



'Driving Safely for Work'

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Simon began by explaining that although he is not a health and safety expert, he does know a lot about fleet risk. In working for Vauxhall Motors for 27 years, 10 of which were managing the large Vauxhall fleet, Simon quite rightly believes that he has a good grasp of the risks involved.

Is Driving For Work Dangerous?

Simon reminded us that driving for work is the third most dangerous occupation, next to coal mining and deep sea diving. Simon acknowledged that the number of fatalities has reduced in recent years. The fitting of airbags, the legal requirement to wear seatbelts and so on have no doubt been contributory factors. Simon admitted that despite these safety 'devices', he was not convinced that behaviour has changed. Indeed, it was suggested that all these safety devices made be lulling drivers and passengers into a false sense of security!

Simon drew our attention to the fact that in the recent spate of cyclist fatalities, five out of six of the drivers involved, were driving for work at the time. Simon wonders whether these fatalities will be investigated to the same level as workplace accidents? Simon suggests - probably not.

Driving for Work - Legal Requirements:

The requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Etc. Act 1974 (HASAWA), includes employees driving for work. Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) drivers are well controlled, but there are no restrictions for van drivers.

The Booklet INDG382: 'Driving at Work – Managing Work Related Road Safety', produced by the HSE in conjunction with the Department for Transport and Think! Road Safety (www.hse.gov.uk), is the only guidance available as far as Simon is aware. Why? Road accidents are not reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013, and therefore fall outside the scope of health and safety.

Case Study:

Simon used case studies to illustrate his point. If an employee is killed at work, say driving a vehicle in the yard, this could be a case for corporate manslaughter? Yet a fatality on the road is unlikely to lead to such penalties.

Mark Hoare, BHSEA Committee Member, commented that that an accident occurring on the highway would not be investigated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), because it wouldn't fall within their remit. RIDDOR provides no information on driving accidents, however, Simon mentioned that a recent Labour Force Survey estimated that around 40,000 drivers were off work at any one time, due to a driving incident at work.

George Allcock, BHSEA Committee Member, referred to the importance of the Company Chief Executive's signature at the end of policy documents covering issues such as driving for work. The signature of someone at this level gives the document status and demonstrates a level of commitment. It was also commented that laying out the costs of driving at work accidents can be a useful 'tool' in persuading management to take a certain course of action! Simon wholeheartedly agreed that management commitment to the driving at work policy is crucial and that the Managing Director needs to be 'on board' from the beginning.

Assessment and Analysis:

Simon added that, in his view, attitude and behaviour are almost always key in an accident situation. Further, Simon believes that competence is not normally the key factor. He noted that it is difficult to 'treat' the highway in the same way as the workplace. On-line driver profiling is useful as part of assessing behaviour and attitude. A Member explained how they use driver testing and profiling (telematics). It involves a small 'black box' which records driver/driving information. It was generally agreed that if you record the data, you must do something with it and act upon the findings.

Fleet Safety Committee:

Simon went on to consider the ways to avoid driving in the first place: public transport; teleconferencing and so on. Simon recommends the establishment of a Fleet Safety Committee, which should meet at least once every 3 months, and which should monitor what's happening with the fleet and take timely action.

Sue Sharp, a guest at the meeting today, mentioned the Driver and Vehicle Licencing Association (DVLA), the licencing system and the potential for using this Agency as the monitoring body. It was commented that you don't often hear about a company which sacks someone with a poor driving history!

A comment was made about the sign often to be seen on the back of vehicles and which invites other drivers to make report on the good/bad driving of the driver. Again, Simon commented that it is really important that the company takes action and is seen to be taking action. Otherwise – why bother?

Members' Questions

There was a general question about the availability of a British standard or even a draft British Standard on road risk? Simon said that a British Standard covering driving at work is about 12 months away.

Mark Hoare said that at the University of Birmingham, there are a number of employees who drive occasionally. Simon said that these drivers are commonly called 'grey fleet people'. Simon added that although they may only drive occasionally, the grey fleet driver should be subject to the same controls as other fleet drivers.

Anyone wishing to pursue AA Drivetech's Driver Risk Management services should contact Simon Monk directly on the link below. The link also provides access to their full portfolio of services:

http://www.aadrivetech.com/product_portfolio/