

One in four company drivers at risk from employers' failures to protect them

Driving for Better Business have created an interactive Driving for Work Policy Builder to help fleet-using companies better address their legal responsibilities. More than a quarter of UK firms recently surveyed*, whose employees drive for work, have no policy, and more than a quarter have not reviewed their policy in the past three years.

Driving for work is statistically the most dangerous activity employees undertake. Up to a third of all road traffic incidents involve someone who is driving for work at the time - accounting for some 500 fatalities and almost 40,000 injuries a year. All reputable employers must have a driving for work policy that will stand up to scrutiny in the event of a crash. The law requires all those who drive on the public highway to be adequately and appropriately insured. This means that any person driving, even occasionally in connection with their employer's work, must be covered for 'business use'.

With the new, free, Driving for Work Policy Builder, being launched today (30 April) by Driving for Better Business, companies can use a template to create a legally compliant document that can be adapted to their own needs and shared with all employees.

Why companies need a driving for work policy:

- It is a legal requirement: the law says all companies must have policies and procedures to minimise risk – and that includes the recognised risks around driving. In the event of a serious incident, a company must be able to produce documentary proof that the organisation has taken reasonable steps to protect drivers and other road users.
- It makes good business sense. Poorly managed drivers will cost companies more: higher insurance, increased servicing and maintenance costs, more speeding tickets and greater fuel use.
- It is the right thing to do so that staff and other road users get home to their families safe and well at the end of each day.

Driving for Better Business – an award-winning programme run by National Highways – spotted a rising trend in online searches where users were looking for guidance on safe operation of employees out on the road. Proof of a driving for work policy that meets legal and compliance standards is also increasingly becoming a requirement when tendering for new work.

Simon Turner, Campaign Manager for Driving for Better Business says: "Our Driving for Work Policy Builder has the potential to deliver a huge positive impact on how employers think about driver safety – especially those, and there are many, that currently have no driver policy at all. It will help employers create, review, and update their own policy and it will cover all the key relevant risks for managing policies, drivers, vehicles and journeys. With a template and checklist, it covers all the key risks of most fleets, and can be adapted to individual companies."

What should be included to meet legal and compliance standards?

- A statement explaining why the policy exists and why it is important that drivers follow it.
- A section covering licence checks, medical conditions, driver competence and fitness to drive including impairment, fatigue and wellbeing.
- A vehicle section including roadworthiness, loading, security, private use of vehicles and towing, if applicable.
- A journey section including driving standards, use of mobile phones, dealing with fines and penalties, and what to do in the event of a collision or breakdown.
- There's no 'one policy fits all fleets'. Users must check the policy wording and amend where necessary – for example to include transporting hazardous goods.

Getting driver buy-in to a Driving for Work Policy

- It must be realistic, consistently applied, and reinforced regularly.
- Bring drivers in at an early stage: let them identify the risks in their journeys and how they might be avoided.
- Drivers need to see how it benefits them, that it can be easily followed, and that other things won't interfere with their ability to comply.
- The rules apply to everyone in the business: directors as well as van drivers.
- Reinforcing the policy, reviewing compliance, and demonstrating the benefits that have been achieved, will help ensure everyone understands its importance.

Driving for Work Policy: keeping it up to date

- To be legally compliant, a policy needs to be up to date and reviewed regularly. The policy must be owned by a director or similar senior manager who has overall responsibility for creating, communicating and reviewing it, as well as monitoring compliance.
- Driving for Better Business works closely with the Health & Safety Executive, Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency, Department for Transport, TSO (which produces the Highway Code) and National Highways, and will provide authoritative and timely updates whenever official guidance or legislation changes that affect a driver policy, as well as an annual reminder to review your policy to make sure it remains current and legally compliant.

To sign up for the new Driving for Work Policy Builder:

<https://www.drivingforbetterbusiness.com/driving-for-work-policy-tool-sign-up-for-updates/>

Notes to editors

*Out of 1236 visitors to the Driving for Better Business website looking to identify gaps in their driving for work and risk management processes, three questions and the answers they gave:

Are all owners, Directors and Managers in the business aware of their legal obligations to manage work-related road safety?

Yes	54%
No	26%
No answer	20%

Does your business have a documented HSE-compliant 'Driving at Work' road safety policy?

Yes	52%
No	27%
No answer	20%

Has the policy been reviewed within the last three years?

Yes	51%
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No	26%
No answer	23%

Research from TomTom, 2017:

- More than a fifth (21%) of UK companies whose employees drive for work have no road safety policy.
- This means that 20% of businesses in the UK are putting both their employees, and their business itself, at greater risk of health and safety breaches from drivers crashing on the job.
- Managers at 400 businesses said a further 4% did not know if their organisation had a defined policy.
- 60% of respondents said staff members had been involved in road traffic crashes while on business duty.
- 78% claimed this resulted in lost productivity due to injury or time off-work.
- The research found only 64 per cent of organisations have processes in place to profile the risk posed by individual drivers, based on factors such as driving behaviour or previous convictions.

Use this link for hi-res image of Simon Turner Campaign Manager for Driving for Better Business: <https://www.drivingforbetterbusiness.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Simon-Bio-Pic-1000px.jpg>

The Driving for Better Business Driving for Work Policy Builder is being launched at the Health and Safety Event <https://www.healthandsafetysafetyevent.com/driver-safety-zone>

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About Driving for Better Business

Driving for work is one of the highest-risk activities that many employees undertake, whether they drive a commercial vehicle, a company car or make work journeys in their own vehicle.

Driving for Better Business is a free to access government-backed National Highways programme, delivered in partnership with RoadSafe, to help employers reduce work-related road risk, protecting staff who drive or ride for work, and others who they may share the road with.

Our mission is to improve safety and reduce risk for all those who drive or ride for work by promoting good management practice and demonstrating significant business benefits.

Our vision is a world where those who use the roads for work do so safely, efficiently, and sustainably.