



# Driving for work: driver assessment and training

IOSH response to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Draft for consultation

Consultation  
response  
**30.06.06**

## About IOSH

Founded in 1945, the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) has over 29,000 individual members, is Europe's largest occupational safety and health (OSH) professional body and has strong OSH links worldwide, with members in over 50 other countries. Incorporated by Royal Charter, a registered charity and international NGO, IOSH is the guardian of OSH standards of competence in the UK and provider of professional development and awareness training courses. The Institution regulates and steers the profession, maintaining standards and providing impartial, authoritative, free guidance on OSH issues. Regularly consulted by government departments and other bodies on OSH issues, IOSH is the founding member and secretariat to UK, European and International professional body networks. The Institution also has a research and development fund, which is helping to establish and develop the evidence-base for OSH policy and practice and is closing knowledge gaps in this area.

IOSH has 25 Branches in the UK and worldwide including the Caribbean, Hong Kong and the Republic of Ireland. We have 15 special interest groups covering the following employment sectors and topic areas: communications and media; construction; consultancy; education; environment; fire risk management; food and drink; healthcare; international; offshore; public services; railways; retail and distribution; rural industries; and safety sciences. IOSH members work at both strategic and operational levels across all employment sectors and our vision is:

**“A world of work which is safe, healthy and sustainable”**

IOSH welcomes the opportunity to comment on the RoSPA Driving for work: driver assessment and training consultation document. We agree that selection, assessment, training and supervision are key areas in the management of work-related road risks and that reinforcing standards of driving can protect all road users from the dangers posed by bad driving.

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## **General Comments**

IOSH welcomes this addition to the 'Driving for work' series published by RoSPA and its emphasis, as part of an overall framework for managing health and safety risk, on the need for employers to carry out risk assessments for work-related driving; to assess those who drive as part of their work; and to provide adequate information, training and supervision.

As driver co-operation and commitment will be essential for information gathering and improvements to take place, we believe the guide should highlight that the purpose of driver assessment is to identify the needs of individuals for carrying out specific driving tasks, and then, if significant issues are identified, to introduce control measures to address them.

In our response, we emphasise the need to consider the contribution of individual factors to driving behaviour; to provide managers and drivers with training to help ensure the prevention of work-related stress; and to include the suggested driver assessment and training policy within the organisation's overall occupational road risk policy and to link to policies on alcohol and drugs, lone working, etc. We also recommend the use of case studies in order to help illustrate practical application and promote good practice.

## **Detailed Comments**

We suggest the following improvements to the consultation document for your consideration:

### Assess drivers and their driving tasks (p.3 and 4 of guide)

Recent research examined individual differences associated with driving behaviour and road traffic accidents, including: age, gender, personality, risk perception, previous accident involvement, experience, stress, life events, fatigue and physiology. (Lancaster and Ward, 2002) The implications of the findings for managing occupational road-risk were presented and included pre and post-employment medical screening. The review found that a number of medical conditions were linked to increased crash involvement, including visual impairment, habitual alcohol consumption, musculoskeletal abnormalities, memory conditions, and chronic illness. It recommended that a formal medical screening programme would allow assessment of a driver's fitness for work. As certain medications can increase drowsiness, it emphasised the importance of ensuring drivers are aware of this when purchasing medication or that they report taking prescribed medication. We also suggest that employees returning to work following an accident or illness who are taking medication that could impair driving will need to inform their employers of this. If in doubt about the effects of medications, employers should check with a suitably qualified medical practitioner. Additionally, driver assessment should also consider the needs of pregnant drivers.

### Checks and benchmarking

We suggest employers should conduct regular checks to ensure that their occupational road risk policy is being followed and is effective. Employers might also like to consider benchmarking their driving

standards and overall performance against their organisation's previous year's performance or against national or sector driving statistics, in order to monitor improvements.

#### Type of assessment (p.4 of guide)

Bullet point 1, 'on paper' refers to use of a driver questionnaire. We suggest that in order to gather accurate data on violations, accidents and near misses, it may be necessary to anonymise the questionnaire to maximise the likelihood of full and frank responses. Although this could give an overall picture of a group of drivers or a department, and could be used to target training at the entire group, it would not identify the needs of particular individuals.

#### Provide training (p.5 of guide)

- Lancaster and Ward cite two aspects of training, 'increasing risk awareness' and 'developing skills' and we suggest it may be useful to include these categories in the guide, under the section 'Provide training'.
- Managing stress: the study also found risky driving behaviour has been shown to be related to stress and that stress has been linked to fatigue states when driving. Specifically, it reports a study that found high job stress was one of the 'best predictors of future MVAs' [motor vehicle accidents] and 'that 'accident-involved' drivers had experienced more stressful work environments than 'accident free' drivers. The review includes a study that found financial stress increased the likelihood of involvement in more serious accidents and a finding that major life events have also been associated with traffic violations.

Although the guide (p.1) does refer to the risk posed by 'unsafe schedules and time pressures', we believe this could be usefully expanded within the guide to cover how managers should be trained in managing workloads and journey schedules to minimise stress on their drivers and in supporting drivers through difficult personal periods associated with major life events (e.g. through use of flexible working). We believe it is important that employers avoid setting unrealistic deadlines and targets, which can not only adversely affect driving behaviour, but also contribute to stress-related ill health.

Training for employers, managers and drivers should include the proper planning of journeys to allow employees sufficient travel time, to ensure they do not drive for excessive periods, and to provide for regular rest breaks. They also need to be trained and resourced to implement the organisation's policies on ensuring lone workers safety, alcohol and drugs, etc. (see below). Employees need to be aware of these policies and what is required of them.

#### Company driver assessment and training policy (p.9 of guide)

We believe that the model 'driver assessment and training policy' needs to be part of an overall occupational road risk policy linking to the organisation's policies on alcohol and drugs, lone working, journey planning, vehicle selection and use of hands-free mobile phones.

### Case studies

We suggest employers and employees would benefit from the inclusion of case studies illustrating how different aspects of the guidance have been implemented and how successful these have been. It might also be helpful to include some quotes or tips from those with relevant experiences to share. Examples demonstrating the business benefits to employers of addressing driver assessment and training issues could be particularly useful.

### **Reference**

Lancaster R and Ward R (2002), *The contribution of individual factors to driving behaviour: Implications for managing work-related road safety*, RR 020, HSE Books, Sudbury