**Driving at Work**



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# What are the risks of driving at work?

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) estimates that up to a third of all road traffic accidents involve somebody who is at work at the time. This may account for 100 fatalities in Scotland per year and over 20 fatalities and 250 serious injuries per week in the UK (Figures from Driving at work):

"It has been estimated that between 800 and 1,000 road deaths a year are in some way work-related. Many bosses have ignored this problem in the past, but the Health and Safety Executive has now made it clear that employers have duties under health and safety law to manage the risks faced by their workers on the road."

It is therefore vital that employers take steps to reduce the risks associated with driving at work.

## Who is most at risk from driving at work?

Bus drivers, HGV drivers and delivery drivers can spend their whole working day driving, these are the higher profile driving occupations, but company representatives, maintenance workers and anyone who drives as part of his or her work duties is at risk. This includes staff driving to customers or clients and driving between sites.

## Legal duties and obligations around driving at work

As well the moral duty of employers to protect employees and members of the public, General Health and Safety Legislation covers all employers and workplaces.

This includes risks presented by driving at work.

In addition, the various UK Road Traffic Acts also have many provisions, which may apply to either the vehicles or the drivers. Employers should ensure that they comply with the relevant sections.

Drivers are required to comply with the Highway Code and other guidance relating to driving.

## Drivers' hours

Whilst the rules mainly address heavy goods vehicles over 3.5 tonnes and are regulated by European Community rules. You should consider setting realistic rules such as:

* Maximum daily driving limit: 4 ½ hours
* Weekly driving limit: 56 hours

## Reducing the risks from driving at work

The selection of drivers is also important and you should ensure that only fully trained, appropriately licensed, competent drivers are employed.

Other steps include:

* avoid setting unrealistic work schedules or deadlines, which may encourage drivers to exceed speed limits or take shortcuts or other risks
* make it clear drivers should not use mobile phones whilst driving. If this is unavoidable, they must be provided with an appropriate hands-free set.

## Developing a driving at work policy - good practices

As a nicenstripy franchisee you should draw up a policy for driving at work. It should include measures for staff using their own cars for work purposes.

## Points for employers As part of any Driving at Work Policy, employers should:

* make it clear that the employee must maintain their vehicle in a roadworthy condition if they are to use their own vehicle for work
* ensure that if the vehicle is over three years old it has a valid MOT certificate
* ensure the employee has a current driving licence
* ensure that the employee has appropriate insurance with cover for using the vehicle for business use (the employee should present copies of certificates annually, for inspection)
* ensure that the employee informs their line manager of any changes in circumstances such as penalty points, changes in insurer or vehicle used or use of any prescription medication or changes to health that affect their ability to drive safely

## Points for Employee Drivers Employee Drivers should:

* report any vehicle defects to their line manager and **never drive defective vehicles**
* be aware of what action needs to be taken in an emergency situation
* ensure they are physically fit to drive
* inform their line manager of any health problems or personal circumstances that could make driving hazardous
* never drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs
* remember that some prescription drugs can adversely affect the ability to drive and check with doctor or pharmacist
* have regular eye tests and ensure that any necessary corrective eyewear is worn
* avoid using a mobile phone while driving
* drive within speed limits and to the speed dictated by conditions, which may mean driving at less than the limit
* follow advice on route planning supplied by line management
* ensure that suitable breaks are included to prevent fatigue
* allow extra journey time and breaks where required, to allow for bad weather, traffic congestion, etc.
* stay calm and relaxed while driving and try to avoid situations which could lead to stress or road rage
* be aware that fatigue is more of a problem at certain times of day and when nearing the end of a long journey. There is an increased likelihood of falling asleep in the afternoon and in the early hours of the morning.
* Plan ahead and consider how, as a driver, you would take responsibility for vulnerable passengers or cargo in the event of a breakdown or other emergency.