



Safety in the spotlight

An analysis of road risk management among car fleets

Risk is a critical issue for any business and the road is often one of its biggest sources. When operating company cars, it is essential to take concrete measures to safeguard the health of employees and limit the potential financial, legislative and human consequences.

Currently, around a third of serious road crashes in Britain involve at-work drivers and the results have also manifested themselves in terms of rising fleet insurance

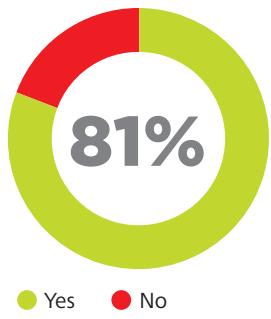
premiums. The onus has fallen on companies to improve safety standards across the board but what action is being taken?

TomTom commissioned research among businesses operating company cars to ascertain the impact of road risk and the measures being taken to limit its effect on operations and overall safety. The findings of the research are detailed below.



Q1 Is work related road safety part of your company's health and safety policy?

A large majority of respondents (81 per cent) include work-related road safety as part of their company's health and safety policy. This is an encouraging statistic which suggests UK companies are taking steps to reduce road risk.

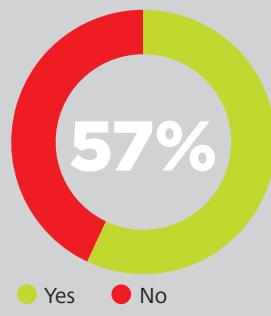


Best practice: The establishment of clear guidelines and processes for road safety is the first step in protecting staff. Six out of ten fatal work accidents in Europe are road crashes, highlighting the necessity for businesses to put their vehicles at the centre of overall safety policy.



Q2 Do you carry out regular risk assessments across your fleet?

More than half of those surveyed (57 per cent) carry out regular risk assessments. However, it is perhaps surprising to see so many (43 per cent) still do not, especially given the commitment to safety outlined in question one.

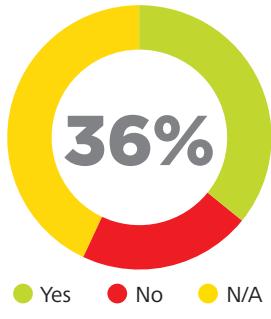


Best practice: Risk assessments should be carried out for every company vehicle, much as they would be in the office environment. A vehicle is a place of work and should be treated as such, with all necessary action taken to ensure a safe environment. Regular risk assessments are a requirement under the Duty of Care Act and failure to complete them could lead to prosecution in the event of an accident.

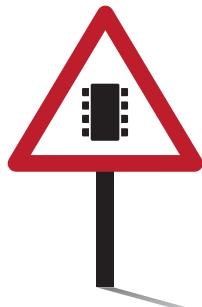


Q3 If you do carry out regular risk assessments, does this involve monitoring driver performance?

Just over a third (36 per cent) of all respondents monitor driver performance, while a further 21 per cent conduct risk assessments without including an analysis of standards behind the wheel.



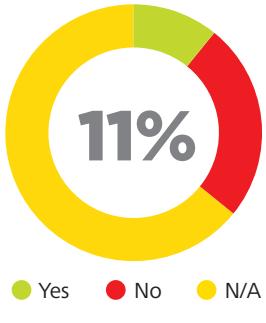
Best practice: Driver performance is one of the biggest variables affecting road safety. If driving standards are not measured, it is impossible to build a complete picture of a company's risk profile. By outlining expected standards and setting achievable targets, it is easier to reduce collision rates and strengthen a commitment to employee wellbeing.



Q4 If you do monitor driver performance, do you use technology to do so?

Only 11 per cent of companies use technology to monitor driver performance, although a further 25 per cent claim to monitor performance without using technology.

Best practice: Driver behaviour monitoring tools provide businesses with a wealth of actionable data, empowering them to make more informed decisions targeted towards reducing risk. Appropriate technology offers insight into the biggest risk factors affecting a company and the main behavioural traits that cause incidents and allows any problems to be tackled.



Q5 Do you have systems or procedures in place to manage driver fatigue?

Although the majority of companies (60 per cent) have systems and processes in place to limit the effect of driver fatigue, a significant proportion (40 per cent) admit they have still not addressed the issue.

Best practice: Up to 20 per cent of serious accidents on motorways and monotonous roads in Britain are caused by driver fatigue. Therefore, it is vital to monitor time spent by staff behind the wheel and ensure they do not spend too much time driving and take regular breaks. Restrictions on driver hours and regular breaks should form a central part of any road safety policy.

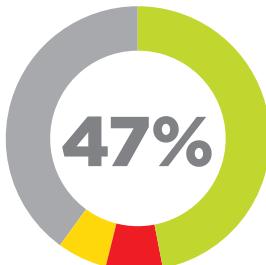


Q6 If you do manage fatigue, what is your primary method of doing so?

Almost half (47 per cent) of those surveyed use driver communications and safety advice as their primary means of managing fatigue. A further seven per cent use technology to monitor driver hours and six per cent conduct regular resource reviews.

Best practice: Driver communications are essential in making staff aware of risks and guidelines, while resource reviews can prevent drivers spending too long behind the wheel. However, appropriate technology can provide incontrovertible proof of driving hours, automatically generate timesheets and send staff reminders to take breaks via messages sent directly to their in-cab navigation devices.

● Employee communications ● Technology to monitor driver hours ● Regular resource reviews ● N/A



Q7 Do you have procedures in place to ensure regular vehicle safety checks are carried out?

Almost four-fifths (79 per cent) of companies conduct regular vehicle safety checks, an encouraging statistic given the importance of regular vehicle maintenance.

Best practice: Regular vehicle safety checks are a crucial element in demonstrating a strong duty of care towards staff. If an accident is caused by equipment which has become faulty through wear and tear, a company may be deemed liable. Businesses should monitor the condition of vehicles and schedule maintenance checks at suggested service intervals as a matter of course.





Q8 Do you provide drivers with regular training?

Less than a third of companies (29 per cent) claim to provide regular training to drivers, which can be a powerful tool in driving fleet efficiency.

Best practice: By combining the measurement and analysis of driver performance with regular training, businesses can unlock even greater improvements in safety and efficiency gains. Technology can be used to identify areas of performance which are in need of improvement, allowing targeted training to be applied where necessary and training budget to be allocated efficiently.



Q9 Have your fleet insurance premiums risen in the last 12 months?

Two-fifths of companies have seen fleet insurance premiums rise over the past year, following similar rises in consumer motor insurance.

Best practice: Fleet insurance premiums are not a fixed cost and can be reduced through careful examination and management of risk factors. The data provided by tools to measure driver results in a clear, transparent, risk profile and provides the necessary insight to reduce the number and size of motor claims. Such transparency allows an insurer to be more precise when rating and underwriting, resulting in more competitive premiums.



Q10 Are you aware of your company's exact requirements for managing road risk?

Although more than two-thirds (68 per cent) of companies are aware of their legislative requirements for managing road risk, almost a third are not.

Best practice: Vehicles used for business are considered places of work under UK law and therefore governed by The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations and Duty of Care Act. As such, businesses are obliged to conduct regular risk assessments and appoint a director to take charge of health and safety requirements. A vehicle and driver audit trail is also required to demonstrate company policy is based on health and safety best practice.



Source: Research conducted by TomTom Business Solutions among businesses operating a vehicle fleet in the United Kingdom. The study was conducted among 72 fleet managers at companies operating a car fleet and 212 fleet managers at companies operating a mixed fleet.

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