

Mott MacDonald's journey towards improving driver safety

At Mott MacDonald, our single most dangerous workplace activity is driving for work. Over the last 2 decades we have been working hard to keep our people safer on the roads - finding new ways to reduce fatigue, cut back on car journeys and mitigate incident risk.

Mott MacDonald is a global engineering, management, and development consultancy. Our 17,000 colleagues are based in 150 countries around the world. In the UK we employ over 8500 staff, with less than 2000 of whom actively drive on company business.

Like many organisations, we recognised that driving posed the greatest risk for our people at work. Tackling this effectively would require a culture change. We took a multi-pronged approach – starting with the right training, followed by initiatives to reduce the number of miles driven, effective fatigue management and steps to ensure our safer driving values are imparted to our supply chain.

“Driving is the single most dangerous work activity for our people. Over recent years we’ve had a clear focus on reducing the number of accidents and serious injuries through raising awareness, changing behaviours and training our people.”

Cathy Travers
Group Managing Director



Our journey

Over 20 years ago, our Driver Entitlement Consent and vehicle declaration forms, completed every three years, became a mandatory requirement for anyone driving for work. Together, these forms gave permission for licences to be checked and confirmed personal vehicle road worthiness and insurance for business use.

Understanding that the risk to our colleagues did not purely come from the state of their vehicle, our 'Safety Wheel' classroom training programme for high-speed roads was launched to protect colleagues driving and conducting surveys or project site visits on live high-speed carriageways. 18 months later, when research indicated that most near misses and small incidents happened in rural areas, we introduced a new module for roads with a limit of below 50 miles per hour. Driver awareness training was the next step, covering all general road risks for anyone who drives on company business.

Each of these courses was bespoke – designed specifically for the work our people do at Mott MacDonald. In the present day, they are regularly updated to include changes in legislation, updates from road safety organisations and incorporating lessons learned along the way. Training must be

renewed every three years. Without it, no member of staff is permitted to drive for work.

In 2015, a driving at work hand-book was published for all staff, providing advice on road rage, fatigue, distractions, journey planning and vehicle checks, amongst other key areas.

The use of mobile phones (including hands-free) has been strictly forbidden for drivers, regardless of the circumstance. This rule has led to our people feeling empowered to stop a phone call if they discover anyone is driving while using a hands-free device.

To reduce the likelihood of a fatigue related incident, a requirement was implemented whereby none of our people are permitted to drive beyond a 12 hour working day. Where a working day exceeds this, accommodation will be provided.

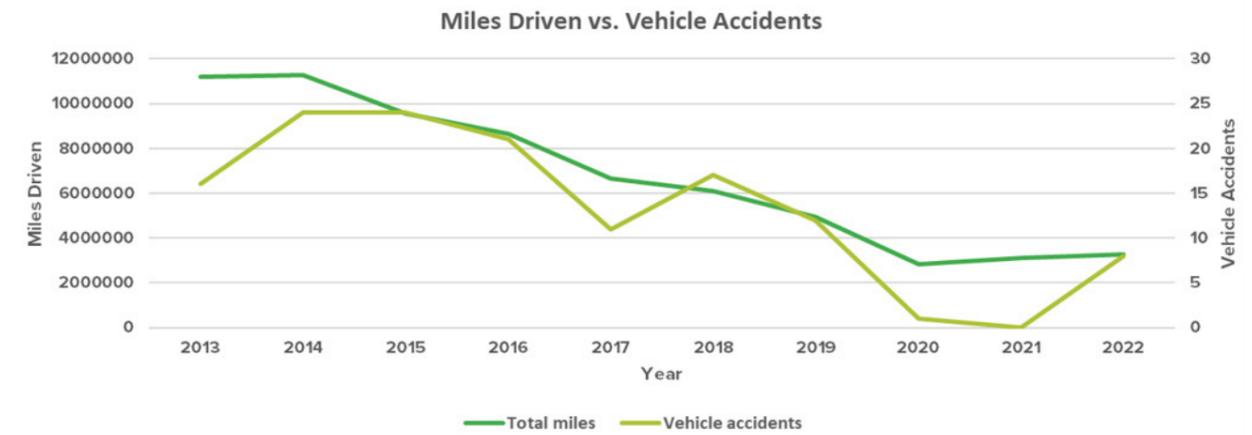
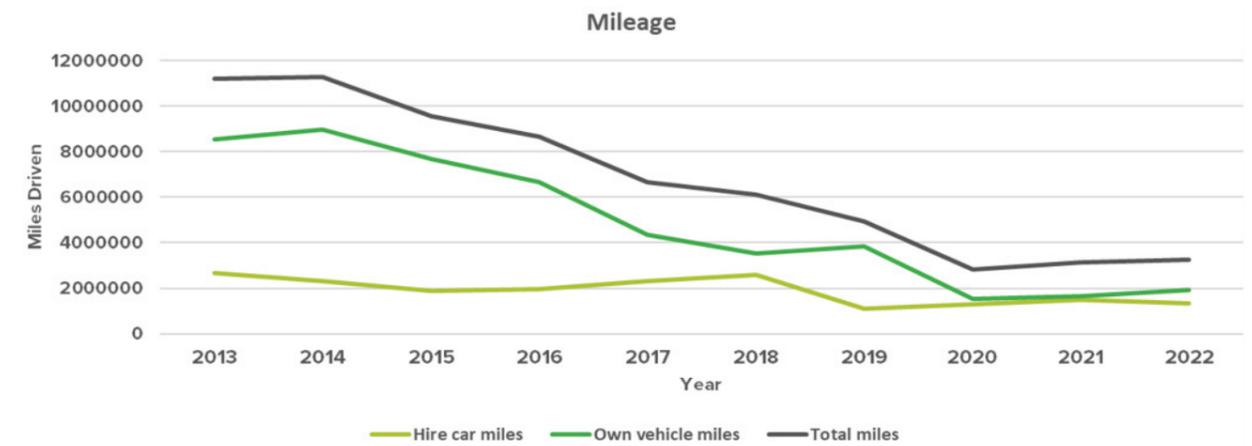
Everyone knows the best way to avoid danger behind the wheel is to avoid driving completely. Accepting this isn't always possible, in 2016 the Mott MacDonald Driver Management Plan (DMP) was created which challenged our people to consider alternatives to driving. This process ensured careful thought about weather conditions, parking, rest breaks and fitness to drive amongst other considerations.

Still in use today, the traveller must discuss and agree their plan with a Driving Safety Advisor before embarking on any business journey by car (either personal or hired). A copy of the signed plan must also accompany any mileage expense claim.

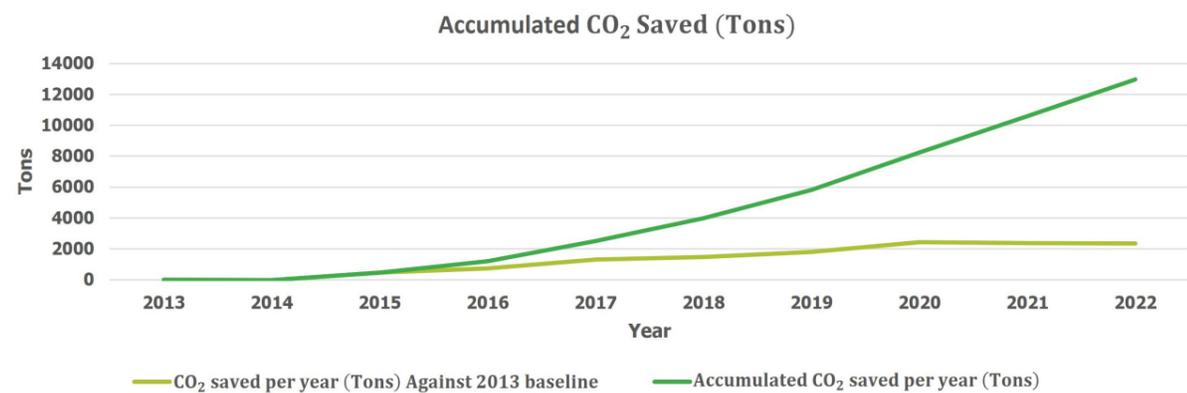
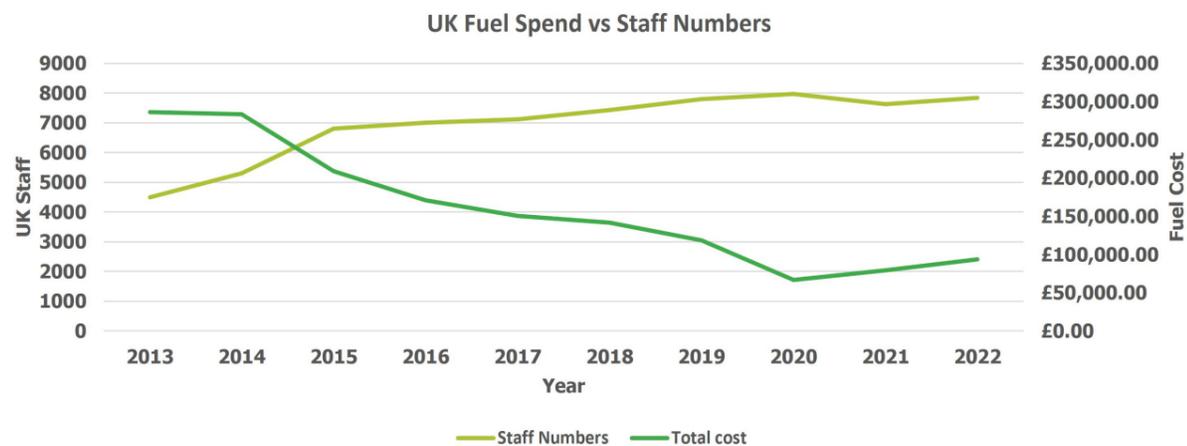
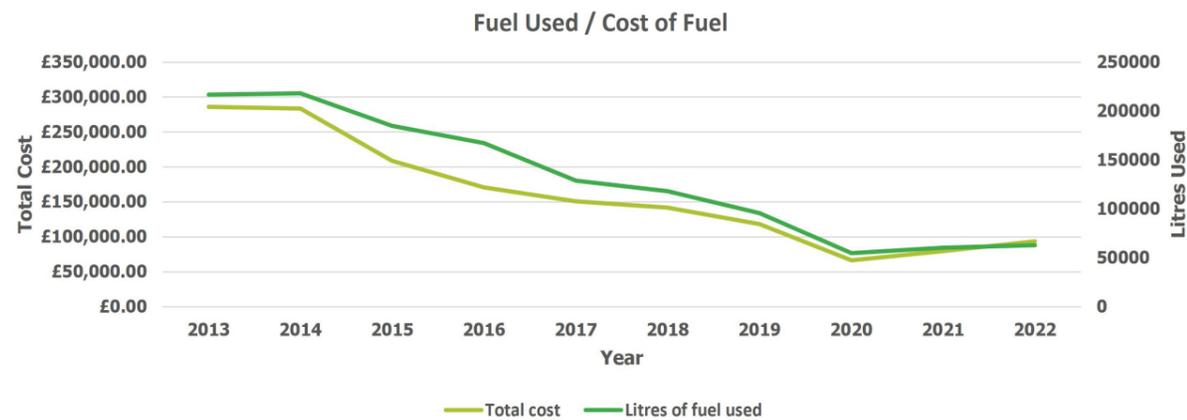
In 2017, the Highways division in Mott MacDonald formed the Driver Focus Group, tasked with finding ways to further reduce the number of driving-related incidents. We put extra support in place to make public transport arrangements quick and simple to access.

As a result of these and other initiatives, and despite the number of staff increasing by 74% since 2013 coupled with the impacts of COVID-19, 66% fewer staff now drive on company business with 71% fewer miles driven compared to the 2013 baseline. Across the years this has led to a halving of vehicle accidents as well as a significant reduction in carbon and cost.

The graphs below show a decrease in miles driven over time as well as a reduction in accidents.



A positive side effect of this sharp reduction in miles driven is significant fuel and carbon savings as shown in the graphs below. While staff numbers have increased, there has been a significant reduction in carbon and cost since 2013.



Another area of concern at Mott MacDonald was inadequately experienced drivers travelling on unfamiliar roads or in challenging conditions. This issue required a more hands-on approach.

We adopted a new driver assessment programme following a successful trial in 2018 formulated by the Driving Focus Group. Initially an online test, the assessment looked at a range of risk factors including driving experience, annual mileage, behaviours and knowledge to help determine an individual's overall 'exposure to risk'.

Colleagues who were deemed to be at 'medium risk' were required to undergo a 1 hour in-vehicle assessment. This time was used to assess an individual's behaviours behind the wheel as well as to provide an opportunity to identify potential improvements. Meanwhile, those at 'high risk' were required to complete a half day in-vehicle driving session with a qualified assessor.

In 2022 the system was replaced and enhanced through the use of 'Driving Monitor' which allowed for automatic checks of licences and business insurances as part of the driver assessment process. All colleagues driving on company business now receive a 'Driving Passport' following completion of all necessary training and licence / insurance checks. This replaced the Driver Entitlement Consent and Vehicle Declarations forms which had been launched 20 years earlier.

Other Driver Focus Group initiatives include:

- Empowering everyone to refuse a hire car at the point of pick up if they would not feel safe driving it
- Training on how to check for vehicle defects
- Providing emergency vehicle kits in case of break down or long delays (includes first aid kit, warning triangle, water and food, high viz jacket, emergency contact details and in-car phone charging kit).

Continuous improvement of our safer driving culture through project delivery is a priority for Mott MacDonald. During recent work on an A45 Footbridge with Skanska, augmented reality was used to allow a site visit to take place where only a limited number of colleagues were on site in person. The rest of the team were able to view the design in real time through augmented reality from the safety of their desk while on a Teams call. Not only did this intervention avoid colleagues accessing the strategic road network, it also reduced the number needing to travel at all. Further benefits that arose from this innovation included:

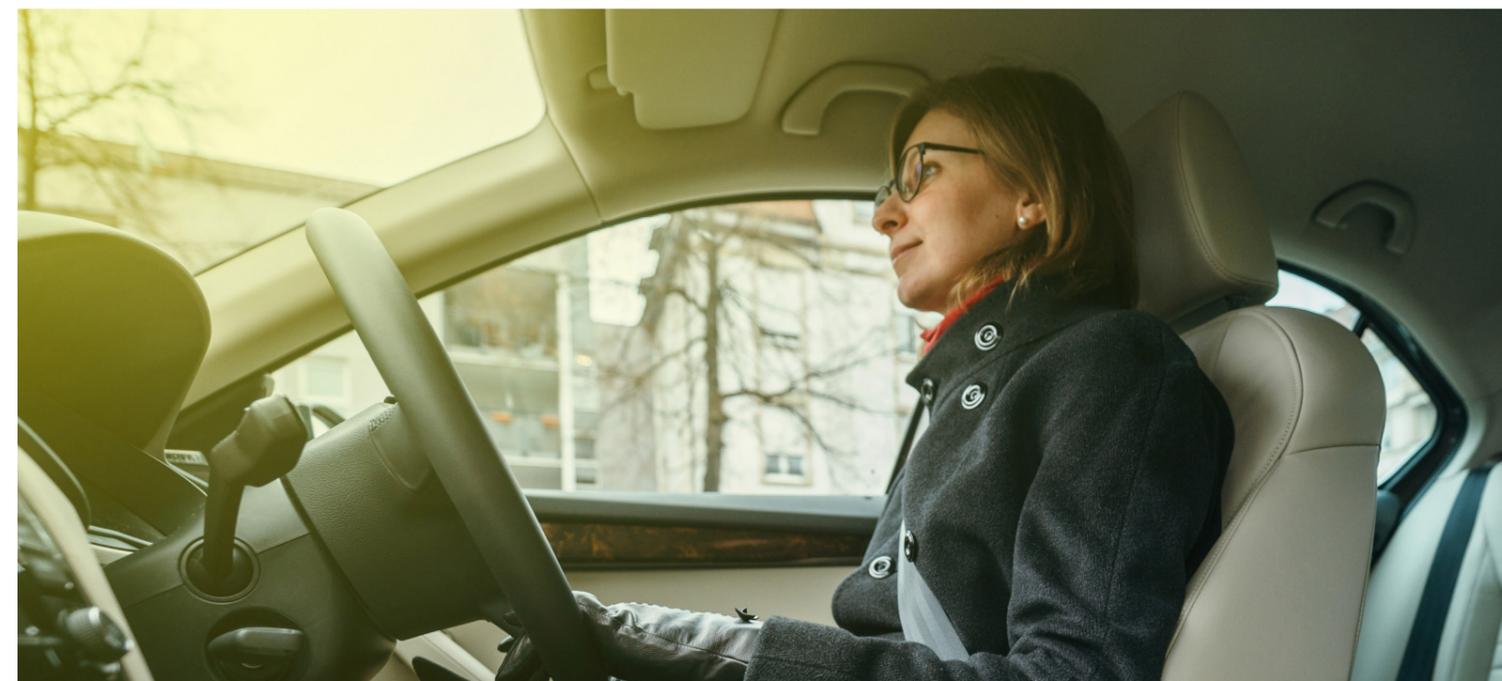
- Making the reviewing process with the Construction team simpler
- Enabling the contractor to raise detailed comments, including around the planning of temporary works
- Creating a more realistic design when compared to a 2D drawing

A short clip on how the augmented reality was used can be viewed using the link below:

- [A45 Footbridge](#)

We have promoted our approach to driving externally to fellow members of the Consultants' Health & Safety Forum and at the Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation (CIHT) Annual Awards 2019, where our Driver Focus Group initiative won the Health & Wellbeing Award.

We will continue to share our good practices and achievements with our supply chain, in order to raise awareness of the benefits of managing occupational road safety risks.



The future

Improving driver safety is an infinite task. There will always be challenges to overcome and new ways to protect our people. We continue to look for solutions and initiatives to reduce road incidents across our industry and build a wider awareness and stronger culture of driver safety.

Feedback so far shows our people feel more valued knowing that their safety is prioritised.

Awards

- 2019 ROSPA Fleet Driver Award
- 2019 Highways England Supplier Recognition Awards - shortlisted
- 2019 CIHT Health and Wellbeing Award Safer Highways Awards
- 2020 Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) - Health and Safety Awards - President's Award
- 2021 'Safer Road Users' submission Award

“Despite having passed my driving test, I realised that my limited experience on the road highlighted the importance of further improving my safe driving skills. The training I received was excellent, providing me with opportunities to ask questions and incorporating highway engineering concepts, which made it both informative and relatable. The constructive feedback I received was invaluable as it helped me identify areas where I needed to improve. This feedback also deepened my understanding of the importance of safe driving practices, equipping me with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate potential risks and hazards on the road”.

George Skuse
Apprentice Civil Engineer

Engineering. Management. Development.

For further information about Mott MacDonald's safer driving initiatives, contact **Martin Thorpe**

Our journey to better driver safety

