



2010

Driving For Work – Your Questions Answered



Driving for Work – Your Questions Answered.

What is Driving for Work?

This is the activity of driving on the road for work purposes. It includes the risks posed to workers themselves and also to those not at work who may be affected by the work activity, such as pedestrians and other road users.

Is commuting to work counted as Driving for Work?

No, driving for work excludes commuting except where the person's journey starts from their home and they are travelling to a work location that is not their normal place of work.

What types of injuries are associated with Driving for Work?

Employees may be at risk of suffering a serious injury or being killed if they are involved in a road traffic collision. Employees can also suffer musculoskeletal injuries through poor posture whilst driving or driving for long periods of time. Slips, trips and falls resulting in sprains and strains are also common occurrences and normally occur whilst the person is mounting or dismounting the vehicle.

But my staff don't Drive for Work?

Are you sure, many workers drive for work, for some workers this is their main job whilst for others driving may only form a minor part of their job and be carried out occasionally.

As an employer how can I have any influence over employees when they are Driving for Work?

Although the driver is ultimately responsible for how a vehicle is driven on the road, as an employer you can have a significant influence on the driver and the vehicle. Naturally, you will not have the same degree of direct control over driving for work whilst it is being carried out on the road as you would have in the workplace. However, you can take action beforehand to ensure that the risks associated with driving for work are properly controlled. Such actions will include:

- Driver selection, vetting and licence checks, for example, ensuring that drivers have the correct licence for the vehicle being driven.
- Selecting the safest company vehicles possible and ensuring that they are fit for purpose.

- Maintaining company vehicles.
- Risk assessing driving for work activities.
- Providing instruction, training and information such as a driver's handbook.
- Providing safety and personal protective equipment, for example, high visibility jackets and warning triangles in case of a vehicle breakdown and as appropriate, suitable safety footwear and weather proof clothing.
- Promoting good driver behaviour amongst staff.
- Safe scheduling and planning of journeys so that drivers have enough time to carry out the journey safely. Inadequate planning can result in poor driver behaviour, speeding and driver fatigue.

As an employee what should I do when Driving for Work?

Always follow the Rules of the Road and follow the driver safety tips.

So who is ultimately responsible for safe Driving for Work?

Safe driving for work is a shared responsibility between the employer and the employee.

Are there any benefits to managing Driving for Work?

Managing driving for work has many benefits. It can reduce accidents, lost staff time, insurance premiums, damage to vehicles, operating costs and environmental impact. Other benefits include improved efficiency, morale and company image. Safe driving for work is good business; it protects your staff and the bottom line.

What laws govern Driving for Work?

There are three main types of law that apply to driving for work:

- Road Traffic law;
- Health and Safety law;
- EU rules on driving time.

Who investigates Work-Related Road Traffic Collisions?

An Garda Síochána is responsible for enforcing road traffic law and where necessary will investigate work-related road traffic collisions on the public road. In some cases, the Gardaí may carry out a joint investigation with the Health and Safety Authority. This is usually where health and safety legislation addresses the underlying cause(s) more effectively than road traffic legislation.

What causes Work-Related Road Traffic Collisions?

There are many underlying causes of such collisions. Some of the main causes of work related road traffic collisions are:

- Unsafe vehicles;
- Unsafe, long or unplanned routes;
- Stressed, tired, distracted or untrained drivers;
- Poor driving techniques;
- Poor road or weather conditions.

Are there certain categories of vehicles that are involved in Work-Related Road Traffic deaths?

Trucks and lorries tend to be the main type of vehicles involved in work related road traffic deaths, but cars, vans and construction vehicles such as excavators and dumpers also feature. Incidents involving construction vehicles tend to occur as the vehicle is leaving the construction site.

Do Work-Related Road Traffic Collisions have to be reported to the Health and Safety Authority?

Yes, if as a result of a road traffic collision whilst driving for work, the person dies or sustains an injury which prevents them from performing their normal work duties for more than three calendar days (excluding the day of the accident), this must be reported to the Authority using the Incident Report System. Incidents that occur while a person is commuting either to or from work do not need to be reported.

How do I manage Driving for Work?

For further assistance, see the Health and Safety Authority's and the Road Safety Authority's CD: Rom on driving for work.

Can I use a hands free kit with my mobile phone?

Using a hands free kit is not against the law but it will affect your concentration and this puts other road users at risk. You could be prosecuted for dangerous driving, careless driving or driving without due care and attention. When driving it is recommended that your mobile phone is switched off or put on silent or meeting option before starting

your journey. For further information see the Road Safety Authority's Mobile Phones and Driving Leaflet.

If I am driving and feel sleepy what should I do?

As a temporary measure, stop your vehicle somewhere safe and have a strong caffeine drink. Then take a 15 minute nap which will allow the caffeine to take effect. But remember the only real cure for sleepiness is to get enough sleep. Turning up the radio and opening windows will **not** help you.

As an employer do I have to provide welfare facilities for visiting drivers?

There is no specific legal requirement to provide welfare facilities for visiting drivers. However, it would not be an unreasonable request for a driver who visits a work premises, for example, making collections or deliveries, to ask to use the toilet or hand-washing facilities, especially if the driver is a regular visitor to the premises.

To facilitate the driver, the driver's employer and the employer at the workplace could reach a prior agreement on access to the welfare facilities, including toilets, hand-washing and canteen facilities. Where self-employed contract drivers are involved, the client or distributor on whose behalf the goods are being transporting could simply notify recipients of the goods that the driver may need to have access to welfare facilities and agree use of the facilities prior to the journey being undertaken.

In providing access to welfare facilities, employers must ensure that the visiting driver can safely access the facilities, that there are clearly signposted pedestrian routes and that the driver is not at risk of being hit or run over by a vehicle.

Some drivers may need to observe the vehicle being loaded and as a result are often at risk of a workplace incident. Providing a designated safe area for visiting drivers to observe the loading process, which has easy, safe access to toilet and refreshment facilities can significantly reduce the risk of an incident occurring.

Where can I get further information on road safety?

See the Road Safety Authority's website at www.rsa.ie.