

# Melvyn Hodgetts

Royal Mail Corporate Social  
Responsibility

Safety Policy Development

Driver fatigue - Developing a risk  
management approach



# Scope

- Attitude
- Sleep deprivation & relationship to workplace accidents inc driving
- Fatigue reasons
- Legal implications & Employer/Employee duties
- Royal Mail approach

# Royal Mail – in context

- The largest single employer in the UK  
c197,000 employees
- Delivers to 27 million addresses -  
84 million items a day
- 35,000 vehicles travelling 1.5 million miles a  
day
- 160 million litres of diesel annually
- 14,600 retail outlets



# RM Key safety kpi's - 05/06

- 24,000 reported accidents - 130/1000sip
- 7,200 lost time accidents – 40/1000sip
- 160,000 days lost
- 5,000 RIDDOR's – 27/1000sip
- 476 Major RIDDOR's – 3/1000sip
- Main accident causes – stepping & striking, falls outdoors, lifting & handling, animals

# Royal Mail – RTA statistics

Vehicle Damage Accidents (VDA) Red Fleet only			
	2004/05	2005/06	VDA/100,000 mile
Royal Mail Letters	17323	18442	36.14
ParcelForce WW	1576	1534	29.10
<b>ROYAL MAIL GROUP</b>	<b>18899</b>	<b>19976</b>	<b>38.91</b>
PO Ltd	503	607	40.37
<b>ROYAL MAIL HOLDINGS</b>	<b>19402</b>	<b>20583</b>	<b>38.95</b>

- *includes on or off highway incidents*



# Royal Mail – RTA statistics

- 15,000 wing mirrors every year £600k
- Total cost - £41.6 million
- At 10% return on sales £1.3 billion 1st class stamps to stand still



# Attitude

- 94% of us “do not consider getting enough sleep as important”
- Those that sacrifice their sleep on the altar of achievement are often admired



# Attitude

- The Victorians considered over seven hours sleep was self indulgent
- Napoleon proclaimed six hours was quite enough for men – women were allowed seven
- Bill Gates says “our programmers work 24 hours around the clock” with pride





# Disasters & Sleep Deprivation

- Most routine UK accident investigation do not look for sleep deprivation as root cause or even as a contributory factor
- However.....

# Disasters & Sleep Deprivation

- 28 March 1979 4.00 am. Three Mile Island nuclear power plant
- 26 April 1986 1.24 pm. Chernobyl nuclear power station
- 24 March 1989. Prince William Sound, Alaska. Exxon Valdez oil supertanker
- 1986 Challenger space shuttle
- 1984 Bhopal chemical plant India



# On The Road

- The effects of sleep deprivation are not confined to a few spectacular disasters.
- We are all at risk – especially when we get behind the wheel of a vehicle
- Estimating how many of UK's thousands of RTA's have sleepy drivers as contributory cause relies on circumstantial evidence



# On The Road

- 28 February 2001 6.12am. Selby North Yorkshire

10 killed, 70 injured

Gary Hart had had no sleep for 36 hours

10 charges of death by dangerous driving

5 years in prison (would be 14 years now)



# The statistics

- 2003: 3,247 deaths, 28,913 serious injuries and 181,879 slight injuries on UK roads
- Cost to society of a single fatal RTA estimated as £1.35m

*Source: dft Transport Statistics Bulletin*



# The statistics

- On motorways and dual carriageways over 20% can be attributed to fatigue
- Sleepy drivers kill more people than drink drivers
- Driver tiredness accidents have more serious consequences

# Reasons

- Medically pre-disposed – i.e. Sleep Apnoea
- Taking medication that causes drowsiness
- Not getting enough sleep before work or quality of sleep is poor.
- Working very long hours with insufficient time to recover
- Working when they would normally be asleep – shift working

# Obstructive Sleep Apnoea

- Greek for “*without breath*”
- Breathing disorder – characterised by brief interruptions of breathing during sleep
- Occurs in all age groups, and in both sexes
- 4% of male and 2% female population
- Those who snore loudly, overweight, high blood pressure, 17” collar size in men and 16” in women





# Obstructive Sleep Apnoea

- 33% of OSA sufferers have had a RTA within last 5 years
- Prevalence in HGV drivers is 28% with clinical sleep disorder, (*some earlier studies suggested up to 78%*), 10% with severe OSA
- 2004 study showed 59% sample studied had sleep disordered breathing and 16% OSA.
- Should (Must) be included in employers O.R.R. strategy as part of driver selection and risk assessments

# Obstructive Sleep Apnoea

- 1: Diagnostics
  - initial screening questionnaire
  - home sleep study with interpretation by clinical consultants
- *If diagnosed it is a legal requirement to inform DVLA and driving must cease until satisfactory controlled*

# Obstructive Sleep Apnoea

- 2: Treatment
  - Continuous Positive Airway Pressure pneumatic splint. 95% success with patient compliance
  - Behavioural interventions - weight loss, smoking & alcohol cessation, avoidance of sedatives
  - available through NHS (GP first point of contact) or specialist providers: -[www.osaonline.com](http://www.osaonline.com) or email [OSA@respironics.com](mailto:OSA@respironics.com)
- 3: Ongoing compliance monitoring

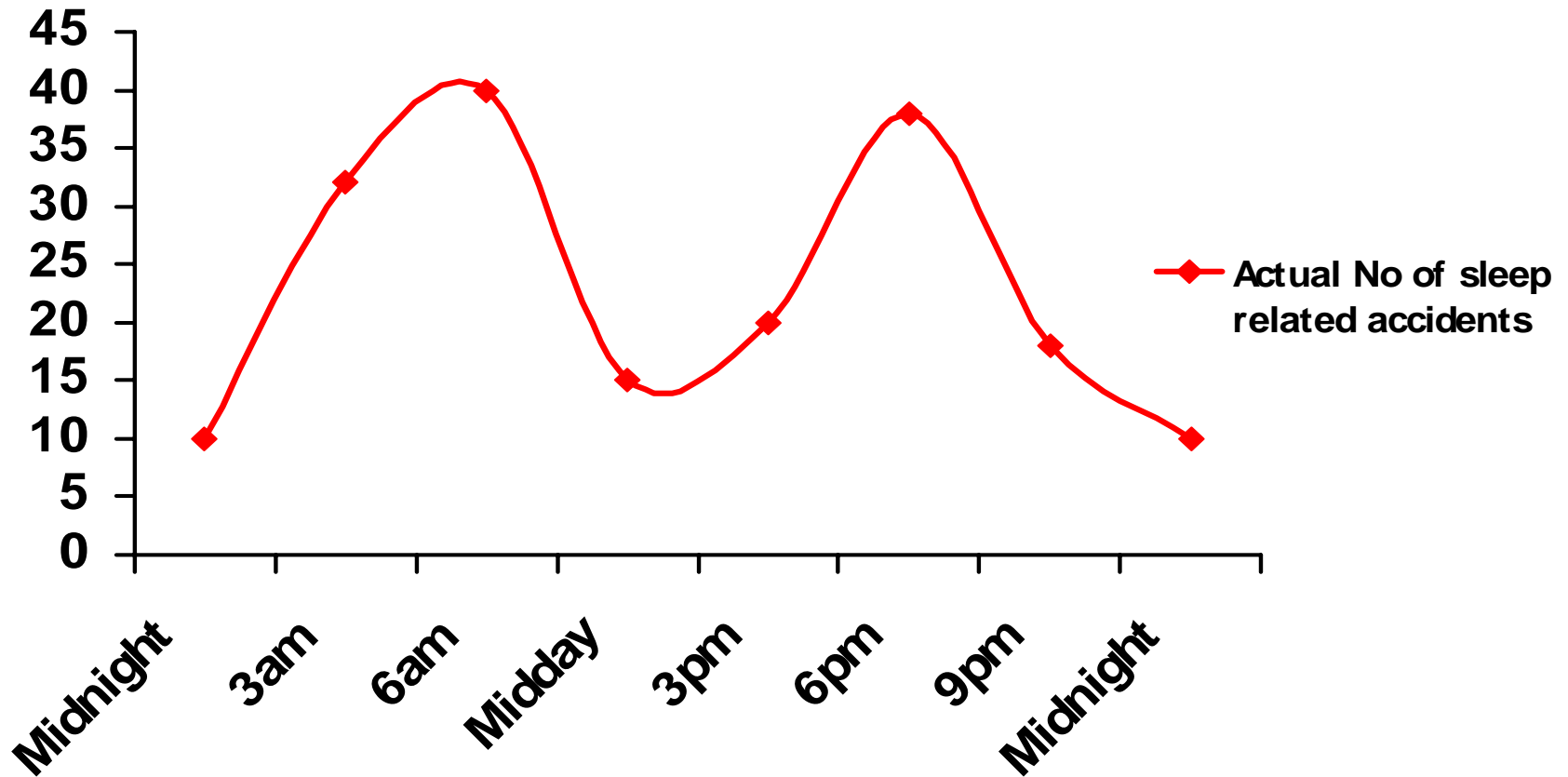


# Time of Day

- The human body has a natural biological rhythm over a 24 hour period
- Most vulnerable to sleepiness during 2-6am & 2-4pm
- These troughs worsened by poor sleep previously
- Driving accidents peak at these times

# Time of Day

Source: Devon & Cornwall Police 1995



# Who is at risk?

- Night workers
- Shift workers driving home after night shift
- Lorry drivers
- Company car drivers (unregulated hours)
- Men – aged 18-24 and 50+

# Legal Implications

- Falling asleep at the wheel is a criminal offence
- Company directors and transport managers can be held legally responsible and could face prosecution if they encourage or ignore overworking ..... *Cause or permit*
- The Produce Connection - £30,000 for failing to properly monitor the hours worked by its employees

# What the employer can do

- Develop a managing occupational road risk strategy as part of their existing safety management system
- Carry out assessments of the risks, looking at risk enhancing factors around:  
Driver – Vehicle - Journey
- Schedule driving shifts to allow sufficient breaks and days off



# What the employer can do

- Raise awareness & give guidance to employees – encourage openness
- Ensure drivers are aware of the effect of some medicines, encourage them to tell their GP's that they drive for a living
- Encourage drivers to prepare by ensuring they have adequate sleep beforehand and to tell their line manager if they feel they should not be driving



# What the employee can do

- Take regular breaks – every 2 hours.
- Never try to tackle tiredness by carrying on driving
- Ensure the family understands the need for shift workers to get adequate sleep
- Tell their manager if they have a problem

# The Highway Code

- 80: FITNESS TO DRIVE

Driving when you are tired greatly increases your accident risk. To minimise this risk:

Make sure you are fit to drive. Do not undertake a long journey (longer than an hour) if you feel tired. Avoid undertaking long journeys between midnight and 6am when natural alertness is at a minimum.

Plan your journey to take sufficient breaks. **A minimum of at least 15 minutes after every two hours of driving is recommended.**

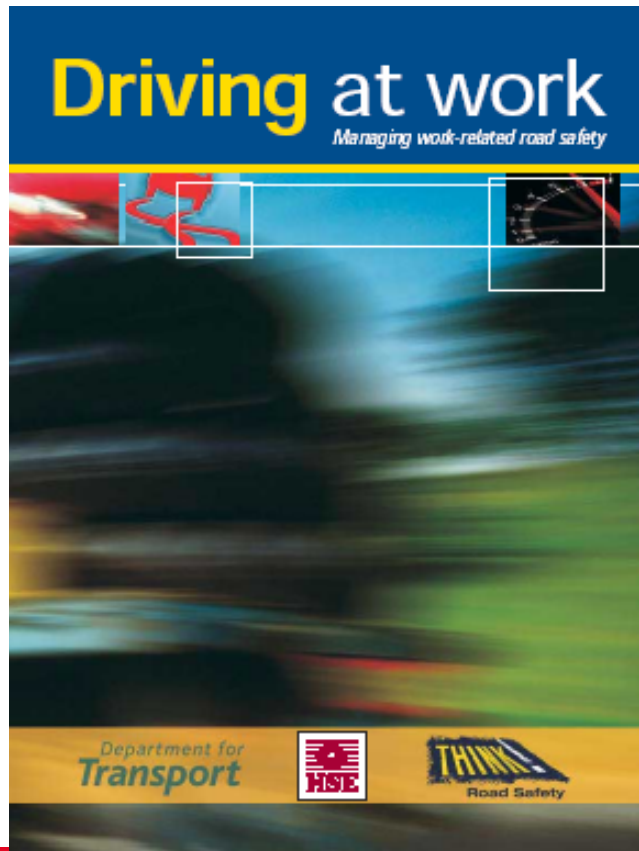
If you feel sleepy, stop in a safe place. Do not stop on the hard shoulder of a motorway.

The most effective ways to counter sleepiness are to take a short nap (up to 15 minutes) or drink, for example, two cups of string coffee. Fresh air, exercise or turning up the radio may help for a short time but are not as effective.



# Further guidance

- INDG 382



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# Royal Mail Logistics

- RTA Statistics May 2002 – June 2003
  - 40 R.T.A.'s involving HGV drivers
  - 2 RML fatalities
  - 15 Injuries (11 RML, 4 third party)
  - £11.5k average repair/recovery cost
- 60% fatigue related

# Royal Mail Logistics

- Poster campaign & Driver briefings using FTA material
- Commissioned Training Video to show:
  - Causes of sleepiness
  - Prevention
  - Action to take
- Backed by briefing material & delivered to driver teams by traffic office managers in a protective environment



# Royal Mail Logistics

- Many drivers had their own remedies:
  - Fixing your hair in the sun roof so that if you nod off you will be jerked awake
  - Standing up in the cab while driving
  - Sucking lemons
  - Shaking your head violently from side to side



# Royal Mail Logistics

- The serious side.....







Royal Mail



Royal Mail



Royal Mail

# Video

- Not actors – real Royal Mail people
- Were sleep deprived
- Used opportunity to mention seatbelt wearing too



# Main Message

The individual is responsible for ensuring they turn up for work in a suitable condition to do the job.

There is no substitute for a good nights sleep



# Result

04/05 – 1 RTA fatality

05/06(to date) – 3 RTA fatalities



# Thank You

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