

RoSPA has long campaigned for organisations to adopt a proactive risk management approach to reducing the risks connected with 'at work' vehicle use, tackling this issue within the framework which they will already have in place for managing other aspects of health and safety at work. In this Q&A, Kevin Clinton, RoSPA head of road safety, provides an update.



Q What do you see as the main opportunities and challenges for occupational road safety in 2014?

A Our biggest challenge is increasing awareness about occupational road risk, particularly among SMEs and micro businesses that don't have the resources or systems that larger corporates do. There are plenty of examples of SMEs that are making progress, though, which is encouraging.

As far as opportunities go, RoSPA is about to publish a strategic review on managing occupational road risk (MORR) and I hope that this will raise awareness. RoSPA started work in this area in the mid 90s, when it was still a peripheral topic, and now occupational road risk is fairly central to the road safety agenda. We have moved a long way in the last 15 to 20 years.

Q Are companies making the best use of telematics ['black boxes' fitted to vehicles to record driving performance] – and if not, what more could they do?

A Some companies are making good use of telematics – it tends to be the larger companies. But a lot more could be done as the evidence is that driver telematics is an effective way of monitoring and improving driving standards. It should not be seen as a stand alone measure but part of an overall risk management system. Workers and their representatives must be consulted about its introduction and use.

Also, I think we need to see improvements on how the data is used – and this is most likely to happen when the driver and their manager sit down together and review the data. There is some benefit in simply having the kit in the vehicle, but not as much as when it is used proactively.

RoSPA will soon publish a new free guide for employers, *Driving for Work: telematics*, on our website, and that will give more guidance for employers.

Q Do you think that companies are doing enough to manage their 'grey' fleets?

A In our experience, via contact with customers and entrants to our MORR awards, companies are much less likely to be managing their grey fleet than their company fleet, even though employers have the same duty of care to these drivers. It's an area that is more difficult to manage than other areas of occupational driving and there is certainly room for improvement.

Q Speed, fatigue and distractions are still significant factors in occupational road risk (ORR). What signs of progress can you see in how companies are managing these risks?

A All three are still major factors in road risk generally, not just ORR. We know that overall accidents are falling and we have evidence that the number of drivers exceed-

ing the speed limit has fallen, but many drivers do still exceed the speed limit, and we know that speed was a factor in 173 fatal road crashes in 2012, and driving within the limit, but too fast for the conditions, was involved in a further 167 fatal crashes. Drivers using their mobile phones is still very common. Most companies have policies on using mobile phones when driving but sometimes the policy only covers hand held phones.

As far as managing fatigue goes, it's important to plan and manage the journey and take overnight stops where necessary. Given that working journeys are often long, fatigue is a particular risk for occupational drivers – not just those whose job is driving but millions of workers who cannot do their job without driving.

Overall, driving for work is higher risk than other forms of driving because you are not in full control of your journey: you need to get





somewhere for the demands of the job or your own perceived demands of the job. Some companies are more aware of these pressures – but it is very variable and tends to be the more responsible companies that take it more seriously.

Q What advice would you give for companies starting out on their MORR journey, particularly micro, small and medium-sized businesses?

A My advice for any company starting to manage occupational road risk for the first time would be to cover the basics first: check driving licences; assess drivers' abilities; monitor their driving through telematics – which can pay for itself – and make sure people are not sacrificing common sense safety measures to get the job done as quickly as possible. The key to tackling these issues is training the line mangers of those who drive as part of their job. Directors have a key role to play and all boards need to review their occupational road safety policies and performance.

There's plenty of advice and information

For more information about managing occupational road risk, including key developments in RoSPA's campaign, see www.rospace.com/drivertraining/morr/background/

Free driving for work guidance can be downloaded from: www.rospace.com/drivertraining/morr/resources

available from RoSPA and from other organisations such as the Occupational Road Safety Alliance (ORSA) and the Scottish Occupational Road Safety Alliance (ScORSA) that RoSPA has strong links with.

Q We know that adopting a risk management approach based on sound evidence is still the best way to manage driver safety at work. Do you think that this approach is becoming more widespread?

A Yes, I think so – although again it's more common in larger companies who are able to access the evidence. Many companies are putting lot of effort into monitoring what is happening and measuring how well they are doing. They know that if they are not

monitoring what is happening, they will miss the evidence.

We are still lacking an evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the MORR measures although this is an area that RoSPA is actively looking at. In the meantime, I recommend that companies set aims and objectives, evaluate and measure their results.

Q Looking ahead to the next five or ten years, what changes would you like to see in occupational road safety?

A I would like to see a more proactive approach from HSE and more active liaison between HSE and the police on MORR incidents and MORR generally. I'd also want occupational road injuries and deaths to be included in RIDDOR – this would give us more data and raise awareness among companies.

I'd like more help for companies so that they could evaluate their MORR efforts and improve what they are doing, and finally I'd like to find more ways to make MORR more relevant and accessible for micro-businesses and SMEs.

A lot can be achieved through benchmarking, business-to-business learning as well as learning from in-depth investigation of work related road crashes.

Q If you could personally change one piece of government policy or legislation in relation to occupational road risk, what would it be, and why?

A There's no one specific policy, but overall I'd like to see a more proactive approach and leadership on this issue. We have made a lot of progress on MORR and now we need to re-invigorate it and spread it to micro-businesses and SMEs, and get more evidence on what is effective.



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Dr Karen McDonnell, RoSPA OS&H policy adviser and head of RoSPA Scotland, gives a brief overview of the Society's current OS&H focus

LAST month, on Workers' Memorial Day, RoSPA's National Occupational Safety and Health Committee (NOSH) launched a new website which focuses on the history of health and safety at work (www.historyofosh.org.uk).

The site includes a brief history of 'the origins, development and implementation of health and safety law in the UK, 1802-2013' (by David Eves) as well as a H&S timeline which begins in 1802 with the *Factories Act* – the first Act of the Parliament in the UK intended to protect the welfare of people at work.

Over 200 years later, the number of fatalities as a result of accidents in the workplace is at an all time low in the UK, but accidents in general are the principal cause of premature, preventable mortality for most of a person's life, which is why RoSPA's mission to 'save lives and reduce injuries' is so important, whether it is preventing injuries in the workplace, on the road, in the home or during leisure activities.

As RoSPA OS&H policy adviser, my role is to ensure RoSPA remains at the hub of policy-making decisions relating to accident prevention. In the workplace this is achieved by working in partnership with key stakeholders and via the promotion of our key issues such as driving for

work, accident investigation and improving OS&H performance by encouraging higher performing companies to share their health and safety knowledge with other firms, particularly SMEs – an issue our national committee will focus on over the next year, and one which in Scotland has already proved successful (see the Scottish Higher Performers Forum – www.rospace.com/occupationalsafety/affiliatedgroups/scottishhigherperformers/).

I believe this sharing of knowledge is vital if we are to save lives and prevent injuries, and that as OS&H professionals our influence is not, and should not be, limited solely to the workplace. For example, initiatives such as 24/7 safety enable health and safety knowledge gained in the workplace to filter back to prevent injuries in the home and on the road, and community projects allow firms and their employees to share their safety knowledge with their local community.

Action-orientated partnership working is fundamental to improving safety performance, and the workplace is pivotal to achieving success. Unlocking the potential of individual practitioners across organisations (safety reps, supervisors, managers, directors, H&S professionals) is critical, as is the sharing of evidence based good practice across the occupational safety and health agenda.



Dr Karen McDonnell, CFIOSH, Chartered FCIPD, CBiol MBS, AIEMA, MSP

- Joined RoSPA in 1989 to deliver occupational safety portfolio within Scotland.
- 2005, appointed head of RoSPA Scotland, responsible for the management of activities linked to the RoSPA's mission 'to save lives and reduce injuries' within Scotland and Northern Ireland. This includes the delivery of home and road safety related grant programmes funded by Scottish Government and NI Assembly, and providing the secretariat for the Cross Parliamentary Group on Safety Awareness and Accident Prevention.
- Joined IOSH in 1989. Instrumental in formation of IOSH Forth and Tay District of Edinburgh Branch. Past chair of this group and IOSH Scotland. Four years as an IOSH vice-president, and elected to IOSH Council in September 2013.
- Chairperson of Professional Organisations in Occupational Safety and Health (POOSH) Scotland since 2005 and represents the POOSH Scotland membership on the Partnership on Health and Safety in Scotland Committee.

RoSPA is at the hub of partnership working across the UK occupational health and safety network, and we have access to tens of thousands of employees through our membership network. Engage with us, connect to us, link to our various networks. Share your success. Help us add to the evidence base of effective workplace occupational safety and health interventions and by doing this support individuals and organisations across the UK. Email: kmcdonnell@rospace.com