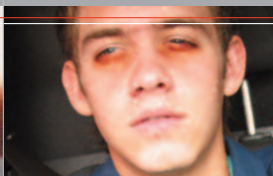




# How does your company measure up?

Fleet Safety Forum subscriber report 2011



For the first time, Brake's Fleet Safety Forum has surveyed fleet managers who subscribe to the Forum to compare their road risk management practices.

We have chosen to focus on some of the most controversial areas, where managers often face significant challenges in implementing safety improvements. The results are given in this report and show that many subscriber companies have taken significant steps forward in improving the safety of their fleets in these difficult areas but that many have not. These findings indicate that even at the most safety-conscious end of the fleet business there is scope for improvement, particularly in these more challenging areas of road risk management.

The following five topics were identified as among the most challenging for fleet managers to implement and were focussed on in this survey:

- grey fleets maintenance
- hands-free mobile phones
- effective use of in-house data
- community engagement
- drugs policies

While areas such as drug testing are controversial to implement because of wrongly-perceived issues around employee rights, others are incorrectly considered to risk productivity, such as bans on hands-free mobile phone use, or are simply overlooked, such as grey fleet risk management or the value of community engagement and data collection. For all these reasons and more, these areas made the Fleet Safety Forum top five toughest tests.

145 organisations of all sizes operating thousands of vehicles around the globe responded to the survey. Respondent organisations came from the public and private sector.

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## Grey fleets

There is no evidence that work travel in employee-owned vehicles is any safer than in employer-owned vehicles. Yet the risk management of grey fleets, or work related travel in employee-owned vehicles is often overlooked by employers and employees. Many companies apply less stringent regulations, or none, to grey fleet vehicles. For example, in the UK, research shows employee-owned cars used for business are nearly seven years old<sup>1</sup> on average and will therefore not benefit from the latest safety technology, while, on average, company cars leave service after four years<sup>2</sup>.

Grey fleets are part of a company's legal responsibility to manage their duty of care to employees driving for work. Failing to manage grey fleets may leave a company open to prosecution and compensation claims following a crash.

### **We asked: Does your company's risk management policies on vehicle checks and maintenance extend to employees using their own vehicles for work purposes?**

Nearly one in three - 32% - of Fleet Safety Forum subscriber companies reported that their policies on vehicle checks and maintenance do not extend to grey fleets.

Geoffrey Bray, chairman of vehicle management company Fleet Support Group, said: "It is FSG's experience that when many companies decide to offer cash alternatives to a company car, driver policies, often laid out in a driver handbook, are not followed through with audits and checks. It is absolutely vital that these happen to ensure safety and that companies can produce a paper trail to protect the company against prosecution. Companies have a responsibility to take the safety of grey fleets seriously and it is in their interest to do so."

### **Advice on managing grey fleets**

- Develop a policy on whether or not your company allows driving personal vehicles for work purposes. It is safer not to – you have more control over your own fleet of owned or leased vehicles.

If allowing grey fleets:

- NCAP safety ratings, required safety features, service history.
- Specify and check required paperwork regularly: valid and clean driving licence, insurance, taxation, breakdown cover.
- Collect data on vehicle type, service history, crash history, and journey patterns.
- Consider setting restrictions on acceptable journey types in grey fleet vehicles, for example, restricting their use to short journeys.

## **CASE STUDY – NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE AND GOOLE NHS FOUNDATION TRUST<sup>3</sup>**

In the year 2006/7, 1.4 million grey fleet miles were carried out on behalf of the Trust; an average of 1,175 miles per employee. The Trust:

- introduced a shuttle bus service to transport staff between its three hospital sites.
- launched a courtesy car to reduce the number of taxis used to transport samples, equipment and doctors. This vehicle completed over 3,000 journeys (60,000 miles) in its first year. They also promoted the scheme to employees.
- purchased video conference equipment and promoted the use of it to all employees.
- encouraged the use of public transport when employees are attending conferences, events and meetings.
- established a dedicated travel and transport page on the Trust's intranet site, using the information collected to monitor shuttle bus uptake, employee travel patterns, vehicle mileage, miles per gallon performance, identify poor performing vehicles and measure carbon footprint.

In the first seven months, the trust used its shuttle bus to reduce grey fleet mileage by almost 200,000 miles. This resulted in a 14% drop in grey fleet mileage compared with the previous year. The movement of employees from their own vehicles to a shuttle bus and to pool and lease cars helped to ensure vehicles used for business journeys have up-to-date safety features and a managed service history. The impact of the 14% reduction in grey fleet mileage has also helped cut carbon emissions by around 70 tonnes compared with the previous year.

## **Hands-free mobile phones**

Hands-free phones are as risky as hand-held phones but many companies have not hung up the habit.

Driving performance is impaired when using a hands-free phone for 97.5% of drivers. Drivers on hands-free phones take 20% longer to hit the brakes when needed<sup>4</sup>. Drivers using a hands-free mobile phone are four times as likely to crash as drivers not using a phone<sup>5</sup>.

When UK companies allow, or even encourage, use of hands-free phones by their company drivers they leave themselves vulnerable to civil liability or even criminal liability under the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act.

Although hands-free mobile phones are legal in many countries still, drivers can often still be prosecuted for behaving dangerously if proven to be using a phone at the time of a crash. Phone records can easily prove this.



## How does your company measure up? Fleet Safety Forum subscriber report 2011

Professor Andrew Parkes, chief research scientist at the UK transport research agency TRL, is concerned that employees may feel pressurised by bosses into making and receiving calls while they drive. He says: "This is a risk employers need to acknowledge and manage. At some stage, I expect to see an employer sued by an employee involved in a crash due to being distracted by a business call."<sup>6</sup>

### **We asked: Does your company permit the use of hands-free mobile phones while driving?**

More than half – 58% - of Fleet Safety Forum subscriber companies questioned still allow hand-held phone use.

Companies we asked said that a major barrier to implementing a hands-free policy was a perception that it would damage business efficiency. There was opposition from board level down to drivers who saw their hands-free phones as a necessary tool to manage staff and clinch deals while on the road. However, when we spoke to companies who had successfully implemented a hands-free policy they reported that such fears were unfounded; staff found alternative methods of doing business and productivity was not sacrificed.

### **Advice on implementing a ban on hands-free mobile phone use**

- Get full support from the board – implementing a hands-free policy requires support from the very top to achieve compliance.
- Ensure managers help the rules succeed by not calling employees while they are driving.
- Require drivers to switch their phones to voicemail service and put them out of reach while driving so they can't be tempted to answer.
- Ask employees to record messages to include the phrases 'I may be driving and unable to respond for some time'.
- Employees who need to be contacted regularly while on a long drive should be given extended break periods every two hours in their schedule to enable them to rest and then to retrieve and respond to phone messages. These break periods need to be factored in to journey times.
- Switch long distance car journeys to public transport where possible. Routine business calls can often be handled on train journeys for example.

### **CASE STUDY – 3M**

Since July 2008 3M, the diversified technology company, has banned its 3,500 UK and Ireland employees from using hands-free mobiles while driving. The ban covers all employees, whether they are driving company cars or their own vehicles; using a company phone or their personal mobiles, they are not allowed make or receive business calls unless they are parked up safely with the handbrake on.

3M has monitored its drivers' attitudes and reported compliance with the ban since its implementation. When it was first introduced, only 19% of employees said they felt positively towards the ban but by June 2010, this had more than doubled to 42%; negative feeling had dropped from 56% to 37%. More than half of drivers in 2010 said that they comply with the ban "because of fears of causing a crash", which suggests that 3M's driver education is working.

3M's corporate communications manager John Klee explained: "Using a hands-free phone when driving is legal but it is dangerous – and we don't want our employees to be a danger to either themselves or other road users. Organisations may consider this to be a difficult decision to make, as there are natural concerns about productivity and the potential impact on business. It could have been a difficult decision for us, too – but in the end, it wasn't. Simply, if you have a sincere health and safety culture, you cannot be presented with a hazard that increases the risk of an accident by a factor of four and just ignore it."

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### **Effective use of data**

Many companies use complex information management systems to manage and analyse the data they collect from telematics, crash investigations, audits and checking procedures. The information is used to highlight areas of risk which can then be targeted with appropriate interventions.

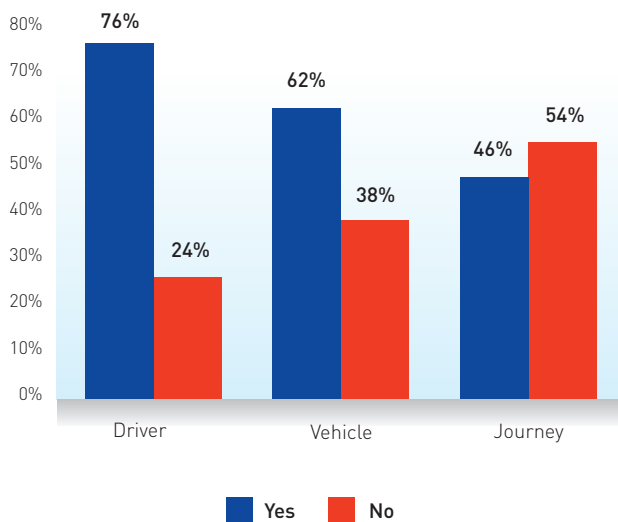
Targeting interventions in this way is an effective use of resources; it can achieve a greater reduction in crashes with reduced outlay. The impact of these interventions can also be assessed using the same data collection and analysis tools. With this information, cost-benefit analysis can be used to justify financially this system and required interventions to the board.

All possible areas of interventions must be addressed covering the driver, their vehicle and their journeys. Failure to address all three risk areas will compromise any overall reduction in crashes.



**We asked: Does your company use the data it collects on drivers, vehicles and journeys (including risk assessments, crashes & near misses) to target interventions on:**

- driver risk reduction;
- vehicle risk reduction;
- journey risk reduction?



Three quarters of Fleet Safety Forum subscriber companies use data capture and analysis to target interventions in driver safety, less than two thirds target interventions at vehicles and less than half use data to target interventions at reducing journey risk.

Will Murray, research director at global provider of fleet risk management solutions, Interactive Driving Systems, said:

“Driver training has been the traditional focus area for organisations wanting to improve on road safety, led by long standing research suggesting that human error is a factor in 95% of all collisions. Although that remains true, an increasing number of researchers, policy makers and practitioners are beginning to understand the importance of vehicle and journey-based factors, and the inter-relationships between people, vehicles and journeys as part of a systems-based approach, and are increasingly focusing more attention on wider risk factors than just driver behaviour. This is a slow process however because it requires a systematic organisation-wide response – but when done effectively can have massive potential rewards for both safety and the environment.”

**Advice on effective use of data**

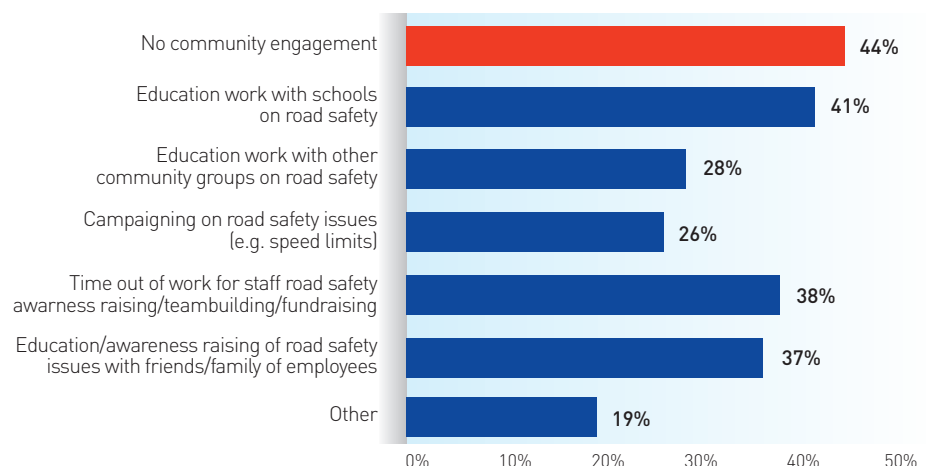
- Make sure interventions address all three areas of risk: the driver; vehicles; journey.
- Driver improvement measures can target drivers according to age range, driving behaviour, crash history, type of incidents and driver mileage.
- Vehicles’ safety can be assessed by recording NCAP rating, age of vehicle, type and age of components such as tyres and brake pads, servicing history and vehicle test results and mileage rates.
- Journey risk can assess routes, crash records, purpose and length.
- Use route planning software to help drivers plan the most efficient journey, using the safest routes. Use data to work out ways to cut down on unnecessary journeys and efficiently distribute freight jobs between drivers or promote car sharing.

**Community engagement**

Many organisations have large and distinctive fleets and it is important for both employees and customers that they demonstrate a proactive approach to safety in the community. In more recent years, many companies have started to extend their interest in road safety from simple fleet management to brand marketing through corporate social responsibility (CSR).

By organising or supporting road safety events in the wider community, as well as managing workplace road risk, companies can benefit by raising their profile with the public, suppliers and customers while also improving esteem among employees. Companies may also receive awards for their good work, such as a Fleet Safety Forum Best of the Best award leading to valuable media coverage and wider recognition through other tangible benefits such as invitations to speak at conferences.

**We asked: Which of the following activities does your company engage in?**





The majority of Fleet Safety Forum subscriber companies engage the community in road safety in a variety of ways. Impressively, 41% of companies work with schools to help improve road safety knowledge among children and a quarter – 26% – campaign on local road safety issues.

### Advice on community engagement

- Build in road safety as part of the organisational CSR strategy.
- Include employees' families in road safety events and communications.
- Make public commitments to road safety by publishing a company vision.
- Organise events to coordinate with Brake's annual Road Safety Week.
- Enter the Fleet Safety Forum Best of the Best awards to get recognition and publicity for your company's hard work.
- Fundraise for Brake, increasing team spirit and understanding of the cause.

### CASE STUDY – RECOGNITION EXPRESS

Promotional merchandise company Recognition Express ran a competition for schools across the UK during Road Safety Week called 'Design a Road Safety Banner' on the themes of 'Kids Say Slow Down' and '20's Plenty'. There were 1,300 entries and 12 winners. Recognition Express presented each winner with a full-size printed banner of their design to display outside their school, plus 300 high visibility drawstring bags for the school.



Winner: Joshua Kim from Guildford Grove Primary School

Nigel Toplis said: "Road Safety Week gives us the perfect opportunity to encourage drivers to slow down near schools and emphasise the importance of children's visibility. The competition was very successful in engaging so many schools."



Winner: Daniel Loach from Hoyland Common Primary School

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### Drugs policies

A study by the UK transport research agency TRL found 17% of UK drivers who die in road crashes (almost one in five) have traces of illegal drugs in their system that may have affected their driving and almost 6% of drivers (one in 17) who die in road crashes have traces of medicinal drugs that may have affected their driving<sup>7</sup>.

Illegal drugs affect people in different and unpredictable ways. In some cases, the effects of drugs can last for many days, either through direct impairment or through tiredness resulting from disrupted sleep patterns. Common medicinal drugs such as cold and flu remedies, painkillers, antihistamines and some anti-depressants can cause drowsiness or slow reaction times<sup>8</sup>.

If someone is killed through a drink or drug driving crash, and the driver's employer does not have appropriate drug and alcohol policies and procedures in place, company directors may face prosecution.

### We asked: Does your company test drivers for illegal drugs?

Two thirds of Fleet Safety Forum subscriber companies had no systems in place for testing drivers for illegal drugs. Of the 33% of companies that do have drug testing policies, 85% have random illegal drug screening programmes; 45% have post incident illegal drug testing; and 30% have targeted illegal drugs testing programmes.

### We asked: Does your company have fleet risk management policies and procedures in place for reporting and checking on the use of prescription drugs that may impair driving?

Half of Fleet Safety Forum subscriber companies have procedures for reporting and checking prescription drugs that may impair driving. Half do not.

Doug Jenkins, motor fleet risk manager for specialist in business insurance QBE European Operations and winner of Brake's Fleet Safety Forum Kevin Storey Award for Outstanding Commitment to Road Safety, said: "It is fair to say that even the police, within the current legislation, find it difficult to identify and prosecute impaired offenders. This is an area that fleet managers need to be very aware of and where there is room for robust company processes to identify and tackle any problem."





### Advice on drugs policies

- Take a zero tolerance approach to the presence of illegal drugs in a driver's system.
- Employee contracts should stipulate that a detected presence of illegal drugs will result in cessation of employment and the employee must comply with requests to test them, either randomly or for targeted reasons.
- Conduct random and targeted testing for illegal drugs (including post-incident testing), and train employees so they understand contractual requirements to refrain from illegal drugs and the need for, and methodologies of, company testing.
- Educate drivers on the dangers of some medicines on driving ability, and the need to always check with a pharmacist or doctor whether they are safe to drive on any medicine, and to inform their employer if they are not.
- Drivers on medicine that may affect driving ability must be taken off driving duties.



### Sources of Further Information

#### Fleet Safety Forum

This report is by the Fleet Safety Forum, a not for profit global initiative by the road safety charity Brake to help managers around the world reduce their road risk. Subscribers to Brake's Fleet Safety Forum receive up-to-date information, research and resources including free posters and guidance on a variety of fleet safety topics, as well as a regular e-bulletin and discounted invitations to conferences and workshops.

Subscribers to the Forum can download from [www.fleetsafetyforum.org](http://www.fleetsafetyforum.org) other reports by the Forum that have bearing on this report, such as reports on:

- Travel plans
- Implementing community road safety programmes
- Working with schools to improve road safety
- Drink driving prevention
- Drug driving prevention
- The dangers of distractions

If you are not a subscriber, you can join the Forum online at [www.fleetsafetyforum.org](http://www.fleetsafetyforum.org) to access these reports, or alternatively call us on UK (0044) +1484 559909 or email [forum@brake.org.uk](mailto:forum@brake.org.uk) for a list of our reports and their prices.

#### More sites providing help on topics covered in this report:

##### Grey fleets

[www.ogc.gov.uk](http://www.ogc.gov.uk) (includes a grey fleet management tool kit)

##### Distractions

[www.distraction.gov](http://www.distraction.gov)

##### Data collection

[www.esafetysupport.org](http://www.esafetysupport.org)

##### Corporate Social Responsibility

[www.oecd.org/daf/investment/cr](http://www.oecd.org/daf/investment/cr)  
[www.nottingham.ac.uk/nubs/ICCSR/](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/nubs/ICCSR/)

##### Drug driving

<http://druggeddriving.org>

### End Notes

- 1 Grey Fleet Best Practice, Office of Government Commerce, 2008
- 2 Data provided by Aston Barclay Auction Group in article in FleetWorld, 23 September 2010.
- 3 Grey Fleet Toolkit, Office of Government Commerce, 2008
- 4 Supertaskers: Profiles in extraordinary multitasking ability, University of Utah, 2010
- 5 Role of mobile phones in motor vehicle crashes resulting in hospital attendance: a case-crossover study, McEvoy, Stephenson, McCart, Woodward, Hayworth, Palamara and Cercarelli, University of Western Australia, British Medical Journal, 2005
- 6 Distracted Driving, Prof. Andrew Parkes, TRL, 2008
- 7 The incidence of drugs and alcohol in road accident fatalities Report 495, TRL, 2001
- 8 Using medicines correctly: OTC Medicines and Drowsiness Consumer Health Information Centre ([www.chic.org.uk](http://www.chic.org.uk)) and Antidepressants and Fitness to Drive (Hindmarch, Surrey University, 1999)



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