



Working together to eliminate road death and serious injuries

Bringing you important news for business drivers: October 2008

Texting risk

Texting behind the wheel impairs driving skills more than being drunk or under the influence of drugs, according to new research carried out by TRL.



But, despite the danger, 48% of UK drivers aged 18-24, a group already at much higher risk of being involved in a crash, admit to using short message services (SMS) whilst driving.

Publicity and legislation has to date focused on the risks of speaking on a mobile phone while driving, overlooking the fact that phones are also used for texting, picture messaging and web surfing. Nearly 5,000 texts are sent every second in the UK.

DriveTech would seriously recommend that this habit is specifically referred to as 'banned' in company driving policy manuals.

Business drivers crash stats



Data contained in the latest DfT Road Casualty Statistics Report reveals that at least 27.1% of the 334,966 vehicles involved in crashes were being driven either on a work-related journey or on a commute. That compares with 26.7% of the 348,059 vehicles in 2006.

Although a total of 90,877 vehicles last year were identified as being driven on a business trip or a commute when they were involved in a crash, some 239,930 vehicles had no journey purpose identified by the police when investigating, so many road safety pundits suspect there is significant under-reporting.

Hard shoulder penalty

A driver who used the motorway hard shoulder to avoid a safety block set up by Highways Agency Traffic Officers has had six penalty points added to his driving licence.



John Chapman of Oldham, was convicted at Tameside Magistrates' Court and also received a £100 fine and ordered to

pay £125 costs plus a £15 victim fee.

He denied driving on the hard shoulder, failing to stop for Highways Agency Traffic Officers and driving without consideration for other road users but he was convicted after the magistrates heard evidence from Traffic Officers in court.

Murder in mind

A police forensic collision investigator has reaffirmed warnings from legal experts that the police will investigate at-work road deaths as if they were murders under the recently introduced Corporate Manslaughter Act. Following a death involving an at-work driver, fleet managers can expect an immediate and in-depth investigation by the police.



“You will feel like you are being treated like a criminal,” warned David Kirk, a forensic investigator for Kent Police. “And that is because it is a criminal investigation. We will investigate a road death starting with the most serious offence of murder and then work down from there.”

A leading barrister, Gerard Forlin, who specialises in health and safety law, recently warned fleet managers that they will be vigorously investigated under the new Act, which came into force in April. “Fleets are a relatively easy target” he said. “At-work road deaths will be investigated much more aggressively by the police from now on.”

Following a business-related road death, managers can expect homes and offices to be raided, computers and documents to be seized and a thorough investigation of policies and procedures. There will also be checks on specific fleet management areas, ranging from vehicle maintenance to licence checking and drink and drug screening.

Pedestrians and vehicles don't mix

At DriveTech we don't want to subscribe to the scare-mongering tactic used by less reputable suppliers but we do want to provide useful information. The two cases below are real, documented and could easily relate to circumstances in which our customers operate.

#1: The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has warned employers they must have systems in place for ensuring pedestrians and vehicles can move safely in the workplace, after a Kirkby in Ashfield woman lost her leg when she was hit by a reversing forklift while working for a Derby company.

Northampton-based international distributors NYK Logistics (UK) Limited, was fined £20,000 and ordered to pay £5,941 costs at Derby Crown Court today after pleading guilty to contravening regulations 4(1) and 17 (1) of the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992.

#2: North Tyneside Council has been bound over for sentencing after pleading guilty to a breach of Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 at North Tyneside Magistrates' Court.

On 2 May 2006, a member of the public, Brian Kindred, was killed after a refuse truck hit him near his home in Allanville, Camperdown, as it was reversing.

HSE Inspector Stephen Britton said, "This is a tragic case where we found that the council's safety management procedures were not adequate. There was no supervision in place, training was cursory and did not cover guiding vehicles in any way.

"Had the council followed the simple and straightforward control measures that have been specifically designed for the waste and recycling industry, such as training their operators to warn the driver about pedestrians walking close to the vehicle, Mr. Kindred would not have died."

Coping with fog

As the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness would appear to be upon us, here are some tips for safely dealing with that most British of weather conditions.....fog.

- First of all, is that journey really necessary in the first place? Is it worth putting yourself in a high risk situation?
- If you haven't checked ALL your lights recently, do so before setting out. To stay safe you must remain as visible as possible.
- If you can, use traffic information to choose a route that stands a better chance of being fog free.
- There is scientific evidence to suggest that drivers actually speed up in fog unwittingly due to the lack of visible reference points, so do keep an eye on that speedometer.
- Use front and rear fog lights if the visibility is below 100 metres but always turn them off when visibility improves. Check that fog light warning lamps are not illuminated before you drive off the next time unless the conditions demand them.
- Driving in fog requires 100% concentration. Avoid conversations and distractions of any kind.
- If you spot the tail lights of a car in front keep well back so that you can still see the lights but allow yourself plenty of room for manoeuvre should the need arise.
- If the headlights of the vehicle behind approach rapidly and at a pace that you are not comfortable with, do not be tempted to speed up to extend the gap. Pull over where it is safe to do so, let them by and continue at a pace that you're at ease with.
- If the fog is really bad it's worth winding the windows down at junctions to LISTEN for oncoming traffic

...and news from DriveTech itself:



We're winners!

DriveTech was awarded the accolade 'Driver Training Company of the Year' at the 2008 Green Fleet Awards, which took place at Twickenham Stadium in late September. We beat four other short-listed driver training companies.

The judges were apparently impressed by DriveTech's commitment to promoting and delivering effective Eco Driving

courses that neither required dramatic changes of driver behaviour nor affected journey times unduly.

DriveTech was of course the company responsible for developing the Safe And Efficient Driving (SAFED) course for vans a few years ago and then trained all the trainers to deliver the course nationwide thereafter.

Any reader wishing to enquire about DriveTech's Eco Driving practical courses, Eco Workshops or 'Pit Stop' seminars on the topic should contact FleetSafe Account Development Manager, Kelly Robertson, on 01344 467886 or email her at fleetsafe@drivetech.co.uk.

Partner-ING up

DriveTech has become the preferred supplier of driver risk management services to leading lease company ING and hopes to be providing a wide range of solutions to ING customers both large and small over the coming months under ING's 'Risk Assist' brand.

Further information about Risk assist can be obtained at http://www.ingcarlease.co.uk/cmsfiles/products_services/762893/Manage_your_fleet_with_Risk_Assist_front.pdf

City & Guilds

DriveTech has received accreditation from the City & Guilds as an Approved Training Centre.

Issued by the DriveTech Communications Department.

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