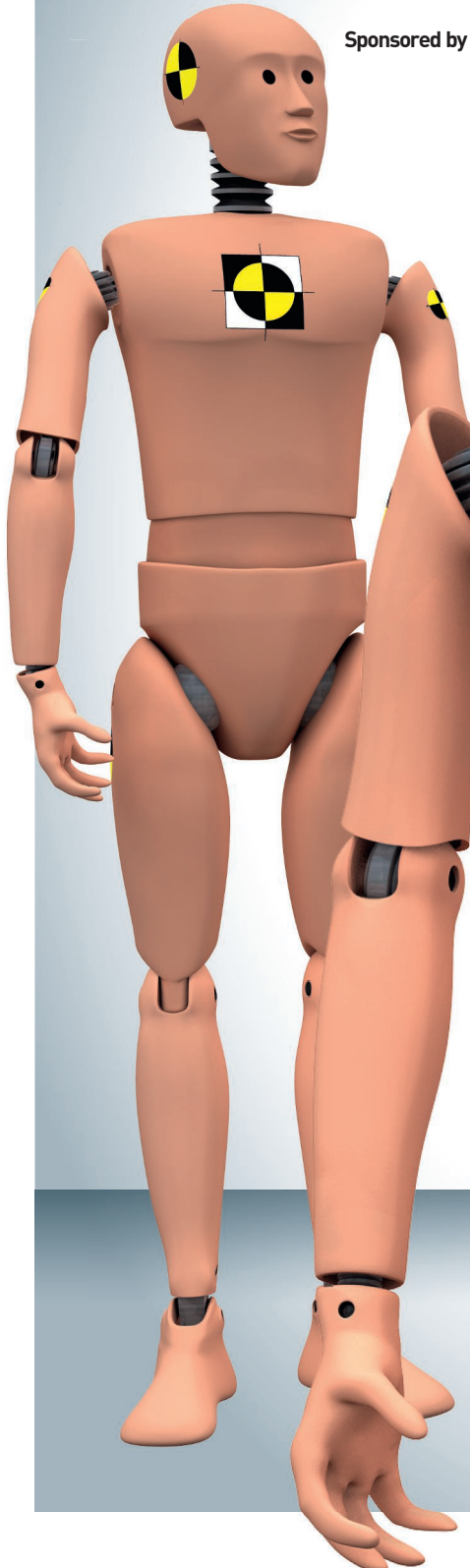


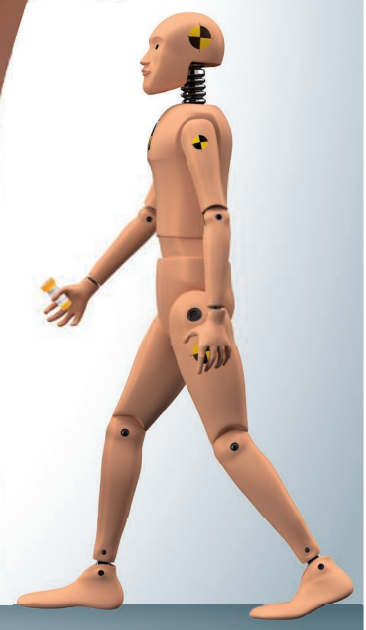
Fleet & Safety

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How health issues can affect drivers' accident rates

At-work drivers are estimated to be involved in more than 400 road deaths a year, with health issues a contributory factor in many collisions. *Andrew Ryan* reports

NEED TO KNOW

- Dehydration can affect drivers in the same way as alcohol
- Fatigue may be responsible for 20% of accidents
- Fleets should advise drivers on ways to avoid back pain

Driving is the most dangerous work activity that most people undertake. Department for Transport research indicates that about 440 people are killed and almost 6,000 seriously injured every year in crashes involving someone driving for work.

A person's fitness to drive can be affected by a medical condition, by temporary illness and by the environment in which they work, drive and live.

Health impairments such as sleep disturbance can lead to unsafe road behaviour, and if not properly managed may lead to a deterioration in health or aggravate a pre-existing condition such as back pain.

DEHYDRATION

What is it and what are the dangers?

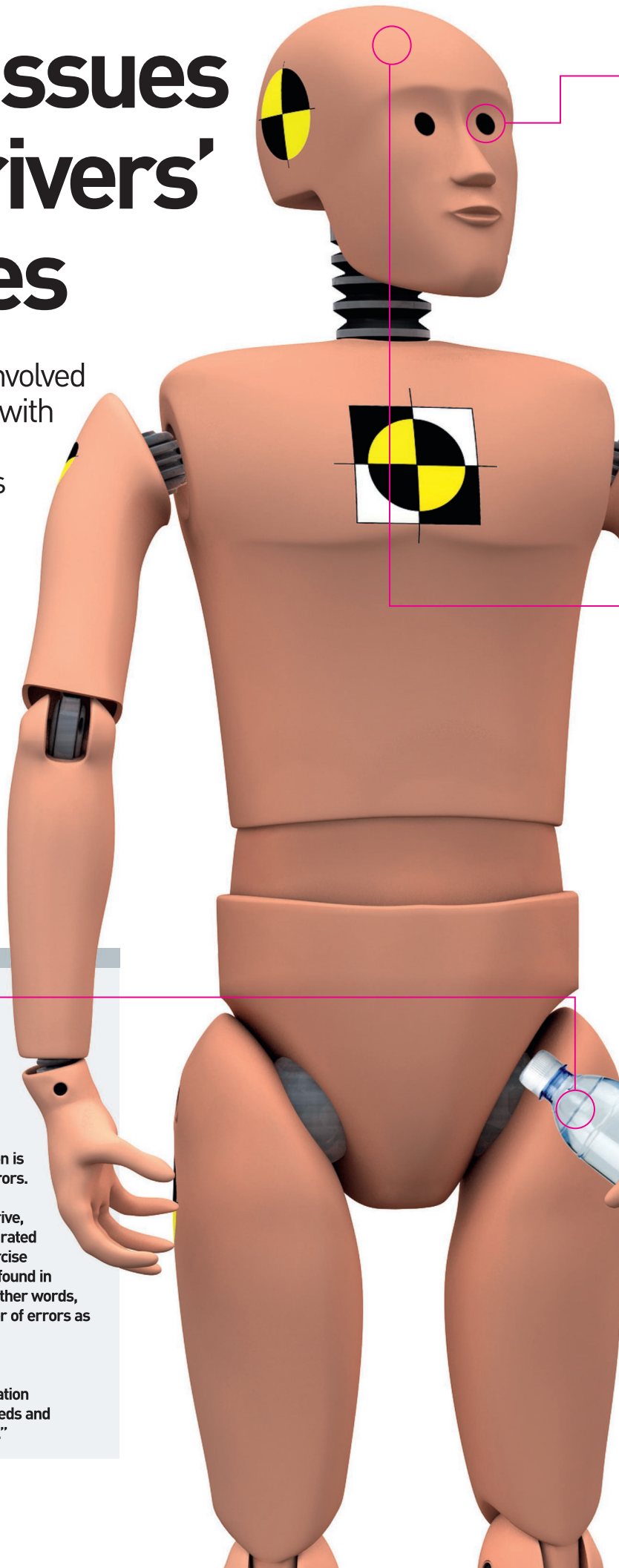
The human body loses and needs to replace two to three litres of water a day. However, as every individual's body responds differently and weather conditions and activity levels also influence dehydration rates, experts say there is no set amount of water that drivers should consume on a daily basis to remain hydrated.

A Loughborough University study shows that even mild dehydration is equivalent to being over the drink-driving limit in terms of driver errors.

"The results suggested mild hypohydration produced a significant increase in minor driving errors during a prolonged, monotonous drive, compared to that observed while performing the same task in a hydrated condition," says Ron Maughan, emeritus professor of sport and exercise nutrition. "The levels of driver errors we found are similar to those found in people with a blood alcohol content at the UK legal driving limit. In other words, drivers who are not properly hydrated could make the same number of errors as people over the drink-drive limit.

What can a fleet operator do?

"Driver education programmes should encourage appropriate hydration practices," says Maughan. "Drinking should be sufficient to meet needs and deliberate restriction because of access to toilets should be avoided."



EYESIGHT

What are the dangers?

Drivers with impaired vision are much more likely to be involved in a road crash than those with good eyesight and are estimated to cause 2,900 casualties a year, research by RSA Insurance Group has found.

The minimum legal requirement is for a driver to be able to read (with glasses or contact lenses if necessary) a car registration plate made after September 1, 2001, from 20 metres.

But after that, drivers do not have to take another eye test for the rest of their lives.

However, road safety charity Brake says eyesight can deteriorate quickly, with the driver often unaware this is happening.

What can a fleet operator do?

Many fleets have made eyesight tests part of their driver policy, and some carry out spot checks to see if a driver can read the number plate of a parked car from the legal distance.

Road safety charity Brake is calling for the Government to introduce compulsory tests for drivers, but until this happens it recommends that drivers undergo regular (at least two-yearly), eyesight tests. Companies may choose to have a corporate eyecare arrangement through an optician or require drivers to provide proof of an independent eye test.

TIREDNESS

What are the dangers?

Driving requires many simultaneous skills, mainly hand-eye co-ordination with accurate speed and direction calculations. This requires full concentration, while evidence suggests that sleepiness and fatigue is responsible for around 20% of road accidents.

Many of these sleep-related accidents are due to lifestyle issues, such as driving without adequate sleep, early-morning starts or late-night socialising, and often happen at times when levels of concentration are naturally low, such as in the afternoon and at night.

However, some are due to medical conditions, such as sleep apnoea (see panel, below), Parkinson's disease or multiple sclerosis.

What can a fleet operator do?

Make drivers aware of the risks and advise them to stop driving if they feel tired. Recommend they have a nap until feeling sufficiently refreshed to be safe again. If the sleepiness is not explicable by lifestyle issues, the driver should be advised to seek medical advice.

The Highway Code recommends drivers take a 15-minute break at least every two hours.

SLEEP APNOEA

What is it?

Obstructive sleep apnoea syndrome (OSAS) is a medical condition which causes repeated episodes of complete or partial blockage of the upper airway during sleep, causing excessive tiredness.

Those who suffer from it are likely to have poor hazard awareness and reduced reaction times. It is the most common sleep-related medical disorder and occurs most commonly, but not exclusively, in overweight individuals.

OSAS sufferers rarely wake from sleep feeling fully refreshed and tend to fall asleep easily when relaxing.

What can a fleet operator do?

If a driver has been diagnosed with OSAS they must make the company aware and follow medical advice.



SPONSOR'S COMMENT

Selwyn Cooper, head of business sales, Volvo Car UK



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“Drivers who are not properly hydrated make the same errors as people over the drink-drive limit”

Ron Maughan, Loughborough University

2,900

Number of road casualties estimated to have been caused by poor eyesight

8

Number of prescription drugs on which the Government has imposed driving restrictions



DRINK/DRUG-DRIVING

What are the dangers?

Drink and drug-driving is one of the biggest killers on the roads. Alcohol, even in very small quantities, significantly increases the risk of accidents while illegal drugs and some medicines also impair driving, for example by slowing reaction times, affecting co-ordination or encouraging risky behaviour.

In March this year, it became illegal to drive if you are either unfit to do so because you're on legal or illegal drugs, or you have certain levels of illegal drugs in your blood even if

they haven't affected your driving.

The drug-driving laws saw the Government impose restrictions on 16 drugs, eight of which are available on prescription (clonazepam, diazepam, flunitrazepam, lorazepam, methadone, morphine or similar derivative drugs, oxazepam and temazepam).

What can a fleet operator do?

Many organisations already screen for alcohol and drug use among employees, and road safety charity Brake says it is crucial drivers are educated on the risks of alcohol and drug use.

BACK PAIN

What are the dangers?

Drivers who fail to adjust their vehicle seat and steering wheel to suit their individual needs are putting their health at risk, warn physiotherapists.

The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CPS) says poor driving posture can lead to musculoskeletal problems such as back and neck pain.

Left untreated, minor discomfort can lead to a more serious problem that causes an absence from work.

“Both people and cars come in different shapes and sizes, and no one size fits all,” says chartered physiotherapist Joshua Catlett, of the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Occupational Health and Ergonomics.

“Most people understand the importance of ensuring that their office workstation is individually suited to them but the car is often overlooked.

“It is so important to be aware of your posture when driving. Persistent poor sitting posture can contribute to musculoskeletal pain and discomfort.”

What can a fleet operator do?

Staff should be given advice or training on how to ensure their driving position is correct and head restraints properly used.

CPS has produced a *Drive Free of Pain* guide which includes advice for drivers on ensuring they have the correct car set-up and ways to improve posture, plus some simple stretches for when drivers take a break from the wheel.

Recommendations include the driver raising their seat as high as possible for a maximum view of the road, moving the seat forward so the pedal can be depressed fully and being close enough to the steering wheel so that their elbows are bent at a 30 to 40-degree angle.

■ The report can be downloaded from csp.org.uk/publicationsdrive-clear-pain



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'Real-life experience videos can change the mindset of even the most hardened driver'

Graham Telfer, Gateshead Council

Winners at the 2015 Brake Fleet Safety Awards share the secrets behind their successful road risk policies. *Andrew Ryan* reports

Improving at-work driver safety is becoming an increasing focus for fleet managers, with many introducing innovative measures to reduce risk.

Many outstanding operators were recognised by road safety charity Brake for their contribution to improving the safety of at-work drivers at the organisation's annual Fleet Safety Awards.

Among the winners were Graham Telfer, fleet manager of Gateshead Council, who won the company driver safety award (small fleet) and eco fleet award, and Astrid van der Burgt, national road risk manager at Kuehne + Nagel UK, named best newcomer to road risk management.

■ For the full list of Brake award winners, visit: fleetnews.co.uk/brakeawards2015

How important is driver safety to your organisation?

Graham Telfer: Over the past seven or eight years our accident rates have fallen by more than 40% and safety is a priority because we have a duty of care throughout the organisation for both drivers and the public. We consider our drivers to be ambassadors. They are the frontline staff who have logos on the sides of their vehicles and the public is encouraged to let us know what they think about our driving. It is in both the public interest and our own that we fully address our road risk policy.

Astrid van der Burgt: Safety is always at the top of the agenda at Kuehne + Nagel, not just from a moral perspective, but it also makes us legally compliant and it makes financial sense. That's why the company wanted somebody on board who was dedicated to road risk, and that's when I was hired. To have a dedicated road risk manager shows that Kuehne + Nagel is committed to safety.

How do you approach driver safety?

Graham Telfer: We have a comprehensive road risk policy and we also have regular training sessions and risk assessments for all our drivers. We have four advanced driving instructors who take each driver out prior to them starting work with us and following a speeding or seatbelt incident or any collision, whether it's minor or major. If they have a collision, the driver is reassessed and they have further additional training if needed. Ultimately, if it's required, they are taken off driving duties. Each driver also has a small driver's handbook that addresses areas such as vehicle load,



driving styles and daily walk-round checks. It isn't a weighty document because if you give someone a 200-page document it tends to gather dust, so its brevity ensures drivers will read it.

Astrid van der Burgt: Kuehne + Nagel invests in both skill and knowledge-based driver training. However, accident statistics showed there was room for improvement, so I added the behavioural side into the driver training package. After joining in 2011, I decided to use the BS OHSAS 18001 occupational health and safety management standard to build our road risk management system. BS OHSAS 18001 gives you a safety structure and work plan covering areas such as policy, risk assessments and responsibilities. Once you've implemented your plan, you do an audit and look where you can make improvements. We introduced initiatives such as the DVLA electronic driver licence checking system and enhanced our driving assessments to include driver metrics so that colleagues get feedback on their driving behaviour. This has led to a big improvement in safety, with a significant reduction in the number of accidents. We've also seen a reduction in accident costs despite our fleet size increasing.

How do you use technology to increase safety?

Graham Telfer: Public sector organisations have faced huge cutbacks in the past few years, so you have to be more astute when selecting what telematics system best suits your operation rather than just choosing one product for all vehicles. Also, you can have a huge amount of data overload from telematics and we simply don't have the staff to monitor

"We had a road rage incident where we were able to prove to the police that it was not our driver's fault because it was recorded. The cameras can protect our drivers"

Astrid van der Burgt, Kuehne + Nagel UK



a vast amount of data. Our heavy commercial vehicles and gritters are the largest vehicles that attend residential areas every day, so we installed route optimisation systems for those vehicles so we know the best route to take in the minimum amount of time. Lightfoot [telematics system] is more relevant to smaller vehicles for which we want to know more about driver behaviour, such as excessive idling and erratic driving. This sends us data as a league table in tabular format, and there isn't anyone sitting there going through reams of data. On top of that, we track lone workers – for instance, care workers who are called out to vulnerable people. Those employees may be going out at 3am so they are tracked so we know where they're at all times and how long they've been at their home visit.

Astrid van der Burgt: Telematics was in place for fuel usage when I started, but it became apparent that if you brake and accelerate less harshly then, yes, you use less fuel but it also means you are driving more safely. We also use in-cab cameras. Once we explained to drivers the reasons why we went for the system, they were fully on board. They felt it was a protection measure against crash-for-cash incidents, but also against problems at the delivery point. The system we use gives the driver an opportunity to record a situation that he feels could be a problem in the future. We had a road rage incident where we were able to prove to the police that it was not our driver's fault because it was recorded. That really showed how these cameras can protect our drivers.

Are there any other measures which prove effective in improving safety?

Graham Telfer: It doesn't matter what walk of life you're

1 Name Graham Telfer
Role Fleet manager
Organisation Gateshead Council
Fleet size 480 cars, LCVs and HCVs
Brake awards won Company driver safety award (small fleet), eco fleet award

2 Name Astrid van der Burgt
Role National road risk manager
Organisation Kuehne + Nagel
Fleet size 2,400 (1,500 commercial vehicles, 900 cars)
Brake award won Best newcomer to road risk management

from, after 20 minutes sitting in a classroom listening you just switch off. When we do driver assessments or toolbox talks we use videos produced by Brake in which someone has unfortunately experienced a road accident, whether it is a family member or themselves. That changes the mindset of even the most hardened driver. Showing someone who has real-life experience of losing someone is inescapable that it is a situation someone could find themselves in through their actions. The videos from Brake, such as Too Young to Die, work extremely well.

Astrid van der Burgt: We run a children's drawing competition based on a safety theme every year. The children of all our drivers and colleagues are invited to take part and the best 12 are converted into road safety posters. The posters are displayed at our sites to remind all drivers about road safety. It also encourages colleagues to have a conversation with their children about road safety. The other initiative we've introduced is a driver of the year competition. We are looking for colleagues that have gone above and beyond the norm to demonstrate and promote road safety. Winning the driver of the year title has become really prestigious, and now all our drivers want to be nominated for it.



For more on Gateshead Council's safety measures, visit: fleetnews.co.uk/gateshead

"We consider our drivers to be ambassadors"

Graham Telfer, Gateshead Council



'Information coming from us carries more weight'

Education is at the heart of how Cheshire Fire Service aims to reduce road casualties, says assistant road safety officer Peter Shields. *Andrew Ryan* reports

NEED TO KNOW

- Fleets increasingly asking CFRS to deliver road safety presentations to their driving staff
- Road safety events held at supermarkets, schools, etc

RIGHT: Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service goes into workplaces such as Morrisons to educate staff about road safety



Rising numbers of casualties have made road safety a high strategic priority for the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA).

Official figures showed there were 1,775 reported road deaths in Britain in 2014, an increase of 4% compared with 2013. The number of those killed or seriously injured increased by 5% to 24,582.

These figures have contributed to CFOA increasing its efforts to reduce road collisions, including holding a safety week in June each year.

One of the leading emergency services for road safety is Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS).

It won Brake's road safety in the community award in 2014 and has also received the Tyresafe emergency services award for the past two years.

Peter Shields, assistant road safety officer, says an increasing number of fleets are asking it to deliver presentations for the benefit of their staff.

"Companies have a duty of care to their employees to provide them with health and safety information and, while fleet managers can provide this, information coming from the fire service or police will perhaps carry more weight," he says. "There's also an element of trust with us because if we go and deliver something it will be right: we're not going to go and say something when in actual fact it's something different."

Although Shields says an increasing number of companies are contacting CFRS, most of its community work takes place elsewhere.

"We hold road safety events in all sorts of different places – workplaces, supermarkets, schools and fire stations.

"At these events, we wash the vehicle but also test tyre pressures, tread depth, wiper blades and top up the wind-screen washer fluid if necessary," he says.

During Brake Safety Week, which runs from November 23-29, CFRS will hold more than 30 events.

"The fire crews have to identify something in their area which they feel they have to address," says Shields.

"In some areas it may be that cycling is an issue, in some areas it may be children crossing the road and in other areas it may be fleet vehicles having road traffic collisions.

"We don't restrict our activity to just this week, though – it's year-round for us: it's all about getting the safety message across to as many people as possible.

"If you give people a leaflet, it's not likely to change the way they drive or behave, but it's that drip, drip, drip effect – the more information they get, the more likely it is that they will change.

"Sustained, long-term education changes people's views."

ROAD SAFETY INITIATIVES

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service's (CFRS) road safety initiatives include: **Motorway engagement days (MEDs)** Cheshire has 212 miles of motorways and MEDs highlight issues such as vehicle maintenance, close driving, tyres and tiredness. **Chief Fire Officers Association National Safety Week** Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service targeted road safety messages to road users. **Drive Survive** This driver education programme is aimed at young adults aged 16 to 25. More than 20,000 people

have taken part since its launch in 2000. **Chief Fire Officers Association Tyresafe winter driving event** CFRS leads this campaign by organising winter driving events and awareness days. **School presentations** CFRS delivers presentations to 130 primary schools and 21 secondary schools. **FireBike** CFRS uses its FireBike to engage with motorcyclists and promote enhanced rider training to reduce the number of motorcyclists killed or seriously injured. It introduced its Biker Down course this year.



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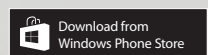
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Combined technology and best practices to encourage safer driving, should be standard for any fleet operator whether looking after company vehicles or grey fleet. Volvo Car UK have gone one step further to support the best practices beyond the car, through a programme called Co-Pilot designed to provide fleet operators with one go-to place for information and support from a number of partners.

Volvo's leadership of innovation in safety has been unchallenged for generations. Increasingly as companies recognise the need to manage costs, risk and compliance, the economic and moral value of Volvo Cars pioneering approach is becoming the key to improvement.



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Reporting near-misses could be a big safety hit

Recording all incidents – whether a collision took place or not – provides a strong base for a comprehensive risk management programme, finds *Andrew Ryan*

NEED TO KNOW

- Most fleets do not record near-miss incidents
- Reporting helps identify areas for improvement
- Use a simple database to record dangerous occurrences

It may sound like more of a puzzle for an episode of *Doctor Who* than for a fleet operator, but how can recording an event which didn't happen prevent it from occurring in the future?

Experts say the answer is simple: reporting near-misses identifies problem areas where safety processes need to improve, thereby aiding prevention.

"Some models suggest that for every accident there are approximately 90 near-misses," say Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance notes.

"If there is a good reporting system in place, the hazard could be dealt with before someone is injured."

The HSE defines a near-miss as "an unplanned event which does not cause injury or damage, but could have done so", such as items falling dangerously near to a member of staff, incidents involving vehicles and electrical short-circuits.

However, this may not be how all fleets regard a near-miss incident, says Will Murray, research director of Interactive Driving Systems.

"A near-miss could be something that nearly happened where there was the potential for there to have been damage, but it could also be minor damage such as a lost door mirror," he says.

"Whether I class it as a near-miss is a different issue, but a lot of fleets say they don't bother counting a lost wing mirror in their incident reports as it just comes from the maintenance or the wear and tear budget, even though the

mirror itself is in most cases only a few centimetres from somebody's head.

"The more we can do in terms of improving reporting and making sure near-misses go through as events instead of just maintenance, the better in terms of being able to prevent the incidents in the first place.

"Also, reporting near-misses or minor incidents is really useful for being able to predict the more major things that could happen.

"If we assume that for every 600 near-hits there are 30 property damage incidents, 10 minor injuries and one major injury, the potential for effective remedial action and training is obvious," he adds.

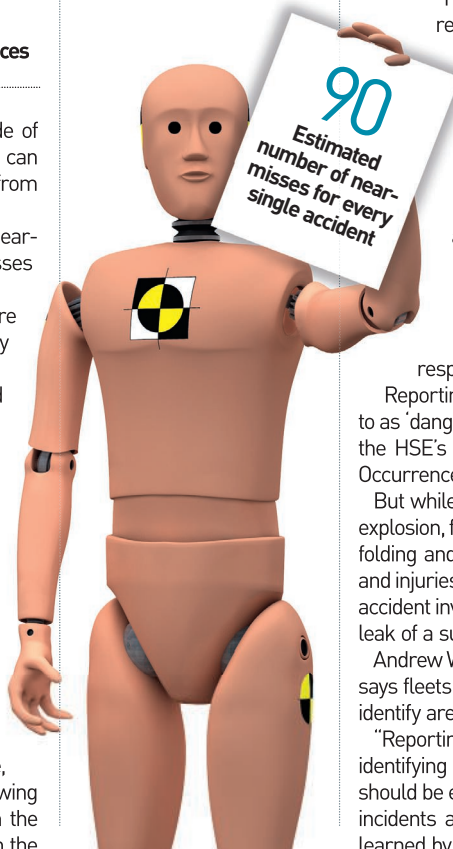
A *Fleet News* online poll found that just 16% of respondents record near-misses.

Reporting certain workplace incidents, which are referred to as 'dangerous occurrences', is a legal requirement under the HSE's Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).

But while RIDDOR covers high-risk incidents involving an explosion, fire, overhead electric cables, the collapse of scaffolding and pipelines, it does not currently apply to deaths and injuries stemming from road traffic collisions unless the accident involves the loading or unloading of a vehicle, or the leak of a substance being carried by a vehicle.

Andrew Wetters, HSE policy adviser, workplace transport, says fleets should adopt this type of near-miss reporting to identify areas of potential risk.

"Reporting near-miss incidents is a very important way of identifying problem areas," he says. "Fleets should be encouraging employees to report all incidents and near-misses. So much can be learned by keeping a near-miss register."





Murray says that, although this may initially be against the instincts of an employee or fleet operator as the number of recorded incidents will initially rise, in the long-term it will have many benefits.

"It isn't always easy, but the key thing with reporting is to get people to report honestly and the more you report the better," he says.

"Quite often a good fleet risk management programme will initially increase the number of incidents reported because you are counting events which you wouldn't have done normally.

"However, if you don't count them and they get hived off as maintenance issues then it's really hard to get an actual picture of what's going on and put processes in place to reduce incidents.

"For example, if you find there are a lot of slow-moving vehicle incidents, you can introduce more low-speed manoeuvring into any training programme.

"If you have a lot of hit-while-parked collisions, you can look at improving parking skills or the layout of spaces in the car park: having the data on different incident types means you can do more about reducing them."

He adds: "Usually, any kind of intervention will affect other incident types as well, so focusing on a specific issue will also have a positive effect across the fleet."

Wetters insists that reporting near-misses shouldn't "be a black point on somebody's record".

RECORD EVERY INCIDENT

The HSE says an anonymous reporting system can work to avoid staff fears or embarrassment, although it adds: "It is important to create a culture which encourages reporting of these accidents." Eurovia classes a near-miss as an event which hasn't caused any injury or damage but had the potential to do so. Every time a near-miss is reported, Eurovia UK donates £1 to charity (*Fleet News*, October 29).

Gateshead Council has a strict policy where every incident is recorded. "If you allow a minor incident to go unacknowledged, that has a knock-on effect to other incidents," says fleet manager Graham Telfer. "Every incident is sent to the driver's supervisor who then interviews the driver and determines what action should be taken.

"If, for example, a door mirror has been damaged by a third party there is no intervention, but if a driver has either caused some third-party damage or it has struck a vehicle or property then we need to investigate that.

"I don't want to be in a position where, after two weeks, we get a third-party claim in and the public would then end up telling us about an incident we have caused."

Gateshead Council also operates a 'non-compliance' card system across the whole operation which includes infringements such as not wearing hi-vis clothing, minor vehicle issues or site safety.

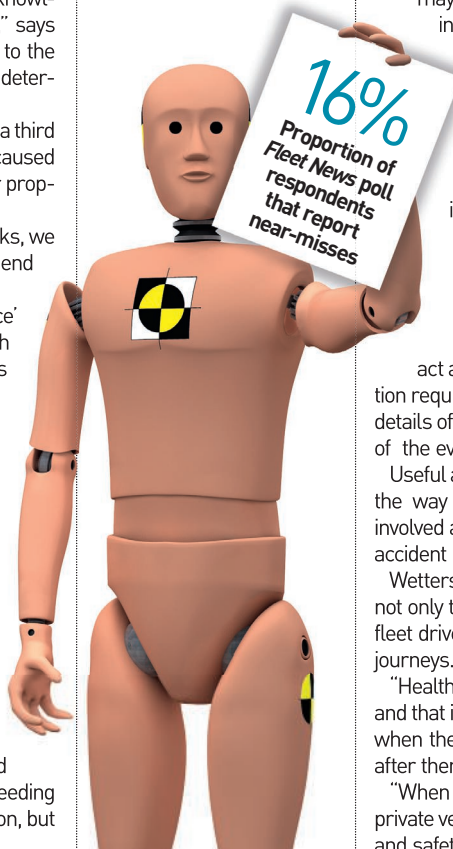
After two non-compliance incidents the disciplinary system is invoked.

A range of vehicles on Gateshead Council's fleet are fitted with Lightfoot telematics which monitors driver behaviour through a traffic light system.

Green indicates good driving behaviour, through to unacceptable driving in red, with Telfer sent regular reports in a tabular format.

A score is typically generated based on real-time analysis taken from gear changes, revving, speed and braking. "A colour is a colour," says Telfer. "If it's green I'm not interested, if it's red or amber it gets flagged up and we'll look at those in more detail."

Murray says data from telematics reporting "could actually be classed as a form of near-miss event as speeding flagged up by telematics may not have caused a collision, but has the potential to".



He adds: "Similarly, a speeding event identified in licence check data may not have caused a collision, but it had the potential to; a CU80 mobile phone conviction on a licence may not actually have caused a collision, but it certainly increased the risk.

"We've seen examples of where people have had quite a few CU80s among their drivers in the previous year or two and have put in place a ban on mobile phone use.

"In some cases, the number of mobile phone offences has gone down from 70 or 80 a year to, if not zero, then one or two.

"Training can be important, but it's only one part of improving safety: putting in place a process and engaging people to follow that process can have an impact."

The HSE publishes RIDDOR forms online, which act as a template for recording the near-miss information required: the date, time and place of the event, personal details of those involved and a brief description of the nature of the event.

Useful additional information about an incident can include the way work was organised, the vehicle or machinery involved and the condition of the site or premises where the accident happened.

Wetters says the reporting of near-misses should apply not only to the drivers of company vehicles, but also to grey fleet drivers who are using their own cars for work-related journeys.

"Health and safety legislation applies to all work activities, and that includes driving," he says. "A lot of people think that when their staff get out on the road it's up to them to look after themselves, but that certainly isn't the case.

"When people use their own vehicle for business, the private vehicles used for work purposes do fall under health and safety legislation."



"Fleets should be encouraging employees to report all incidents and near-misses"

Andrew Wetters, HSE

HOW TO ENCOURAGE BETTER INCIDENT REPORTING

- Documented pre- and post-drive vehicle circle checks and end-of-shift driver debriefs.
- A simple in-company/site-based collision database may be the best way to monitor minor, low speed, low impact collisions below the excess.
- Video cameras at sites with frequent movements.
- Interviewing the correct employees in an informal manner with the assurance that discipline will not be applied will make them more likely to report.
- Removing or changing crash reporting bonus schemes to focus on total vehicle costs rather than crashes.
- Implementing a strong wear and tear and maintenance policy to identify all non-scheduled maintenance by crosschecking records against reported crashes, and ensuring that crash codes are allocated before any repairs are undertaken.
- More severe disciplinary action for those 'found out' after the event than 'self reporters'.
- Continued management focus to stress how better reporting can help prevent problems for workmates.
- Use statistics positively. For example, show the ratio of major to minor, which improves with better reporting, or average cost per crash, which goes down.
- Specific report and investigation forms. Make forms easy to complete and show that improvements are being made.
- Regular inspections and risk assessments.
- Use all KPIs (no of risk assessments, property damage and repairs undertaken) as well as injuries.

Source: Interactive Driving Systems

Advertisement feature

Commuting to work – should employers adopt a duty of care to all their staff?

Over recent years, the focus of most UK fleet professionals has been on satisfying their duty of care for employees who 'drive for work'. In most cases, this means people who typically drive company vehicles or hire cars. It also includes 'grey fleet', where staff use their private cars for business purposes.

But what about staff who are simply driving to and from work? Aren't they worth protecting too, through better training?

To answer these questions, AA DriveTech commissioned independent road safety specialists Road Safety Analysis to analyse "the commute" over the last five years using STATS 19 information. The results provide some new and interesting insights.

The first insight, based on the Department for Transport's most recently published British road casualty statistics, is that of the 1,065 drivers killed on our roads in 2014, 71 drivers (7%) were at work, while 120 drivers (11%) were commuting to and from work.

Secondly, the research identified that while most vehicle crashes happen during the evening commute, drivers were more likely to be involved in crashes during the morning commute (20%) compared with the 10% involved in the evening.

Thirdly, there are actually three distinct commuting periods: early morning (4.30am to 7am), morning (7am to 9am) and evening (4pm to 6.30pm), each with different accident characteristics.

Of particular interest was the very early commute where commuters are more likely to crash on bends, rural roads and faster roads.

Finally, it was identified that while car commuters are more likely to crash compared with leisure drivers, due to fatigue, distraction and close following, they also crash more because of the speed choices they make.

This research shows companies need to consider broader corporate social responsibility to all their staff who drive. It's the right thing to do, and could save lives.



AA DriveTech

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or email: tellmemore@AAdrivetech.com
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Treat car commuters as 'at-work' drivers

Approaching commuter safety with the same duty of care as for working hours drivers has benefits for both employers and employees. *Andrew Ryan* reports

NEED TO KNOW

- No legal duty of care obligation for commuting periods
- Driving risk higher during commute than at work
- Benefits of commuter safety include health and wellbeing

Road accidents involving commuters can have a heavy cost for their employers. As well as the potential for staff absenteeism through injury, their organisation could also face costs for accident repairs and potential damage to the brand's image if the vehicle involved is a company car or van.

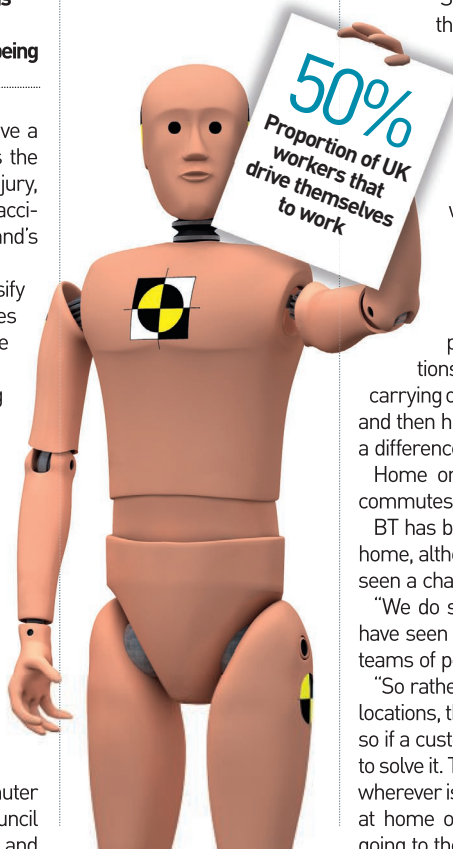
Health and Safety Executive guidelines do not classify driving to work as driving for work, meaning companies do not, legally, have a duty of care to employees for the duration of their commute.

Will Murray, research director of Interactive Driving Systems, is among the UK's safety experts who think they should, even if it is not enforced by law. The RAC Report on Motoring 2015 found that almost two-thirds of motorists use cars as the principal means of getting to work, with 50% driving themselves.

"Commuting is a massive issue, something that organisations should be managing even though they don't directly legally have to," says Murray.

"Looking after staff and protecting key assets is really important. My main message is that companies need to go beyond the minimum legal standard regarding duty of care and think about what's good practice and what they ought to be doing to look after their employees."

Murray says limited data is available covering commuter collisions in the UK, but European Transport Safety Council research covering France, Germany, Italy, Portugal and



Spain suggests that organisations should focus on commuting to protect the safety and wellbeing of workers.

"Statistically, you are more at risk driving to work than you are driving at work," he adds.

"Research has found that more police die when driving to or from work than they do at work or when fighting crimes; and more firefighters die driving to or from work than when fighting fires."

He suggests that organisations should engage with their employees over the issue and let them know they want them to travel on the safest possible commute.

"For example, Transport for London employees have Oyster cards and are encouraged to use public transport," he says. "Many other organisations also encourage the use of public transport, and

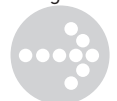
carrying out a travel survey to find out how people commute and then help them get to work in different ways can make a difference."

Home or flexible working can also reduce employees' commutes, he adds.

BT has been a pioneer in encouraging staff to work from home, although group safety manager Dave Wallington has seen a changing trend over the past two-to-three years.

"We do still have an awful lot of home workers, but we have seen many migrate back into centres where we have teams of people," he says.

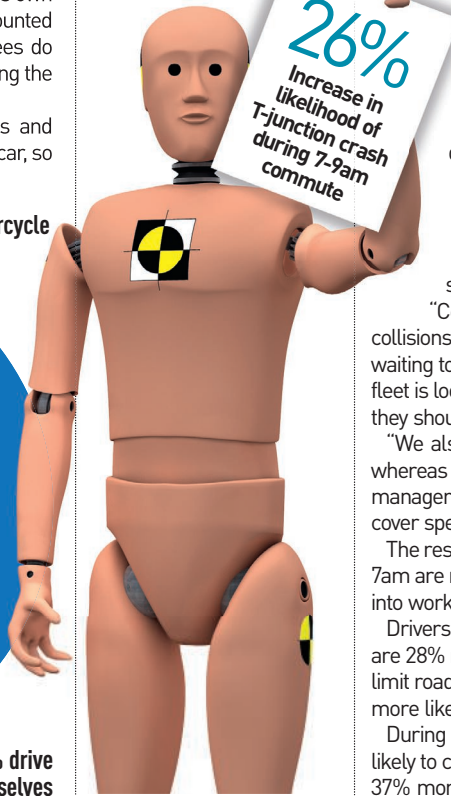
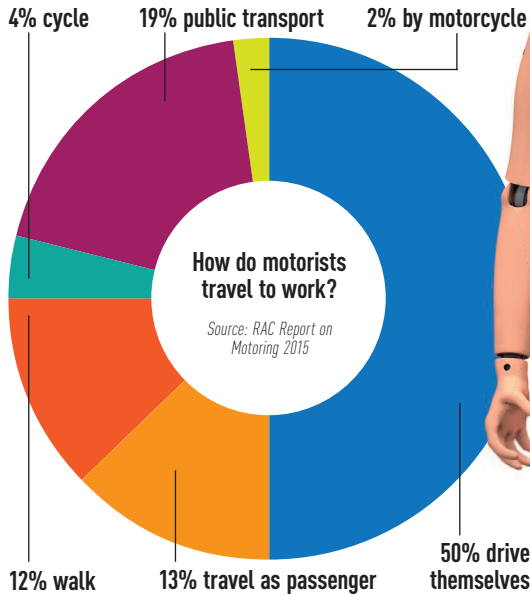
"So rather than having people spread around in disparate locations, they can be in the same place as other employees so if a customer has a problem it is easier to work together to solve it. These 'agile workers' can work from wherever is convenient for them, which may be at home or their local exchange rather than going to the general office."





BT also encourages employees to use public transport where they can, and has also negotiated discounted deals with hotels to reduce commutes, says Wallington. It also has its own dedicated Trainline service which offers tickets at discounted rates and charges the company directly, so employees do not have to purchase tickets themselves before claiming the cost back.

"We also run safe driver programmes for friends and family and still monitor anybody who uses a company car, so



if they have any accident outside of work we take that into consideration when we're doing risk assessments," says Wallington.

David Richards, head of marketing at AA Drivetech, says recent research into commuter incidents can also be used to identify training needs. The AA Drivetech research, based on incidents reported to the police between 2010 and 2014, involving more than 1.3 million drivers, highlighted the three time periods when drivers commute: 4.30am-7am, 7am-9am and 4pm-6.30pm.

"We found that compared to 'normal' drivers, car commuters are over-represented in collisions," says Richards.

"Compared to the general motorist, they have more collisions when they are stopping and starting, and not waiting to move off at junctions such as roundabouts, so if a fleet is looking at driver safety, those are some of the issues they should be looking at.

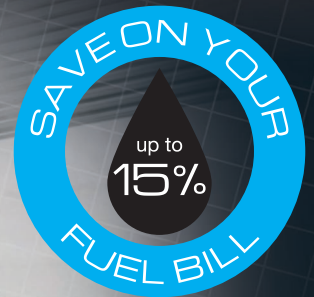
"We also found that speed is an issue with commuters, whereas with people who drive for work, it isn't: if a fleet manager is looking at training, we would recommend they cover speeding."

The research found that drivers commuting from 4.30am-7am are more likely to crash on bends than those travelling into work later in the morning.

Drivers commuting during this period on high-speed roads are 28% more likely to be involved in an accident on 60mph limit roads than drivers commuting later in the day and 19% more likely in 70mph limits.

During the 7am-9am commute, drivers are 26% more likely to crash at T-junctions than their earlier counterparts, 37% more likely to have an accident on unclassified roads

MORE MILES - LESS FUEL





Home-working is one solution used by companies to reduce risk of crashes while commuting to work

and 13% more likely to be involved in an incident on roads with 30mph limits.

During the evening commute, the report says that drivers are 35% more likely to have a crash on an unclassified road than any other group at 19%.

The evening commute also posed the strongest risk to drivers of being involved in a crash on a 30mph limit road than the other two groups.

They are also more likely to have a crash while they are stationary and in stop-start traffic.

"A lot of companies rightly focus on at-work drivers when managing risk, but we believe that businesses should, from a corporate and social responsibility standpoint, take a more holistic view and also consider the risks that drivers face while travelling to and from work," says Richards.

CHANGE COMMUTING TRENDS TO IMPROVE HEALTH



Medical research has shown that encouraging employees to use forms of commuting other than the car can have health benefits.

A study by research fellow Ellen Fling and professor of population health Steven Cummins, both of London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and Amanda Sacker, professor of lifecourse studies at University College London,

has looked at the link between the Body Mass Index (BMI) and commuting.

The BMI formula is used by doctors to work out if someone is overweight or obese and so at risk of problems from high blood pressure to heart disease.

It is calculated by dividing a person's weight in kilograms by their height in metres squared with the aim of giving a measure of an individual's body fat.

A BMI of between 18.5 and 24.9 is normal, less than 18.5 is seen as underweight while 25 to 29.9 is considered overweight. A mark of 30 or above means a person is obese.

The research found: "Men and women who commuted to work by active and public modes of transport had significantly lower BMI and percentage body fat than their counterparts who used private transport."

The study reported that men who commuted via public or active modes, such as cycling and walking, had BMI scores 1.10 and 0.97 points lower, respectively, than those who used private transport.

Women who commuted via public or active modes had BMI scores 0.72 and 0.87 lower, respectively, than those who used private transport.

For the average man in the sample (43 years old, 176cm tall, weight 86kg and BMI 27.8), it would equate to around 3kg (almost half a stone), and for the average woman in the sample (43 years old, 163cm tall, weight 72.8kg, BMI 27.4), it would be approximately 2.5kg (5.5lb).

Results for percentage body fat showed similar benefits.

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