

ALL IN THE MIND



With around 90 per cent of all vehicle collisions attributed to driver error, it's hardly surprising that changing the attitude and behaviour of drivers can have a significant impact on fleet accident statistics. Following on from last month's article on the Road Safety and Corporate Manslaughter bills, Mel Dawson, Sales Director for ALD Automotive, explains why getting inside the mind of company car drivers should be a key part of any risk management strategy.

There are compelling legal, human and financial reasons why fleets should assess the risks to individuals in their organisation who drive on company business. The legal framework is something of a moveable feast at present, with new legislation expected this summer in the form of the Road Safety Bill and the Corporate Manslaughter Bill. However, these new bills notwithstanding, there exist already many good reasons to assess the risk to fleet drivers, and many good tools to help companies do so.

The financial arguments in favour of driver risk assessment are equally strong. Work related road crashes cost more than some people think, reducing company profits and compromising business continuity and efficiency. On average, fleets have a crash frequency of 50%. As many as one-third of all serious road injuries and fatalities involve someone who is driving for work, and they cost UK businesses £3 Billion per annum.

The human reasons are likewise clear, and companies which are seen by their staff to be taking an interest in their welfare often benefit from higher productivity as a result. Indeed, the HSE booklet *Driving at Work - Managing Work-Related Road Safety* (right) makes frequent reference to the importance of employees' health - both physical and mental - and points to the potential for reducing stress and improving morale through risk management programmes.

In recent years, much media attention has been focused on vehicle-related areas such as ABS braking, stability control and traction control as ways of reducing road traffic accidents, while traffic calming schemes and speed limit enforcement

systems also regularly hit the headlines. However, with driver error being responsible for so many collisions, it is also important to look at ways of identifying - and then training - potentially high-risk drivers.

Numerous online facilities have been offered over the years, but in our opinion, none is as effective as the Fleet Driver Risk Index (FDRI) developed by Cranfield University and now offered exclusively to fleets through driver training specialist Peak Performance. ALD Automotive's exclusive partnership with Peak Performance makes the FDRI programme available to fleets as part of ALD's DriveSafe package, which provides a simple and affordable solution to address fleets' duty of care obligations.

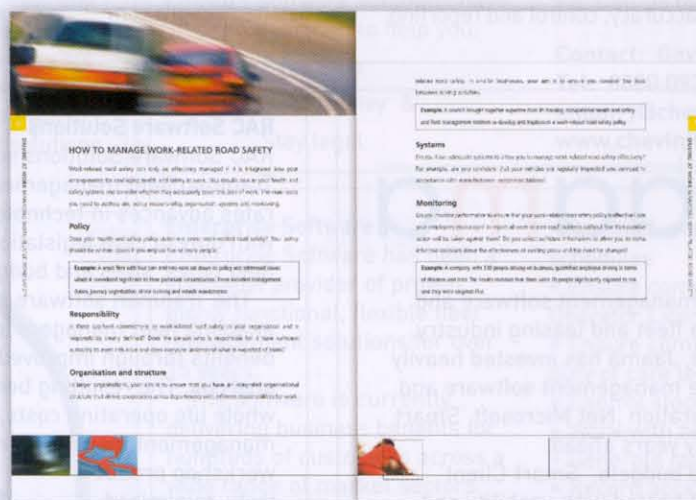
The FDRI is an online driving psychometric assessment undertaken by employees who regularly drive for work. With several scales to measure both

behavioural factors and situational factors that are known to increase the risk of collisions, FDRI is based on over 20 years academic research into the psychology of driver behaviour. Once the employee has completed the assessment - which takes approximately 30 minutes - a report is generated for each driver. The FDRI report identifies which drivers are at risk, but also and most importantly it predicts *why* drivers are at a high risk.

The ability to "drill" into the mind of each individual is vital when assessing what influences behaviour. That is why a psychometric-based assessment is far superior to many "off-the-shelf" online driver training packages, which are very simplistic in their approach. Psychometric tests are widely used in the military, clinical practice and industry to make important decisions about individuals in the areas of recruitment, selection and training. To prevent cheating, a "lie scale" is built into the FDRI - a proven way to identify candidates who are trying to present themselves in a favourable light.

By identifying the specific behaviours that contribute to a driver's high risk of an accident, companies are able to specify more targeted training interventions aimed at reducing the risk. The driver risks identified by the FDRI can then be addressed through one of a series of training courses developed specifically to

address the behavioural issues identified by the FDRI. These courses are provided by our partner, Peak Performance - the UK's leading work-related driver training organisation. For more information on DriveSafe, please contact ukmarketing@aldautomotive.com



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