

TOOLBOX TALK: DRIVING AT WORK

Introduction

Based on reports from the Department for Transport, more than a quarter of all road traffic incidents involve somebody who is driving as part of their work.

The legal requirements related to health and safety at work, also applies to work activities on the road, in similar way as it does on site. For the majority of people, driving is the most dangerous work activity that they carry out as part of their job.

Very few organisations can operate without using the road in one way or another and millions of vehicles including lorries, vans, taxis, buses, emergency service vehicles, company cars, motorcycles and bicycles are used for work purposes every single day.

The Hazards

Driving as part of work has many hazards that need to be considered. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Speed
- Fatigue
- Mobile phone and distractions
- Managing space on the road in confined areas.
- Alcohol awareness
- Vehicle maintenance
- Winter driving
- Night driving
- Ergonomics

Control Measures

You should consider the following every time before you start driving:

- Always wear your seat belt as it increases your chance of survival in an accident.
- Don't drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Don't drive if you are tired or exhausted as it increases the risk of getting involved in an accident.
- Maintain your vehicle in good condition. Check that the tires, brakes, headlights, taillights, and turn signals all work properly prior to a trip.
- Obey the speed limit and maintain a safe driving distance between you and the car in front of you.
- Stay aware of the drivers around you and if they are driving aggressively.
- If experiencing road rage, then stay away from them, even if you have to pull off the road.
- When using a cell phone while driving, pull off the road in a safe and legal place or limit your calls to emergencies.
- Don't text while driving, it takes your eyes off the road for an average of 4.6 seconds. This is equivalent to driving the length of an entire football field blind at 55 mph.
- If your vehicle has an Anti-Lock Braking System (ABS) and you must brake because of an obstacle, be sure to press the brake pedal and hold, while gently steering around the obstacle.
- Be extra alert when driving in road construction areas.
- Be aware of the environment you drive in; extra care should be taken during winter or while driving during heavy rain or at night.

The Law

- The Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992
- The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Toolbox Talk Questions

- What are the hazards when driving as part of work?
- Which controls can reduce the risk of an incident?
- What are you going to do differently as a result of this Toolbox Talk?