

Lowering risks for your drivers



Organisations with employees who drive for work have a duty of care to ensure *all* their drivers are safe; this includes employees driving their own vehicle on company business. After appropriate road risk assessment, there are three main ways that employers can improve fleet safety: managing drivers, managing vehicles, and managing journeys.

Accurate recording and monitoring of incidents and near-misses is essential in effectively improving fleet safety. Employers should record all incidents involving staff driving for work, including near misses, to help identify common issues. Making use of new technologies such as telematics can be an invaluable tool in helping organisations monitor driver behaviour. It should also be an essential ingredient in collating and maintaining appropriate records and updating these at regular fixed intervals with invasive techniques that ensure compliance on a continual basis. It is essential that employers develop a comprehensive training and education programme for their drivers and this should be provided continually throughout employment for all drivers.

Inadequate vehicle maintenance can cost lives. Employers must ensure vehicles driven for work – whether company or employee-owned – are well maintained, particularly safety-critical components such as brakes and tyres, to protect their drivers and members of the public and avoid costly insurance claims and repair bills. Companies with vehicle fleets should buy or retrofit vehicles with the latest safety features that are shown to help prevent or reduce the consequences of crashes, and organisations with large vehicles, such as trucks and buses, should also ensure their vehicles are fitted with the latest blind spot-minimising technology.

The simplest way to reduce the risk vehicles pose to people is to reduce the number of vehicles on roads. Some business travel can be avoided altogether through the use of communications technologies such as teleconferencing and webcasts. Where business travel cannot be avoided, it is important that journeys are planned to avoid residential areas and instead stick to motorways and other major roads wherever possible. This is not only safer for drivers as these roads have a lower crash risk, but also lessens the risk to vulnerable road users.

Finally, employers need to remember to positively fulfil their legal obligations. Adhering to the good practice's detailed above will greatly improve their chances of doing so and help mitigate their legal liabilities under extensive legislation, especially the very onerous sanctions contained within the Corporate Manslaughter Act.

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