

**ESSENTIAL  
STANDARD  
no.23**

# Occupational Road Risk



## KEY MESSAGES

- Employees driving on company business must be checked and authorised by means of a Permit to Drive.
- Drivers must be competent to operate their vehicle and be fit to drive (well rested and never under the influence of alcohol and drugs).
- Plan journeys always to include rest stops where messages can be checked and calls returned.
- Always pull over to a safe place before making a call.
- Leave incoming calls to go to voicemail - nothing is more important than the driver's safety.
- It is illegal to use a hand-held phone while driving.

## 1. Introduction

Thames Water and its supply chain partners combined drive in excess of 80 million miles per year on some of the UK's most congested roads. Driving is one of the most dangerous work-related activities we ask our employees to undertake, with an estimated one in four deaths and injuries on Britain's roads involving someone driving on company business.

## 2. Permit to Drive – Authorisations

Permits to Drive ensure employees who drive on company business have:

- a valid UK driving licence
- a valid licence according to the vehicle they operate
- suitable eye sight or corrective vision lenses



and they meet the additional requirements when driving their own vehicles, such as:

- business insurance
- vehicle meets legal requirements of the UK
- vehicle is roadworthy



Permits to Drive should be reviewed and revised every 6 months.

## 3. Risk Assessment – Fitness to Drive



Working hours must be monitored and managed so they're in line with EU Drivers' Hours and the Working Time Directive. This will ensure adequate breaks are taken to reduce fatigue. For further information please refer to *Essential Standard 25 Tiredness and Fatigue*.



Random drug and alcohol testing must be done to protect against drivers driving under the influence.



Prescription drugs or medication must be reviewed to ensure whoever is taking it, does not drive if it will impair their driving ability, for example by causing drowsiness, etc.



Employees driving on company business must ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy, subject to regular inspection and being maintained in line with the manufacturer's specification.

## 4. Driver Induction

An effective driver induction must be in place to ensure employees are provided with:



First use and weekly vehicle check requirements



Safe loading and payloads including securing loads (e.g. falls from height)



Responsibilities as a Company ambassador while on the road i.e. being courteous, complying with legal requirements (speed limits, road signs, etc.)



Safe unloading/manual handling



Company vehicle maintenance requirements and how to report and organise defects to be fixed/serviced/repaired



Streetworks requirements. For further information please refer to *Essential Standard 16 Streetworks*.



Requirements and details to report vehicle collisions and damage



Driver's handbook



Vehicle familiarisation to cover both the vehicle and the fit out/conversion



Company policies:  
- Code of Conduct  
- Drugs and Alcohol Policy  
- Mobile Device Policy  
- Company Vehicle Use Policy



Driver and vehicle hygiene requirements e.g. no smoking



Any additional information for employees driving HGV's, using trailers, etc.

## 5. Safe Driving Programme

A safe driving programme can educate, support employees' driving and reduce road traffic collisions.

In order to assess driver risk, take note of the following:

- Common risks associated with job roles/locations
- Employee assessments to determine individual development needs
- Claims history
- Vehicle maintenance history
- Customer complaints
- Telematics
- Mileage covered
- Driving licence endorsements



A responsible person must conduct post-incident interviews to understand the cause so that the appropriate support and education can be provided.

### Safe driving model example:



## 6. Mobile Devices

Research shows that around 7,800 people are killed or seriously injured every year in road traffic collisions involving someone who was driving, riding, or otherwise using the road for work purposes. That's 150 incidents per week and makes driving one of the most dangerous work activities for most people. If an investigation determines an incident was caused by an employee driver using their phone, criminal or civil proceedings could be brought against the organisation.

Drivers who use phones while driving (hand-held or hands-free) are:

- 4 times more likely to crash
- less aware of surroundings
- fail to see road signs
- fail to maintain proper lane position and steady speed
- more likely to tailgate
- react slower
- take longer to brake
- more likely to enter unsafe gaps in traffic
- feel more stressed and frustrated



**The use of phones while driving is strictly prohibited.**