

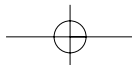
Stay safe on the road

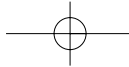


Driving Standards Code of Practice



Essex County Council





Preface

Road vehicles are essential to the County Council's operation. They include delivery vehicles, mini-buses, road maintenance vehicles, lease cars and employees own cars.

The use of vehicles carries with it a significant risk of accidents leading to death and injury to employees and others. The County Council has a moral as well as a legal duty to adopt a proactive approach to managing *occupational road risk* (i.e. risk of injury from vehicles being used at work). Under the Health and Safety at Work Act it is obliged to do all that is "reasonably practicable" to protect its staff who may be using vehicles as part of their job. This applies whether the vehicle is owned by the County Council, by the employee or any other party.

It is also necessary for the County Council to manage occupational road risk in order to control the very significant business losses which arise from at work road accidents, which include not only direct accident costs but also lost staff time, higher insurance premiums and poor public image. Occupational road risk must be managed in exactly the same way as any other health and safety at work problem, following modern risk management principles as described in the Health and Safety Executive's publication "Successful Health and Safety Management".

The purpose of this Code of Practice is to ensure that risks arising from vehicle use are properly assessed so that all necessary control measures can be identified, implemented and monitored.

Statement of Intent

This Code of Practice outlines the organisation and arrangements for implementing the County Council's *Health, Safety and Welfare Policy* with regard to occupational road risk.

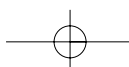
The County Council recognises its legal and moral duties to ensure occupational road risk is effectively managed. It will do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure high standards of health, safety and welfare are achieved and maintained for all of its employees who use vehicles as part of their work.

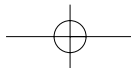
Given its status as a Local Authority and Highways Authority, there is a particular expectation that employees of the County Council will observe high standards of driving safety.

The County Council's objectives are:

- To ensure all vehicles used on County business are roadworthy and properly insured;
- To ensure realistic journey times are set;
- To ensure members of staff plan journey times properly;
- To look at the circumstances of incidents involving County Council vehicles, including lease cars, and accidents involving employees' private cars being used on County Council business and to ensure line managers of staff involved in such incidents discuss the causes and make recommendations for preventing future accidents;
- To consider road safety awareness training for staff and provide training where considered necessary;
- To take disciplinary action where appropriate;
- To ensure Directorates have appropriate Codes of Practice, etc. in place for activities such as use of minibuses, transporting clients, etc.

The County Council strongly discourages staff from drinking alcohol prior to driving as part of their work or at any time in a County vehicle. Staff must in any event stay within the legal limits for alcohol.



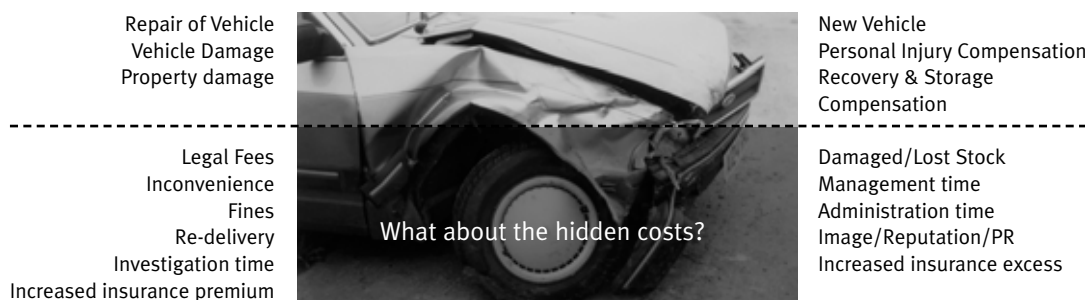


Occupational Road Risk: What are the Issues

Annually around 3,500 people are killed and more than 44,500 seriously injured as a result of accidents on Britain's roads. It has been estimated that about 25% of these accidents probably involved vehicles which were being driven by people who were at work at the time (this excludes commuting). RoSPA estimates that as many as 1,000 people die every year in occupational accidents on our roads compared with less than 350 in other kinds of work related accidents. The annual average probability of an occupational fatality for a driver covering more than 25,000 miles per year is similar to the probability of an occupational fatality in coal mining and higher than in construction work, both recognised as high risk occupations.

Corporate Liability – Costs

£2.7 billion is lost in 'at work' road accidents



Taking action to prevent vehicle accidents does mean committing additional resources but the potential savings can be very significant.

The Law:

The Road Traffic Acts, supported by the Highway Code, are the main legislation governing road safety. There are also regulations covering the construction and use of vehicles. Duties imposed by this legislation fall on the shoulders of road users and vehicle owners.

In addition, where vehicles are being used or driven on the highway by persons working for an employer, the Health and Safety at Work Act (and sub-ordinate legislation) is also relevant. This requires employers to have safe systems of work in place which reduce work related risks to employees and others, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations employers are required to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risk.

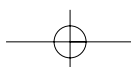
If there is a breach of the law involving a County Council vehicle or a private vehicle being used on County Council business, both the driver and the County Council could face prosecution. It is possible that a driver's line manager could face legal action if County Council procedures have not been implemented.

Responsibilities

Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring that this Code of Practice is implemented in their Service Group.

Service Group Health and Safety Co-ordinators are responsible for co-ordinating the implementation of this Code of Practice. This includes liaising with the County Risk Manager and Head of Transport as appropriate.

Service Group Health and Safety Co-ordinators are also responsible for ensuring the Group has adequate Codes of Practices covering, for example, use of minibuses and transporting clients.





Line Managers: This section applies to any Manager who directly manages other staff who use road vehicles for County business. Responsibilities include:

- ensuring realistic journey times are set.
- monitoring staff to ensure they allow adequate time.
- establishing procedures for the use of mobile telephones. Staff should not be expected to use a 'phone whilst driving. If there is a need to contact staff while they might be driving, ensure they are provided with voice mail or call divert facilities and it is made clear that they should stop regularly to check for messages and return calls. Where contact is unavoidable the vehicle should be fitted with hands-free equipment and communication should be kept to a minimum.
- setting a good example and strongly encouraging drivers on County Council business or in County Council vehicles not to drink alcohol prior to driving, and ensuring that alternatives to alcoholic drinks are available at all work related functions.
- discussing incidents/accidents with the staff involved.
- ensuring procedures are completed for reporting.
- notifying their line manager of particular problems.
- ensuring that County Council requirements are met regarding driver training.
- checking Driving Licences and, where appropriate, addressing the issue of vehicle driving during staff performance management reviews(PMR).
- seeking advice about staff who have a high incident rate with regard to available courses of action and identifying any driver training needs.
- dealing appropriately with any information about driver performance from the Head of Transport, the Risk Manager or at annual review(PMR).
- where appropriate, implementing disciplinary procedures.

All Drivers:

All staff who drive a vehicle in the course of their work:

- are strongly encouraged not to drink and drive and must in any event stay within the legal limits for alcohol.
- must not drive if experiencing drowsiness or fatigue.
- must observe speed limits.
- must follow the County Council's Drivers Advice leaflet.
- must report to their Line Manager any road traffic incidents which occur during the course of their work (and at any time in the case of lease cars) and any moving traffic offences.
- must ensure their vehicle is in a fit and serviceable condition and not overloaded and carry out routine checks prior to driving.
- must be adequately insured for business use.

Drivers of lease cars or County vehicles must additionally follow the requirement of those schemes for notifying the Council's Insurance Section of such accidents.

Driving Standards

All drivers must comply with the Highway Code and a copy has been provided for all staff who drive on County business. Further copies of this and the advice leaflet will be supplied for inclusion in all new staff induction packs.

In addition the County Council has produced an "Advice to Drivers" leaflet which must also be observed.

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