

.....
Best practice in fleet management
Issue 01
.....

In this Fleet Matters:

DRIVERS - PROTECTING YOUR ASSETS

Who are your drivers?

What licences do your drivers need?

Do your drivers need training?

What help is available?
.....



.....

Who are your drivers?

.....

As an employer, you are responsible for the welfare of your staff while at work. According to the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, 'at work' includes when they are driving during the course of your employment. So, you have a **duty of care** towards:

- professional drivers, whether full- or part-time
- anyone driving a company car or other vehicle
- anyone, employee or otherwise, driving any vehicle in furtherance of your business

It makes no difference whether you own or lease vehicles, or have a **'grey' fleet** of employees and others using their own vehicles. You are responsible for the drivers while they are driving on your behalf. This does not include everyday commuting to their usual workplace, but covers almost everything else:

- one-off journeys to meetings, events, conferences etc.
- casual deliveries or calls made on the way to the usual workplace
- visits to sites other than the employee's usual workplace

Staff are as much 'at work' when driving for you as while in the workplace, so you have a corresponding responsibility for their actions and duty of care towards third parties.

Action point: Anybody likely to drive on your behalf must be issued with a written policy on work-related road safety. You have to protect them – and the business and third parties – by ensuring that you communicate policies relating to such issues as driver fatigue, time pressure, mobile phone use and other distractions.

.....

What licences do your drivers need?

.....

You can not take for granted that any of your drivers has a **current driving licence**, valid for the vehicle they drive. You should not even assume that they know the licensing requirements, which are always subject to change.

The current driving licence categories have been in force since January 2013, following several changes during preceding years – and categories were known as ‘groups’ until 1990. As an example, vehicles ranging from cars to 16-seat minibuses were all within the ‘A’ group of vehicle types during 1976-86, but are now sub-divided into four different categories.

You should also take into account that age restrictions apply. The minimum age for driving in the UK can be 16, 17, 19, 21 or 24, according to the vehicle category. Make no assumptions: a minibus might fall into either category D or D1 – or even D1E, if towing a trailer – and different minimum ages apply.

You can check driving licences manually – ensuring that you examine both the plastic photocard and the paper counterpart, but this is hardly foolproof. The only certain way of covering yourself is to check with DVLA before hiring a driver. Then, carry out regular reviews, at least annually.

Action point: Anybody likely to drive on your behalf must be **licence-checked** with DVLA. Check the type, any restrictions – ‘must wear glasses,’ for example – and review any driving offences. **Ensure that each and every driver is fully covered by insurance.**

.....

Do your drivers need training?

.....

If your drivers all have the current clean licences, of the right categories, you might assume that they need no **further training**. That could be an expensive assumption, costing your business money every time that a vehicle takes to the road. Acquiring the knowledge and skills to pass a driving test is only the beginning of learning to drive.

Few people drive with maximum cost-efficiency. Almost all drivers could benefit from appropriate training to reduce fuel consumption, reduce vehicle wear and tear, minimise service and repair costs and increase their safety on the road. **Effective training** need not even be vehicle-based, although this will depend upon the course objectives.

Significant benefits are available from classroom-based training, which offers the advantage of allowing a number of drivers to receive consistent training concurrently. Potential topics could include journey management and safety, driver risk workshops. As an example, the classroom is an ideal forum for minimising future risk to drivers, and limiting corporate exposure, through teaching the correct actions following a road accident.

E-learning and simulator training can deliver lasting impact in such areas as hazard perception and speed awareness. These methods can be especially appropriate when training needs to be conducted outside of normal working hours. E-learning is particularly suitable for quickly and cost-effectively targeting a geographically dispersed workforce, such as a national sales team.

Sometimes, there is no substitute for in-vehicle training, which allows the trainer to observe a driver in real situations and, where appropriate, demonstrate. Training can range from improving whole-life vehicle costs through eco-driving courses, to reducing on-site bumps by teaching low-speed manoeuvring.

Action point: Compare fuel consumption figures to identify drivers who would benefit from improved driving habits.
Ensure that all drivers know what to do following an accident to protect themselves and the company.
Consult drivers themselves, in confidence, on their own and colleagues' training requirements.

.....

What help is available?

.....

The Fuel Card Group has years of experience of helping with cost-effective fleet management. That expertise is available through a growing range of specialist products and services created to help fleet managers.

One of these products is **MileageCount**, a next-generation fleet automation software, supported by bespoke training services. It offers everything you need to ensure that your drivers are legally compliant, fully trained:

- fast DVLA checking of **driving licences, MOT certificates** and **vehicle insurance**
- complete coverage, regardless of vehicle ownership
- **customised training programmes**, incorporating in-vehicle, simulator, classroom and e-learning

Action point: **Request a free Fleet Safety Health Check** from the Fuel Card Group and ask for a no-obligation demonstration of MileageCount capabilities.

Contact us:

T:..... 0844 870 9741

F:..... 0844 870 7598

E:..... info@mileagecount.co.uk

W:..... www.mileagecount.co.uk

A:..... The Fuel Card Group

.....The White Barn, Manor Farm

..... Wantage, Oxfordshire OX12 8NE



incorporating

