, to new personal performance targets.

Encourage drivers to raise concerns with their line manager, and encourage line managers to respond positively. This will help to identify and manage the factors that make drivers more likely to speed. Be aware that some staff, especially younger employees or those new to the company, may not feel able to raise concerns for fear of jeopardising their relationship with the company or their manager.

For more advice about "Young Drivers at Work", see: www.rospa.com/roadsafety/youngdriversatwork/

Liaise with Other Organisations

It is very useful to liaise with police forces, road safety bodies and other organisations such as trade associations to share knowledge and experience.

Further Advice

- HSE Guide, "Driving at Work", www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg382.pdf
- www.rospa.com/roadsafety
- www.rospa.com/drivertraining
- www.rospa.com/roadsafety/resources/employers/
- www.orsa.org.uk
- www.scorsa.org.uk
- www.dft.gov.uk (road safety section)
- www.hse.gov.uk/roadsafety/

Company Speed Policy

As part of our overall health and safety policy, _____ is committed to reducing the risks which our staff face and create when driving or riding for work. We ask all our staff to play their part, whether they use a company vehicle, their own one or a hire vehicle.

Staff driving for work must never drive faster than conditions safely allow and must obey posted speed limits at all times. Exceeding the speed limit is against the law. Persistent failure to comply with the law will be regarded as a serious matter, and gross speeding while driving for work will be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter.

Staff who gain penalty points on their licence may be required to take further driver training. Company cars may be withdrawn from staff who attain 9 or more penalty points. They **will** be withdrawn from staff who are dis-qualified from driving.

We will co-operate with police enquires resulting from an alleged speeding offence or incident and supply details of the employee (or the driver, if different) to whom the vehicle is allocated.

Senior managers must:

- Lead by example, both in the way they drive themselves and by not tolerating poor driving practice among colleagues.

Line managers must ensure:

- they also lead by personal example
- staff understand their responsibilities to drive at safe speeds and obey speed limits
- staff receive driving assessments and appropriate training
- staff plan and undertake journeys at safe speeds and obey speed limits
- work targets, systems of work or performance related methods of pay do not create pressures which lead staff to use speed inappropriately
- work related road safety is included in team meetings and staff appraisals and periodic checks are conducted to ensure our Safe Speed Policy is being followed
- they follow the monitoring, reporting and investigation procedures to help learn lessons which could help improve our future road safety performance
- they challenge unsafe attitudes and behaviours, encourage staff to drive safely, and lead by personal example in the way they themselves drive.

Staff who drive for work must:

- never drive faster than conditions safely allow and obey posted speed limits at all times
- ensure they know the maximum speed limit for the vehicle they are driving.
- plan journeys so they can be completed at safe speeds and without exceeding speed limits
- report road safety problems, including crashes, incidents, fixed penalty notices, summons and convictions for any offence, including speeding, to their line manager
- present their licence, and any other documents required, for inspection on request (normally annually)
- co-operate with monitoring, reporting and investigation procedures



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