Info Sheet

# Risk Management

This info sheet may be useful for small and medium enterprises.

## Risk Assessment

Undertaking a risk assessment for any work-related driving requires you to:

- Identify the road traffic hazards – find out what could cause harm
- Assess the risks – understand the nature of the possible harm
- Control the risks – in the most effective reasonably practicable manner
- Review hazards and control measures to ensure they are working.

Talk with your workers/employees about the hazards and risks associated with your organisation's work-related driving, including those who drive extensively as well as those who only drive occasionally, to get the best understanding of the hazards and have the best controls in place.

## Hazards and Controls

Driving motor vehicles is a significant hazard which may be a regular or irregular part of a worker's day. The likely hazards and possible controls may include:

| Likely Hazards | Possible Controls |
|---|---|
| **Journey**<br>Additional kilometres increase exposure, and the journey itself presents hazards through poor choice of route/vehicle, or poor scheduling/fatigue, or changes in weather or road conditions | Reduce driving exposure by planning journeys, grouping activities geographically, and using practicable public transport alternatives |
| | Routinely monitor adequacy of time to complete work and travel between clients |
| | Establish a process for ensuring changes to the journey are adequately managed |
| **Road**<br>Less trafficked and secondary roads are often not as safe, while intersections, single carriageway rural roads, and high pedestrian areas present location specific hazards | Use major roads as they tend to be safer, and always stay within the speed limits which apply |
| **Speed**<br>Speed limits in Australia are generally above established safe speed thresholds, requiring attention to appropriate speed under the legal limit<br>Any travel for whatever time above speed limits is particularly dangerous, significantly elevating the frequency and severity risk of a crash | Provide and demonstrate direction on this critical safety issue |
| | Consider in-vehicle monitoring or systems to alert or eliminate travel over the speed limit |
| | Ensure that schedules involving driving are routinely checked to prevent inadvertent encouragement of speeding |
| | Consider setting lower speed limits within the organisation, particularly on high-risk or remote roads – for example, 80 km/h on unsealed roads |

| Likely Hazards | Possible Controls |
|---|---|
| **Vehicle**<br>Not all new vehicles provide the same level of safety, aftermarket modifications can create a hazard (such as altering the centre of gravity), and core maintenance on tyres, brakes, steering, lights and seatbelts needs to be kept up | Consider carefully the most appropriate vehicle type for the work to be undertaken |
| | Specify ANCAP five star safety ratings (widely available across all light vehicle ranges) when purchasing new vehicles; safety ratings are also available for used vehicles |
| | Ensure only essential modifications are undertaken and will not affect safety performance of the vehicle such as stability and braking power |
| | Ensure programmed maintenance of all vehicles in accordance with manufacturer's requirements |
| | Ensure appropriate information and instruction for workers on operating the allocated vehicle safely |
| | Secure all equipment or bulky items in the vehicle's boot or behind a cargo barrier |
| **Driver**<br>A current driver licence is sufficient for most tasks, but needs to be checked and maintained, and assessed against the type of vehicle required and roads used. Driver perception and management of risk is critical, and fitness before and during each journey.<br>The main issues are likely to be:<br>• Excess or inappropriate speed<br>• Impairment by alcohol, drugs or fatigue<br>• Distractions from mobile phones or client behaviour<br>• Immaturity and inexperience | Ensure drivers are appropriately licensed and report any driving offences, or changes in medical fitness |
| | Develop and communicate a safe driving policy emphasising main issues in law, and go further to address operational issues as required – for example:<br>• no mobile phone use when in the vehicle<br>• zero alcohol or drug use<br>• no solo driving within 12 months of a full license |
| | Routinely reinforce safety requirements as part of staff feedback/performance talks |
| **Incident/Crash Management**<br>Slow or poor quality response to a crash can directly impact upon the severity of any injury, requiring appropriate alert and response systems to be in place, particularly for solo or remote drivers | Provide a reliable means of communication between the worker, supervisor and/or emergency services if an incident occurs |
| | Encourage and monitor reporting of on-road or in-vehicle incidents |
| | Maintain and monitor a record of incidents |

## Management

A simple safety management document can be useful for setting expectations on the safe use of vehicles. A simple checklist:

- Ensure you and/or your Senior Management is committed to work health and safety
- Develop a health and safety policy, with employer and employee obligations
- Consult with your employees about the selection and safe use of vehicles
- Have a process to ensure workers are licensed and fit to use their assigned vehicles
- Conduct risk and hazard assessments relating to safe use of vehicles and have a hazard checklist to encourage reporting
- Train and induct your workers on the use of the specific vehicles they need to use
- Model and reinforce safety awareness and processes.

**Publishing information |** This info sheet is part of the *Vehicles as a Workplace* guidance downloadable from the Work Health and Safety Queensland website www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/transport.

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