



HS Broadcast – Driving safely

You may have heard about businesses putting their staff through driver training programmes. In fact some years ago, the team I managed and I, who were all 15,000+ miles a year employees, attended such training and I have to say this was money well spent

So now may be a good time for you to look at your own arrangements. It is my guess that your own arrangements have focused on the basics such as driver licence checks.

As you will be aware, the Health & Safety at Work Act of 1974 requires the employer to take reasonably practicable precautions to safeguard its employees. The Management of Health and Safety at work regulations require that if you have five or more employees the risk assessments must be documented.

More than 500 deaths per year are caused by work-related driving, and for many businesses this is one of the riskiest activities their staff will undertake. Therefore, I would strongly suggest that at the very least, where you have employees who drive whilst at work a documented risk assessment process is undertaken. In addition I would suggest a Driving at Work policy is produced and circulated.

The risk assessment means that you must do what is reasonably practicable to protect your employees and others from harm. Employers are also required to carry out a risk assessment of all work activities (including driving) and implement risk control measures which the assessment has shown to be necessary.

In addition to fulfilling these general health and safety requirements, as an employer you must be cautious not to cause or permit certain traffic offences, otherwise you may face prosecution.

It has to be said that the major share of responsibility for safe driving rests with the employee. All drivers must ensure that they are fit to drive, have the right licence and insurance, and satisfy themselves that their vehicle is roadworthy. However the employer should also make their own driving licence, insurance and MOT checks.

As mentioned above, employers also have a duty of care. The minimum you must do is:

- undertake a risk assessment of driving activities
- include driver safety in your health and safety policy or have a separate policy on driving
- avoid the type of poor work scheduling which causes excessive tiredness or encourages speeding
- ensure that vehicles are suitable for the purpose, kept in good order and, where applicable, are MOT'd
- check that drivers have a valid licence for the intended vehicle(s) and make reasonable efforts to ensure that they are fit for the job
- make sure that vehicles are insured for the appropriate category of business use
- take action to encourage adherence to the law on the use of mobile phones.



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So, what about training?

There is no specific legal requirement to sign up for additional driver training / assessment programmes. This will only be necessary if your own risk assessment shows that it is warranted, such as a particular employee who undertakes high mileage or has a poor accident record.

Whilst I recommend formal driver training all you need to do is provide instruction in:

1. The use of unfamiliar vehicles.
2. The securing of unusual loads (if applicable).
3. Emergency procedures.
4. Your policy and procedures, including any routine checks you require.

If you require further advice please do not hesitate to contact Andy.