



## Managing risks to drivers in road transport: Good practice cases

In the road transport sector, as with any other, it is important to pay attention to working conditions in order to ensure a skilled and motivated workforce. Certain characteristics of the sector make it more difficult to practise risk management than for other sectors. But by taking account of how the sector operates in practice, and the characteristics of drivers themselves and the way they work, risks can be successfully managed. EU-OSHA has published a report of case studies in managing risks to road transport drivers <sup>(1)</sup>. The cases feature a variety of initiatives and interventions to protect road transport drivers.

Drivers work independently and away from a fixed base. They may be self-employed and often have long experience as drivers. This means that it is not always easy to communicate with them and consult and involve them, and they are not always open to change. Because of this, drivers need to be intimately involved in solutions — solutions need to be developed by drivers for drivers using participatory methods, in order to use their experience and gain their acceptance. It is also crucial to allow sufficient time to discuss, plan, trial and introduce changes.



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The experience of drivers can also be harnessed by using them as advocates, trainers and mentors.

There should be customer and stakeholder involvement in managing risks. Those involved in making deliveries do not operate in isolation, but are part of a chain. Employers of drivers can find it difficult to ensure the safety of their employees whilst they are working at customer premises. And the competitive nature of the business makes haulage firms reluctant to make demands of their customers, who may wrongly assume that driver safety is not their responsibility. For drivers of public transport vehicles, passengers are also part of the risk and of the solution. Other parties that need to be involved in risk management may include:

- the enterprises where goods are collected and deliveries are made;
- passengers and schoolchildren;
- road safety groups, transport ministries, police and the judiciary, etc.

Large employers are in a position to set OSH standards for their delivery contractors, which can stimulate these small businesses to adopt such standards when working with their other clients.

OSH solutions, such as safer driving measures, may require additional time to carry out. This must be taken into account both in work organisation and work scheduling. On the other hand, the introduction of defensive driving can result in lower fuel consumption and therefore cost savings.

Training, refresher training and ensuring that procedures are properly followed are very important for drivers, but they must be carried out in the framework of an organisational system aimed at preventing risks and with clear management commitment.

Whenever change takes place the OSH implications should be considered. For example, the introduction of information and communication technology in drivers' cabins can be used to improve drivers' safety and health as well.

Diversity in the workforce needs to be taken into account — for example, the needs of older and younger workers, women drivers and foreign workers should be considered.

### Key conclusions from the cases include:

- Drivers are frequently self-employed, very experienced and used to working independently. This suggests, among other things:
  - ensuring that approaches are practical but not patronising;
  - using places drivers frequent — motorway stop areas, etc.;
  - ensuring that advice and solutions are based on drivers' experiences, for example, by:
    - involving drivers in risk assessment and developing solutions;
    - using drivers as advocates, mentors, etc.;
    - allowing sufficient time to develop solutions and introduce change.
- Customers, clients and stakeholders should be involved in solutions to manage risks:
  - the supply chain — suppliers, premises where deliveries are made, etc.;
  - passengers and schoolchildren;
  - road safety groups, transport ministries, etc.
- Large organisations are in a position to set OSH standards for their delivery contractors. This in turn can stimulate these SMEs to adopt the same standards with their other clients.
- When new technology is introduced into cabs, it can also be used for OSH purposes, for example to keep drivers informed and improve delivery schedules.
- OSH solutions may require more time to carry out tasks and therefore:

<sup>(1)</sup> European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA), *Managing risks to drivers in road transport: good practice cases*, EU-OSHA.

- this needs to be recognised in work organisation and work scheduling;
- clients also need to be made aware of this.
- Training, for example defensive driving techniques, must be part of an organisational system to prevent risks and with clear management commitment.

In passenger transport various case studies deal with preventing violence to drivers, including violence from schoolchildren. Such violence can have a number of consequences: stress and injury to staff, physical damage to buses and increased road accident risk. Involving children in the solution was seen to be important and measures taken in the cases included:

- partnership — with schools, crime prevention schemes, police, traffic authorities;
- involving children, for example:
  - appointing a prevention officer with outreach responsibilities, e.g. to work with schools;
  - using theatre performance with children to identify issues and solutions;
  - children agreeing behaviour rules for bus travel and 'policing' the buses;
  - joint training with drivers and children — to help gain a common understanding;
- taking a holistic approach, with schools involved in what happens both inside and outside the school gate;
- intervention officers — assistants who work with ticket inspectors;
- protective coatings to side windows, driver's cabs separated from passengers, CCTV, tracking systems and radio links for rapid intervention;
- post-incident legal support and counselling made available to staff.

The case studies demonstrate that a number of measures can be taken to control risks and improve safety for road transport drivers. These measures can also lead to an improved service for clients and passengers and financial savings for transport companies.

### Examples:

The German project DocStop was initiated to improve **medical facilities for long-distance professional drivers** while at work. Motorway rest areas serve as DocStop centres, which have a network of doctors that are convenient for drivers to consult while on the road, without seriously disrupting their schedules.

At Arla Foods, Denmark, managers developed a scheme in collaboration with drivers to gather **information about working conditions in over 500 different loading areas**. This information has been integrated into the company's IT system, making the information available to drivers when they print out their daily route. The issues covered included agreements with clients. For drivers it was important



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that the measures took account of literacy levels and limited time for making deliveries.

Shell Transport in Denmark requires its **subcontractors to conform to the company's quality and safety standards**. These focus particularly on the reporting of accidents and injuries, training and instruction of drivers and how subcontractors incorporate safety within their own organisational practice. Adherence to the programme is closely monitored.

Transport for London offers **women bus drivers** suitable working conditions to improve recruitment and retention. They provide: 'women mentors' in the depots to support female drivers; help with childcare costs; and women's facilities. Measures and a campaign have been introduced to prevent violence on buses. There is training for staff and all managers that emphasises zero tolerance of discriminatory behaviour. Work continues on issues such as flexible work patterns. In another example, following a study, Spanish trade union CCOO produced recommendations for uniforms for female drivers.

French transport company Prevoist initiated an 80 km/h **speed limit** for its drivers using various measures, resulting in reduced fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and improved health and safety of drivers. Workers shared in the cost savings. Stickers on vehicles are used to promote the initiative.

### Further information

The full report is available in English on the agency's website at: <http://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/reports/TEWE10003ENC/view> where it can be downloaded free of charge.

This factsheet is available in all EU languages at: <http://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/factsheets>

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