

OCCUPATIONAL DRIVING



Health and Safety Guidance Note



NFU Mutual
RISK MANAGEMENT SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

Out of all road traffic accidents in the UK, more than a quarter involve somebody who is driving as part of their work at the time. As an employer you have a duty to manage occupational road risks in the same way as workplace health and safety and as such you must manage the risks to drivers as part of your health and safety arrangements.

Effective management of occupational driving helps reduce risk, no matter what size your organisation is.

It could also result in, for example:

- Fewer injuries to drivers;
- Reduced risk of work-related ill health;
- Reduced stress and improved morale;
- Fewer repairs for vehicles;
- Fewer missed orders;
- Reduced running costs.

The following information gives advice on how you might reduce the health and safety risks to your employees who drive a vehicle, or ride a motorcycle or bicycle as part of their work activities. It also applies to those using their own vehicle for a work-related journey.

WHAT ARE MY LEGAL DUTIES?

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act, 1974 [The Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978] states you must ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health and safety of all employees while at work. You must also ensure that others are not put at risk by your work activities. Driving for work is classed as a work activity.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require you to carry out an assessment of the risks to the health and safety of your employees, while they are at work, and to other people who may be affected by your organisation's work activities.

You also have duties under road traffic law, e.g. the Road Traffic Act [Road Traffic (NI) Order] and associated regulations, which are administered by the police and other agencies such as the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA).

All road users must comply with the Highway Code, including those using the road for work.

Health and safety law does not apply to people commuting (i.e. travelling between their home and their usual place of work), unless they are travelling from their home to somewhere which is not their usual place of work.

HOW CAN I ASSESS THE RISKS FROM OCCUPATIONAL DRIVING?

A risk assessment is about identifying and taking sensible and proportionate measures to control the risks in your workplace, not about creating huge amounts of paperwork. You are probably already taking steps to protect your employees, but your risk assessment will help you decide whether you should be doing more. Specific guidance on how to carry out a risk assessment is also provided in the Risk Assessment Guidance Note.

When carrying out your occupational driving risk assessment you need to take into account a range of relevant factors, including the driver, the vehicle and the journey. Conducting this risk assessment requires worker participation, as they have first-hand experience of what happens in practice, so make sure you consult your employee or their representatives.

The DRIVER

When assessing occupational driving risks you need to have an understanding of the people that will be doing the actual driving, their driving competence, training, experience and driving history, their attitude towards driver safety, their fitness to drive and their knowledge of how to keep themselves and others safe on the road.

Don't forget about any contractors you may employ for driving. Refer to the Contractors and Visitors Guidance Note for your responsibilities in relation to contractors.

The VEHICLE

All vehicles used for work need to be included in your assessment, regardless of whether they are used in the work premises or on public roads. Think about all the vehicles used for work, including for example:

- Vehicles used for transporting people, such as cars, buses, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), motorcycles, bicycles, etc.;
- Vehicles used for transporting goods, such as vans, heavy goods vehicles, trailers, tankers, forklift trucks etc;
- Vehicles used for a specific work activity, such as tractors, combine harvesters, construction vehicles, etc.

The risk from vehicles is dependent on their suitability for use, whether they are adequately serviced and maintained and how well they fit the driver and the road surface conditions, which may have an effect on seating position or driving posture.

The JOURNEY

Not all driving journeys carry the same risks. Your assessment should review whether the journeys your employees make are adequately planned and whether work schedules are realistic. Fatigue plays a big part in the potential for road traffic accidents, so you should review the frequency and the length of the journeys as part of your assessment.

Journeys may also be affected by weather and road conditions and your assessment should therefore take both good and poor conditions into account.

The Health and Safety Executive have produced a simple checklist to help you ask yourself all the relevant questions when carrying out your assessment. The checklist is provided at the end of this guidance note to assist you.

HOW CAN I CONTROL THE RISKS FROM OCCUPATIONAL DRIVING?

Make sure you have adequate systems for all three areas included in your risk assessment to allow you to manage work-related road safety effectively. This can be achieved by developing a health and safety policy covering organisation of journeys, driver training and vehicle maintenance, making sure there is top-level commitment to work-related road safety in your organisation and by clearly setting out everyone's roles and responsibilities for work-related road safety etc.

Once implemented you should monitor performance to ensure your work-related road safety policy is effective and has been implemented effectively.

To ensure driver safety, you can:

- Make sure that you specify what levels of skill and expertise are required to do the job safely and ensure that your drivers are equipped with these;
- Arrange for drivers to be trained, giving priority to those at highest risk, e.g. those with high annual mileage, poor accident records, or those new to the job (see Information, Instruction, Training and Supervision);
- Regularly check the validity of driving licences, including that they are suitable for the type(s) of vehicles they are required to drive on recruitment and periodically (e.g. annually) afterwards. An example driving licence check sheet is provided at the end of this guidance note;
- Provide drivers with a handbook, giving advice on road safety, including clear rules for ensuring that drivers do not drive under the influence of drink or drugs and that they do not use a hand-held mobile phone while driving. Consider prohibiting even using a hands-free phone, as it can seriously affect concentration;

- Ensure you have adequate vehicle breakdown and roadside emergency arrangements;
- Make sure crash helmets and protective clothing for motorcycle, ATV and bicycle riders are provided and are of the appropriate standard;
- Make sure that you regularly check that all drivers for whom there are legal requirements for medical examination, have the appropriate medical certificate;
- Encourage your employees to report all work-related road incidents or near misses and also any health concerns they may have.

To ensure vehicle safety, you can:

- Make sure you consider ergonomic and seating design alongside other considerations for suitability for use when buying or leasing new vehicles ;
- Ensure your vehicles have driver aids and other safety devices where appropriate (e.g. reversing alarms, camera systems, proximity sensors, and side protection bars for lorries or HGVs);
- Make sure that vehicles are properly equipped to operate in poor weather conditions (e.g. anti-lock brakes or winter tyres and windscreen washer fluid the correct strength for freezing conditions);
- Implement routine safety checks on all vehicles, such as those on lights, tyres and wheel fixings, provide drivers with the means to carry them out and record them and ensure they report any faults;
- Ensure planned/preventive maintenance is carried out on all vehicles in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations. Remember – an MOT certificate only covers basic defects and does not guarantee the safety of a vehicle;
- Ensure any vehicles that are considered lifting equipment (e.g. FLTs and telescopic handlers) are subject to annual thorough examination in accordance with the Lifting Equipment and Lifting Operations Regulations;

- Ensure maintenance and repairs are carried out promptly and to an acceptable standard;
- Make sure that privately owned vehicles are not used for work purposes unless they are serviced in line with manufacturers' recommendations, insured for business use and, where the vehicle is over three years old, have a valid MOT certificate;
- Ensure you have details on the height and weight of vehicles, both laden and empty and make sure this information is shared with the drivers. Ensure vehicles do not exceed their maximum load weight. Information on weight limitations, height and width requirements and speed limits for agricultural vehicles is provided at the end of this guidance note;
- Make sure you have appropriate arrangements for carrying and properly securing goods and equipment in/on a vehicle.

To ensure journey safety, you can:

- When planning journeys, take account of:
 - Planning journeys along the safest routes available for the type of vehicle doing the journey. Motorways are the safest roads and although minor roads may be fine for cars, they are less safe and could cause difficulties for larger vehicles;
 - Overhead restrictions, (e.g. bridges and tunnels and other hazards, such as level crossings, which may present dangers for long vehicles);
 - Road types and conditions;
 - Weather conditions;
 - The need for rest breaks and access to toilets and washing facilities etc. The Highway Code recommends that drivers should take a 15-minute break every two hours;
 - The total number of hours that a driver may need to work in a day and ensure that they are not exceptionally long;

- The minimum time required to make the journey without the driver having to exceed speed limits. Take into account any delays that the driver may experience;
- Periods when drivers are most likely to feel sleepy. Sleep-related incidents are most likely between 2 am and 6 am and between 2 pm and 4 pm;
- Avoiding periods of peak traffic flow where possible;
- Reduce the need for long journeys where possible,(e.g. by moving goods in bulk by train and then arrange for local distribution by van or lorry, or arrange meetings using conference calls or video links);
- Where appropriate, make sure that tachographs are fitted to vehicles and regularly checked.

INFORMATION, INSTRUCTION, TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

Where employees are exposed to occupational road risks, you need to provide them with training so that they understand the risks and their duties and responsibilities.

The information, instruction and training for drivers should at least include the following:

- The company driving policy and what is expected of drivers;
- The risks arising from their driving and what they can do to reduce risks (e.g. by providing a driver handbook);
- Guidance and awareness of key issues, including:
 - The prohibition of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
 - The prohibition of the use a hand-held mobile phone while driving;
 - The risks of driving while taking medicine that might impair their judgement;

- The dangers of driving when tired and what to do if they start to feel sleepy whilst driving;
- The importance of good posture and, where appropriate, on how to set their seat correctly;
- How to carry out routine vehicle inspections and how to correctly adjust vehicle safety equipment, (e.g. seat belts and head restraints);
- Vehicle breakdown arrangements and how to keep safe in the event of a breakdown or emergency (e.g. use safety warning triangles and high-visibility jackets);
- Details on the vehicle(s) they are driving, including the height, width and weight of vehicles, both laden and empty, and speed requirements;
- A reminder of the requirement to satisfy the eyesight and other health requirements of the Highway Code and the DVLA;
- Requirements to report all work-related road incidents or near misses and also any health concerns they may have.

Consideration should also be given to providing drivers with extra training in order to carry out their duties safely, such as using defensive driving techniques, or how to load and unload safely.

Training needs should be periodically reviewed, including the requirement for refresher training.

It is important that workers are appropriately supervised. Effective supervision can help you monitor the effectiveness of the training that people have received and whether employees have the necessary competence to do the job. This is especially important for new starters, young workers and trainee drivers.

FURTHER GUIDANCE

- HSE website - Driving for Work
www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/drivingforwork.htm
- INDG382 Driving at Work - Managing work-related road safety
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg382.pdf
- INDG199 Workplace transport safety: A brief guide
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg199.pdf
- HSG136 A guide to workplace transport safety; An employers guide
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg136.pdf

These documents are available to download free of charge from www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books

WORK-RELATED ROAD SAFETY CHECKLIST

Working through this checklist and thinking about the three areas of safe driver, safe vehicle and safe journey will help you manage work-related road safety effectively.

SAFE DRIVER

Are your drivers competent and capable of doing their work in a way that is safe for them and other people?

- Have you specified what levels of skill and expertise is required to do the job safely and how do you ensure these are met?
- What are you doing to make sure your drivers are aware of company policy on work-related road safety and understand what is expected of them?
- Could you use written instructions and guidance, training sessions or group meetings to help you communicate your policy more effectively?

Are your drivers properly trained?

- Do you provide general induction training for drivers?
- Do you arrange for drivers to be trained – giving priority to those at highest risk, e.g. those with high annual mileage, poor accident records, or those new to the job?
- Do you find out whether drivers require extra training to carry out their duties safely, such as using defensive driving techniques, or how to load and unload safely?
- Do you consider training about other road users, e.g. cyclists or motorcyclists?
- Do you assess training needs periodically, including the requirement for refresher training?
- Do you ensure your training providers are competent to deliver the training you need?

Do you ensure your drivers have clear instructions about how to keep themselves safe while on the road?

- Do drivers know how to carry out routine safety checks, such as those on lights, tyres and wheel fixings, and report any faults?
- Do drivers know how to correctly adjust safety equipment, e.g. seat belts and head restraints?
- Do drivers know how to use anti-lock braking systems (ABS) properly?
- Do drivers know what to do to ensure they are safe if their vehicle breaks down, e.g. use safety warning triangles and high-visibility jackets?
- Do you need to provide a handbook for drivers giving advice on road safety?
- Do drivers know they must not drive under the influence of drink or drugs?
- Do drivers know they must not use a hand-held mobile phone while driving and that even using a hands-free phone can seriously affect concentration?
- Are drivers aware of the height of their vehicle, both laden and empty? There are estimated to be around three to six major bridge strikes every day.
- Do you make sure crash helmets and protective clothing for motorcycle and bicycle riders are of the appropriate standard?

Are your drivers sufficiently fit and healthy to drive safely and not put themselves or others at risk?

- Do drivers of heavy lorries, for whom there are legal requirements for medical examination, have the appropriate medical certificate?
- Do you remind drivers that they must satisfy the eyesight and other health requirements of the Highway Code and DVLA?
- Have you told drivers they should not drive while taking medicine that might impair their judgement? If there is any doubt, they should ask their GP.
- Are drivers aware of how dangerous tiredness can be and do they know what to do if they start to feel sleepy?
- Do you encourage drivers to report any health concerns?

Do you know your duties under health and safety law when employing contractors and subcontractors?

- Did you know that both you and the contractor you use have duties under health and safety law?
- Do you ensure contractors are competent to do the job safely and without risks to health and safety?
- Do you provide contractors with information on the risks from your activities and the controls you have in place?
- What arrangements do you have in place to ensure contractors tell you about any additional risks from their contracted work?
- Have you set up liaison arrangements for co-operation and co-ordination with all those responsible to ensure the health and safety of everyone concerned?
- Do you decide what you need to do to manage and supervise the work of contractors and agree any controls before work starts?

SAFE VEHICLE

Are vehicles fit for the purpose for which they are used?

- Do you investigate, when buying new vehicles, which ones are most suitable for driving and for the health and safety of the public?
- Do you make sure your vehicles have driver aids and other safety devices where appropriate, e.g. reversing alarms, camera systems, proximity sensors, and side protection bars for lorries or HGVs to protect cyclists?
- Do you ensure privately owned vehicles are not used for work purposes unless they are serviced in line with manufacturers' recommendations, insured for business use and, where the vehicle is over three years old, have a valid MOT certificate?
- Do you ensure drivers and passengers would be adequately protected in an incident, e.g. are any seatbelts, head restraints or airbags correctly fitted, working properly and used?
- Do you ensure vehicles do not exceed their maximum load weight?
- Do you have appropriate arrangements for carrying and properly securing goods and equipment in a vehicle?

Are vehicles maintained in a safe and fit condition?

- Do you ensure daily vehicle checks are carried out?
- Is planned/preventive maintenance carried out in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations? Remember – an MOT certificate only covers basic defects and does not guarantee the safety of a vehicle.
- Do you ensure tyres and windscreen wipers are inspected regularly and replaced as necessary?
- What procedures are there for reporting defects and are they remedied promptly?
- How do you ensure maintenance and repairs are carried out to an acceptable standard?
- Do you have a clear policy that unsafe vehicles should not be driven?

Are you sure that drivers' health, and possibly safety, is not being put at risk, e.g. from an inappropriate seating position or driving posture?

- Do you take account of ergonomic considerations (e.g. driving position and how accessible the controls are) before buying or leasing new vehicles?
- Do you involve drivers in decisions about seating design?
- Do you provide drivers with guidance on good posture and, where appropriate, on how to set their seat correctly?

SAFE JOURNEY

Do you plan routes thoroughly?

- Could you use safer routes which are more appropriate for the type of vehicle doing the journey? Motorways are the safest roads and although minor roads may be fine for cars, they are less safe and could cause difficulties for larger vehicles.
- Does your route planning take account of overhead restrictions, e.g. bridges and tunnels and other hazards, such as level crossings, which may present dangers for long vehicles?
- Can you eliminate or reduce long road journeys by combining with other ways of working or other forms of transport? For example, move goods in bulk by train and then arrange for local distribution by van or lorry, or arrange meetings using conference calls or video links.
- Do you plan routes in consultation with drivers or their representatives, taking account of, for example, the need for rest breaks and access to toilets and washing facilities?

Are work schedules realistic?

- Do you take account of periods when drivers are most likely to feel sleepy when planning work schedules? Sleep-related incidents are most likely between 2am and 6am and between 2pm and 4pm.
- Have you taken steps to stop employees from driving if they feel sleepy, even if this might upset delivery schedules?
- Where appropriate, are tachographs fitted to vehicles and regularly checked? There are other in-vehicle monitoring and telemetry devices which help to ensure drivers are not putting themselves and others at risk.
- Do you try to avoid periods of peak traffic flow?
- Do you make allowances for new starters, young workers and trainee drivers?

Do you allow enough time to complete journeys safely?

- Do journey times take account of road types and conditions, and allow for rest breaks? The Highway Code recommends that drivers should take a 15-minute break every two hours.
- Would you expect an occasional driver to drive and work for longer than a professional driver? Professional HGV drivers must comply with the rules for drivers' hours. There is more information at www.gov.uk/drivers-hours/overview.
- Does company policy put drivers under pressure and encourage them to take unnecessary risks, e.g. to exceed safe speeds because of agreed arrival times?
- Do you allow drivers enough time to safely deliver loads?
- How do you ensure drivers are not being asked to work an exceptionally long day? Remember that sometimes they will be starting a journey from home.
- Have you considered advising drivers who work long or irregular hours of the dangers of driving home from work when they are excessively tired? Could they consider an alternative, such as an overnight stay?

Do you consider poor weather conditions, such as snow or high winds, when planning journeys?

- Can your journey times and routes be adjusted to take account of poor weather conditions? Where this is possible, is it done?
- Are vehicles properly equipped to operate in poor weather conditions, e.g. are anti-lock brakes or winter tyres fitted and is windscreen washer fluid the correct strength for freezing conditions?
- Do drivers understand what to do to reduce risk, e.g. do drivers of high-sided vehicles know they should take extra care if driving in strong winds with a light load?
- Do drivers feel pressured to complete journeys where weather conditions are exceptionally difficult and do they know who to contact if they need to cancel a journey?

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