

Work Related Road Safety News

MARCH 2011

Hampshire's Road Safety Team are committed to reducing the risk of road traffic collisions within the county and are keen to assist companies, where necessary, in managing work related driving risk.

Putting Health and Safety management procedures in place often means finding a reasonable balance between ensuring the lowest possible risks and not disrupting the work function unnecessarily.

Driver risk assessments

Directors and managers of companies who already have comprehensive driving policies in place often ask the following questions:

'Do I need to risk assess individual drivers?'

Most companies carry out regular licence checks but, unfortunately, a valid driving licence does not guarantee a good driver.

Sitting in the passenger seat will enable anyone to assess how safe they feel but would this be enough to satisfy a court in the event of a serious incident?

There are legal restrictions on offering training or advice to car and van drivers for financial gain unless registered as an Approved Driver Instructor (ADI) by the Driving Standards Agency (DSA).

'We have a large number of drivers and it is not practical to risk assess all of them.'

A company can carry out a profile of individual drivers in order to identify those exposed to the highest risk. Those drivers can then be prioritised for practical assessment or training. Lower risk drivers can be programmed in at a later date, when convenient.

'Which drivers are exposed to the highest risk?'

Younger drivers, under 25 years old, are statistically at considerably higher risk than drivers between 45 and 65.

Drivers who do a high mileage are exposed to fatigue, stress and distraction which leads to increased risk.

Certain makes of vehicle can increase the risk levels as can a lack of road safety knowledge. A young driver who does high annual mileage using a powerful car is clearly exposed to an increased risk. If this driver is then involved in a serious collision the court may well ask questions about how that recognised risk was managed.

The same could be asked if a company has

received complaints about a particular employee's driving or one that has a history of accidents or several points on their licence.

Driver profiling

Hampshire's Road Safety Team offers an objective driver profiling service which will enable employers to prioritise which drivers should have further training.

This involves answering questions on a form about driving history and driving theory and takes about ten minutes to complete. This is then evaluated by the Road Safety Team to give a score corresponding to the risk level.

The charge of £10.00 per profile is refundable for those drivers who subsequently receive practical training from Hampshire's Road Safety Team.

Case studies

State Securities plc is a Hedge End based company who provide asset finance solutions. They have recently arranged Business Drivers Workshops for their drivers in order to raise awareness about the risks involved in driving on business.

During the workshops the drivers completed the profiling exercise which highlighted those exposed to the highest risk. State Securities are now undertaking practical driver training for these drivers.

Laura Roberts, Company Solicitor said 'all of our company car drivers have undertaken the workshop training and provided positive feedback as to the contents of the course. Those going on to the practical training have all expressed how valuable the training was to them.'

Custom Card—EMOS is a Basingstoke based company who specialise in supplying plastic business cards. They have recently asked the Road Safety Team to arrange practical driving assessments, for some of their drivers, with an emphasis on fuel efficient driving.

Tracy Head, Production Manager said 'The assessments went well, all participants enjoyed it and picked up some very useful tips on saving fuel.'

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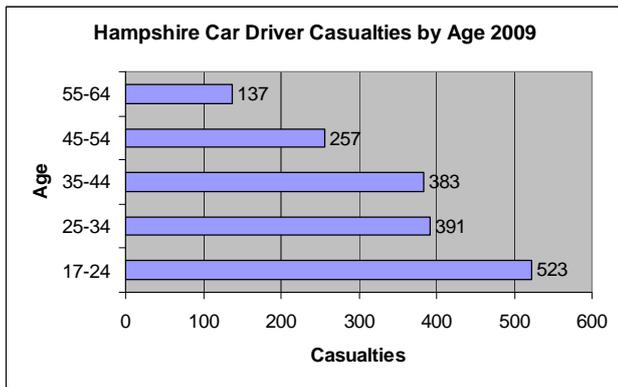
If you would like information or literature on any road safety related matter please give us a call on 01962 846100



Young business drivers

According to Department of Transport statistics, one in four deaths and serious injuries on British roads in 2009 involved a young driver, despite young people accounting for just one in eight licence holders.

In Hampshire, car driver casualties in the 17 to 24 age group account for 28% of all driver casualties. The table below represents car driver casualties in Hampshire for different age groups.



National statistics reveal that nearly three-quarters (71%) of the young drivers involved in accidents during 2009 were male.

Driving on different road types

Rural roads

More than half of all UK fatal crashes occur on rural roads. Overtaking, excessive speed and complacency all raise the risk of collision.

Overtaking

To avoid unnecessary risk, overtaking should be avoided on rural roads unless you are completely sure it is safe.

Passing another vehicle means driving on the wrong side of the road for several seconds. With a speed of 60 mph you will approach an oncoming vehicle, moving equally as fast, at a closing speed of around 120 mph. It is extremely difficult to judge the length of road needed to be safe in these circumstances.

Excessive speed

In 2009 nearly 3000 people were killed or seriously injured in single vehicle accidents on rural roads.

A large number of these involved vehicles hitting trees, lamp posts or road signs.



One of the reasons for losing control of a vehicle is misjudgment of speed when entering a bend.

Vehicle stability is lost due to weight shift whilst steering and braking. It is therefore important

to ensure all necessary speed is lost before entering a bend and then driving round the bend at a constant speed to maximise grip.

Complacency

As many rural roads are free of heavy traffic, complacency can lead to too high a speed and a lack of concentration. This will extend reaction times and braking distances considerably.

Reading the road for clues of potential hazards, warning signs and road markings as well as good anticipation is necessary to keep the risk of a collision to a minimum.

Motorways

These are statistically the safest roads in terms of fatal or serious injuries.

The main risks come from joining, changing lane and sudden braking.

Risk can be limited by:

- avoiding any sudden changes in direction or speed
- avoiding more than one lane change at a time
- checking the blind spot over the left or right shoulder when lane changing.
- signalling your intention where necessary and allowing time for other road users to respond.
- allowing a minimum of a two second gap to the vehicle in front.
- increasing forward vision and planning.

Town Centre

Although average vehicle speeds in urban areas are relatively low, fatality rates are still approaching 50% of total number for all road types.



Many of these fatalities involve vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists, and motorbike riders.

Many drivers admit to driving above the legal speed limit in these areas. Although it is very rare for any particular driver to be in collision with a pedestrian, when it does happen the speed of impact makes a big difference in survivability.

Hitting a pedestrian at 35 mph will cause disproportionately more severe injuries than at 30 mph.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of work related road safety please call us on 01962 846100 or email roadsafety@hants.gov.uk or visit our website at <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/roadsafety/>

