

# Fleet Training

## Fleet Managers Need to Wake Up !

Alarming figures showing that between 800 and 1,000 deaths on Britain's roads each year are in some way work-related have been confirmed and are now widely accepted.

Those fleet managers who did not take that initial wake up call seriously, hoping the issue would go away, were given another jolt last year with the publication of guidance from the Health and Safety Executive and the Department for Transport. That made it clear that employers had duties under health and safety law to manage the risks faced and created for others by employees when on the road.

Companies need to consider if they have a management structure in place to deal with occupational road risk in the same way that they deal with mainstream health and safety issues. Basics such as checking employees' driving licences and even that their eyesight is good enough for the road may well have been overlooked.

People are important. The fleet manager, health and safety adviser, insurers and the director with responsibility for health and safety all need to be involved. But don't forget to consult the drivers and their safety representatives, as they are the ones with the real experience on the road and can give invaluable feedback.

Make sure line managers are aware of the issues so that they can feed information, such as staff needing training, into the system.

Risk assessments should be carried out for individual drivers. It is not just a question of how good they are as a driver: you must also consider how dangerous their job is. For instance, anyone driving more than 30,000 miles a year for work would be considered High risk.

Assessments can be done out on the road with an assessor. Looking at accident records, or even the state of the car, can provide invaluable clues. Once these things have been considered the manager can decide if drivers would benefit from specialist training.

Good drivers need to be encouraged. Recognition with awards or financial incentives for those who drive well throughout the year are likely to convince them to maintain high standards on the road.

There is no need to overcomplicate the process to reap substantial rewards from sound policies for managing occupational road risk. The bill for a crash doesn't end when the vehicle is repaired. It can result in costly court actions, damage to reputation, soaring insurance premiums and lost productivity and orders when injured staff are off work. Then, there's the money that has to be spent on recruiting and training replacements. Also, knowing that their managers care about their safety and take their moral duty to protect their own and other road users seriously is likely to boost staff morale.

Well-thought-out policies to prevent work-related road accidents will provide proof of a responsible employer. It is important to provide suitable vehicles for the job, plan safe routes and set realistic schedules so that drivers do not have to speed, or be at the wheel when tired. In the process, you'll be staying on the right side of the law and have nothing to fear from legal action.

Do your employees use a company vehicle, for example, a car, van or mini-bus?

If your company has one or more people who drive a vehicle in relation to their work, then you can benefit from fleet driver assessment.

Fleet driver training can effectively reduce accidents and costs. Many insurance companies offer a reduction in premiums for those companies whose drivers are regularly assessed by a DSA Registered Fleet Trainer.

The common perception of fleet drivers be it a 'white van man' or a sales executive, is that they are aggressive and often rude while on the road. Aggressive driving is dangerous driving. These people represent your company. Would you want your telephones answered in this manner ?

Your drivers are an integral part of your business; you have the responsibility to help keep them safe while driving for you. Fleet driver training not only helps improve driving skills, it may also help drivers perform more efficiently therefore reducing costs and stress. It highlights the importance of vehicle safety; again, this will help reduce costs as well as possible accident prevention.

Fleet training can be provided to drivers in any vehicle.

**FLEET TRAINING SERVICES >>**

For further details call Paul Murphy on 0113 232 0440 or 07812 0630663, or email us using the contact form.

