



accidents don't have to happen

## Driving for work: Driver assessment & training



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## Introduction

Driving is the most dangerous work activity that most people do, and it contributes to far more work-related accidental deaths and serious injuries than all other work activities.

Very few organisations can operate without using the road. Millions of vehicles (lorries, vans, taxis, buses, emergency service vehicles, company cars, motorcycles, bicycles) are used for work, and many people work on foot on the road (maintenance workers, refuse collectors, postal workers, vehicle breakdown employees, the police and so on).

Unfortunately, all these workers face risks on the road because they are doing their jobs. They can also create risks for everyone else on the road. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) estimate that a third of all road traffic accidents involve someone who is at work at the time. This may account for over 20 fatalities and 250 serious injuries every week<sup>1</sup>.

Employers have a duty to assess, train and supervise staff who drive as part of their job, and to manage the conditions under which staff drive for work, in order to reduce the risks their staff face and create when they drive for work.

HSE'S [Driving at Work](#) Guidelines state that

*“health and safety law applies to on-the-road work activities and the risks should be effectively managed within a health and safety system.”*

Almost all road crashes are caused by, or involve, human error. The most frequently recorded causes of road crashes involving drivers are:

- careless, thoughtless, reckless driving
- inappropriate speed
- failure to look properly
- loss of control of vehicle
- lack of judgement of own path
- failure to give way
- poor turn or manoeuvre
- inattention or distraction

This guide gives simple advice on how employers and line managers can select, assess, train and supervise staff who drive for work in order to reduce the risk that they face and create for others.

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<sup>1</sup> Health and Safety Executive, Work related road safety  
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/roadsafety/roadsafety.htm> (Accessed 17 June 2022)



## What employers can do

Make sure that you put in place policies, people and procedures to enable you to understand:

- How your organisation uses the road (the staff who do so, the vehicles they use and the journeys they make)
- The risks this creates to your staff and other people
- The potential consequences of those risks, and
- The measures needed to manage and reduce these risks and consequences.

This will make your organisation more efficient and successful by helping you to:

- Keep your employees and volunteers safe while at work
- Protect other road users
- Save money by reducing crashes and incidents
- Reduce business interruptions
- Avoid adverse publicity associated with crashes
- Promote smoother driving which improves fuel efficiency and reduces environmental impact.

Road crashes are not just caused by driver error, but also by the nature of the driving that at-work drivers are required to do (for example, their schedules, time pressures and distractions) and the vehicles they drive. See [Driving for Work: Choosing Safer Vehicles](#).

Take particular care to reduce risks caused by driver tiredness, distraction and time pressures, and to reduce the amount of driving as much as possible by:

- Using remote communications (telephone, email, video-conferencing, etc)
- Travelling by plane or train, which is far safer and more environmentally-friendly.
- Maximising car sharing to reduce the number of journeys.



### Provide driver assessment and training

Make driver assessment and training part of the organisation's overall policy and procedures. Good driver assessment and training does not just focus on driving skills, but also on driver's attitudes, knowledge and understanding of how they can manage driving risks. It also aims to ensure that drivers are aware of vulnerable road users, especially pedestrians, pedal cyclists and motorcyclists.

It should also reflect the fact that at work drivers are not all the same. It is important to identify which drivers are most at risk and why, so that the most appropriate intervention can be delivered. Accident risk varies, depending on the amount and type of work related driving, vehicles, driving skills and attitudes, age, gender and personal characteristics.

### 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.

### Expect safe driving

Make sure that all your staff, including directors, senior managers and line managers, understand that they are expected to drive safely, responsibly and legally. If they have concerns about the organisation's driving policy or procedures, they should raise them with their line manager or staff representative.



### Engage staff

Ensure that staff are fully consulted about the organisation's policies on safe driving, including driver assessment and training. Review the policy periodically in joint health and safety committee meetings.

Some drivers may find driver assessment or training intimidating or feel it is unnecessary, so clear and positive communication is important. The company's image and reputation can be affected, positively or negatively, by the way their staff drive, especially if driving a liveried vehicle. As part of recruitment, training and staff appraisal, remind drivers and line managers to understand that the company needs to:



- Assess each driver's risk and competence, even though they have passed the driving test
- Assess drivers for the specific type of driving their job requires
- Assess the sort of driving their job requires
- Identify those who are at the highest risk (due to their driving skills and attitudes and/or to the type of driving they do).

Include driving issues in periodic staff appraisals and team meetings, and note any feedback from drivers and ensure that it is addressed as necessary.

### Check driver licences

Conduct regular driver licence checks, at least once a year, but more often for high mileage drivers or those with a poor driving record. 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).

### Check business use motor insurance

Check that staff who drive for work (including those who use their own vehicle for work journeys) have business use cover on their insurance.

### Consider a permit to drive

Many organisations operate a 'permit to drive' system in which only staff who have been authorised to do so are allowed to drive on company business; sometimes it is a condition of the company's insurance.

### Train line managers

Train managers to manage work related road safety as part of their health and safety responsibilities, and to lead by personal example by following the organisation's policy. They should understand the importance of driver assessment and training, their role in ensuring that it is properly implemented for all the drivers they manage, to understand how to use the results from driver assessments and training to prioritise those drivers who are at highest risk, and to make any necessary management changes, such as journey planning, schedules, and so on.

### Assess and train your drivers

Assess drivers' attitudes and their driving competence on recruitment, during induction and regularly afterwards, including fitness to drive, with their drivers during periodic staff appraisals and team meetings.

Assess all drivers regularly, but prioritise those with the greatest mileages, young drivers, drivers using a new type of vehicle, such as a van, and drivers with a crash history or history of motoring offences. Use the results to identify training needs and other risk management measures, and discuss driving during individual staff



appraisals, and group meetings. Provide driver education and practical training for your drivers, based on the needs identified through driver assessment and targeting those at greatest risk first.

### When to assess and train

Assessment and training should take place at various points during a person's career with the company, starting with their recruitment and continuing at regular intervals.

#### ✓ On recruitment

If a job involves driving, recruitment should include questions about applicants' driving abilities and history (amount and type of driving experience, accidents and motoring offences) and a driving licence check. Consider requiring applicants to take a:

- Driver profiler assessment to assess their attitudes towards driving and their likely driving behaviour.
- Theory or Highway Code test to assess their knowledge about the rules of the road and safe driving
- On-road practical assessment in the type of vehicle they will be driving to assess their driving ability.

Ask candidates to complete a medical declaration that they are fit to drive. If the job requires a substantial amount of driving, consider requiring them to take a medical fitness to drive check, including an eyesight test, with a medical professional (the individual's GP, an in-house occupational therapist or a medical firm contracted by the company). Drivers of large vehicles have to pass higher medical standards than car or small van drivers.

#### ✓ During induction

Include awareness and understanding of the company's driving for work policies and procedures in the induction period for new staff members. Other options include:

- Initial driver assessment and training for the vehicle and types of journey they are required to make.
- A 'buddy' system, in which a new member of staff is paired with an experienced staff member to act as their mentor for a period of time. This is especially useful for young staff and for staff who are driving a new type of vehicle, for example, a van, for the first time. It's important to make sure the 'buddy' does not pass on incorrect information or bad habits, so consider some training and monitoring for 'buddies'.
- Driver handbooks are a useful way of giving concise information to drivers. They should include information about the company's driving rules and procedures, and advice about safe driving. They should be clear, concise, easy to read and relevant to the type of vehicle. Keep a copy in the vehicle's glove box.
- Vehicle and route familiarisation, especially if the new staff member will be driving a type of vehicle they do not normally drive, such as a van, or on types of roads or areas with which they are not familiar.
- Telematics, if used by the company, can provide an accurate picture of how the new person is driving. Managers should monitor the feedback about new drivers carefully during their induction period, and ensure that the driver is also looking at the data about their driving to see how they can improve.

#### ✓ Regularly

A good driver assessment and training system will include regular on-going assessment of all drivers (e.g., once a year) to identify any new issues such as a change in driving style, abilities or attitudes or a change in the driving tasks.



Specific or more frequent assessments are needed:

✓ **For higher risk drivers**

Managers should ensure that drivers who are identified as facing the highest risk are given help first and that the training they receive addresses issues revealed by the assessment. They should also consider whether other management changes (such as a change to schedules) are required.

✓ **After an incident**

An accident (or near miss), penalty points or a conviction for a motoring offence may indicate that a driver needs more frequent assessments or further training. It should trigger an investigation to determine whether the driver's attitudes, skills or behaviour, or the nature of the driving task or vehicle, contributed to the crash, and what (if any) action is necessary to prevent repeat occurrences.

✓ **Following a complaint**

Organisations that use 'driver feedback' schemes may require drivers to be reassessed following complaints from members of the public.

✓ **When returning to work**

Employees returning to work after a serious illness or following an accident (of any kind), may benefit from a driver assessment to see if they need extra training or support to help them resume driving.

## Type of assessment and training

### Online driver profiler

Driver profiler tools analyse the type of work-related driving undertaken, accidents (and possibly near misses), violations and driving attitudes. They then provide a report detailing the level and type of risk each driver faces. Some provide a 'manager's report' which grades drivers as 'high', 'medium' or 'low' risk to help managers prioritise who needs help first and to indicate the most appropriate form of training. These enable the best use of limited budgets. Some also enable organisations to keep records of who has been assessed or trained, when and how.

### Driver education

Seminars or workshops can cover defensive driving, road traffic laws (the Highway Code), the causes of road crashes, the increased risk caused by poor driving, the potential consequences and the company's policy on driving. They can also focus on specific topics, for example, on drinking and drug driving, impairment or speed management.

Driver education should not just focus on driving skills and vehicle control, but also on higher level issues, such as journey planning and how personal characteristics can influence risks. A life change such as a bereavement or divorce can have a detrimental effect on a person's driving ability, as can health changes. The aim of this type of behavioural session is to help drivers to recognise how they can minimise their own risks. It is likely to be more effective if it includes opportunities for interaction and group discussion so that staff can share their experiences and express their views.



### E-learning

E-learning courses can cover the same issues that driver education workshops cover, and often include a test at the end to check what the person taking it has learned. They are a less expensive option, but do not provide the same opportunity for interaction or discussion between delegates or with the trainer. They are more likely to be suitable for low and medium risk drivers, and to support in-vehicle training for drivers of all risk levels.



### On-road

On-road driver training normally includes both education and practical driving sessions. They can cover everything from defensive driving, development courses to eco-driving, vehicle familiarisation and other specific issues. Good on-road training covers attitudinal development, not just driving skills. It teaches safe driving techniques and a systematic approach to driving and hazard perception.

Often, two or three staff members go out with the trainer and take turns at driving. Each is given a report analysing their driving and recommending further training (if needed) and aspects of their driving they could improve. On completion, drivers should have a better understanding of their vehicles, the principles of defensive driving, improved concentration and observation and earlier anticipation of hazards.

### Driving tests

Many employers also provide the option for staff to pass an advanced or refresher driving test. Some make it a requirement to achieve a minimum grade. This can demonstrate that training has been effective and act as an incentive for drivers who can gain additional qualifications.

### Advanced driver training

Managers can consider helping those who wish to do so, to further develop their driving skills by taking advanced driver training and an advanced driving test. Test standards are monitored and approved by the Driver and Vehicles Standards Agency (DVSA) and some of the courses qualify for vocational qualifications.

### Specific vehicles

Training courses for drivers of specific types of vehicles or specific types of driving, including minibus driver training, chauffeur courses, and large vehicles. Drivers of LGVs and PCVs must, of course, be appropriately trained and licensed as required by law, but even these drivers will benefit from advanced training in their specific vehicles.

### Vehicle and country familiarisation

Driving a vehicle for the first time (e.g., a colleague's car, a pool car or a hire car, or a new type of vehicle, such as a van) can be difficult. Vehicle familiarisation courses can be tailored to specific vehicles.

Overseas staff from who are new to driving in the UK may not be familiar with our roads, traffic laws and driving habits. Equally, UK drivers who are required to drive abroad may not be familiar with the roads, traffic laws and driving habits in the country they are visiting. It is important that such drivers receive training on the roads they will be using.

### Telematics (see "[Driving for Work: Telematics](#)")

Telematics provides accurate and useful information about a person's real driving behaviour to identify strengths and weaknesses, crash risk and to create personalised feedback. However, this information is only useful, if it is viewed regularly and used proactively to provide tailored, personalised feedback to drivers. It can help drivers to improve their driving and help managers to identify driver training and education needs and other ways of reducing a driver's risk (eg, changing journey schedules).

### Assessors and trainers

Companies can either employ their own in-house driver assessors and trainers or commission an external company to provide these services. Whichever option is chosen, companies should make sure the assessors and trainers are properly qualified and experienced.



### In-house

In-house driver assessors should be experienced in assessing at work drivers in the type of vehicle they use. They do not need to be an Approved driving instructor (ADI) if they only assess, but if they also provide driver training, they must be an ADI.

### External company

When selecting an external company to provide driver assessments or training, check:

- A range of different companies
- Assessors have a valid driving licence for the type of vehicle(s) in which they are assessing
- Driver trainers are ADIs
- Fleet car and van trainers are on the DVSA's voluntary register of fleet driver trainers
- Large vehicle trainers are on the DVSA's voluntary register for LGV instructors or the voluntary industry register for PCV (passenger carrying vehicle) instructors
- The company is accredited by a nationally recognised body.
- Assessors and trainers have excellent communication skills.



Discuss your specific needs with potential suppliers and how they will tailor their training to meet them. Require the supplier to provide a detailed report for each driver and a simple way for you to compare the results for all your drivers so you can identify and prioritise those with the greatest needs.

Monitor the standard of training to make sure it continues to meet your needs, that standards are not slipping and to check that all the individual trainers are performing to the required standard. Make sure there is a clear procedure for raising concerns with your supplier and for them to rectify any problems with their training.

### Use the results of assessments and training

Use the results of driver assessments to identify training needs and to inform the type and content of any training provided. The results of assessments should also inform any other management changes, such as amending a route or journey schedule.

Discuss driving in individual staff appraisals, as well as in group meetings. It's important that drivers are able to raise issues and concerns, as well as managers. The approach should be to help drivers who need to improve rather than to be punitive, and the aim is to identify risks and better prepare drivers. However, it may be necessary to remove an individual from driving duties if they do not respond to their driving assessments and training. Such drivers should not be allowed to continue to drive for the company as they pose an unacceptable risk to themselves, their colleagues, the company as a whole and to the public.

### Require reporting

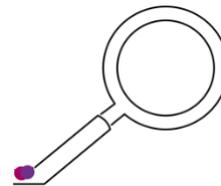
Require staff and managers to report collisions (including damage-only), significant near misses and offences. Drivers who have received penalty points, been cautioned, summoned or convicted for driving offences (whether while at work or not) should be required to inform their line manager as soon as possible. 'Driver feedback' schemes which encourage other road users to report positive and negative driver behaviour can reveal examples of good and bad driving by employees and increase their sense of accountability. The aim is to help drivers who need to improve rather than to be punitive, but it may be necessary to remove an individual from driving duties if the way they drive poses an unacceptable risk to themselves, colleagues or the public.

### Liaise with the police and other organisations

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. It is very useful to liaise with road safety bodies and other organisations such as trade associations to share knowledge and experience. Feedback any lessons learned into the organisation's policy and procedures, and communicate them to managers and staff. Review claims data with the organisation's insurers.



### Record 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 driver fitness 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, record and analyse near misses, as they can provide valuable information.

Encourage staff to report all work-related road incidents, near misses and road traffic offences (whether at work or not). Line managers should understand their responsibilities to ensure that reporting procedures are followed and encourage a 'just culture' so staff are reassured that reporting will not lead to unfair action.

### Investigate incidents

Investigate crashes (including damage only), offences and near misses to establish the immediate and root causes, and to identify the measures that will reduce the risk of repeat occurrences. Share the lessons learned throughout the organisation. Review claims data with the organisation's insurers and vehicle providers.

The managers responsible for investigations should be properly trained to conduct investigations, and analyse and interpret the findings. Telematics are a useful way of providing objective and accurate data about what a vehicle was doing immediately before and during a crash or incident.

### Review and Evaluate

Managers should monitor and evaluate their driver assessment and driver training policies and practices to ensure that they are working effectively. Advice on evaluation is available in "[How to Evaluate Managing Occupational Road Risk: A guide for employers](#)".

## Further information and support

[HSE Driving at Work: A Guide for Employers](#)

[RoSPA Driving for Work Resources](#)

[RoSPA Fleet Safety](#)

[RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders](#)

[Scottish Occupational Road Safety Alliance \(ScORSA\)](#)

[Driving for Better Business \(DfBB\)](#)

[IAM Roadsmart](#)

[Global Fleet Champions](#)

[Road Safety GB](#)

[Road Safety Scotland](#)

[Road Safety Wales](#)

[Road Safety Observatory](#)

[Think Road Safety](#)

[The Highway Code](#)

[Safe Driving for Life](#)

[Department for Transport](#)

[Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency \(DVLA\)](#)

[Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency](#)





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