

Driving for work: Safer journey **planner**



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Driving is the most dangerous work activity that most people do. It is estimated that around 150 people are killed or seriously injured every week in crashes involving someone who was driving, riding or otherwise using the road for work purposes. The majority of these tragedies can be prevented.

HSE Guidelines, "Driving at Work", state that **"health and safety law applies to on-the-road work activities as to all work activities and the risks should be effectively managed within a health and safety system"**.

Therefore, employers must assess the risks involved in their staff's use of the road for work and put in place all 'reasonably practicable' measures to manage those risks.

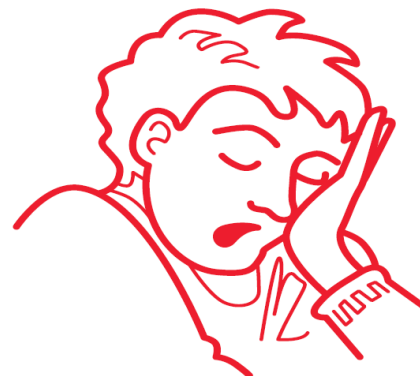
This guide gives simple advice on how employers and line managers can help to ensure that the organisation's road journeys are properly planned and completed safely. This applies to all at-work drivers (e.g. sales staff, managers driving to meetings) and not just professional LGV and PCV drivers.

What employers should do:

Prevent driver sleepiness

One of the most important things employers must do is ensure that their drivers are not at risk of falling asleep at the wheel. Thousands of crashes are caused by tired drivers. They are most likely to happen:

- on long journeys on monotonous roads, such as motorways
- between 2am and 6am
- between 2pm and 4pm (especially after eating, or taking even one alcoholic drink)
- after having less sleep than normal
- after drinking alcohol
- if taking medicines that cause drowsiness
- after long working hours or on journeys home after long shifts, especially night shifts



Raise awareness

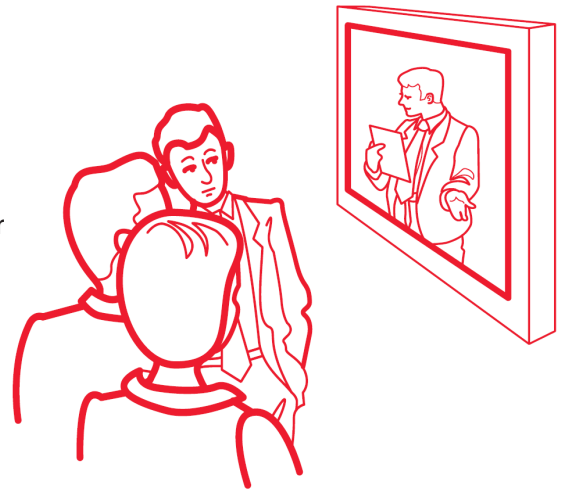
As part of recruitment, training and staff appraisal, ensure that drivers and line managers are reminded about:

- the danger of falling asleep at the wheel
- the need for safe journey planning
- the need to get adequate sleep before starting to drive
- the dangers of 'moonlighting' or spending too long on evening hobbies, social activities or domestic work that limit sleeping time
- the times of day when sleepiness is most common
- the early signs of fatigue and what to do if they begin to feel tired during a journey
- the tendency to sleepiness associated with ageing and certain medical conditions
- the risks of making a lengthy home journey after a day's work away from their normal base
- how to organise shifts and workloads to reduce the risk of driving tired
- the organisation's policy on what staff should do if they feel fatigued before or whilst driving

Give staff the advice leaflet, "Safer Journey Planner", which can be downloaded free from www.rosipa.com/roadsafety/info/safer_journey.pdf

Use safer alternatives

Where possible, use remote communications such as telephone, email or video-conferencing as a substitute for road journeys or travel by plane or train, which is far safer and more environmentally-friendly. The relative CO₂ emissions of a car journey can be compared with rail, coach or air travel on the Transport Direct website (www.transportdirect.info). If road travel is unavoidable, maximise car sharing to reduce the number of journeys. Also, sharing driving can reduce the length of time spent at the wheel.



Plan Routes

Every journey should be a managed journey. Require those responsible for journey planning (line managers or drivers themselves) to plan journeys, taking account of road type (for example, accident rates are lowest on motorways and dual carriageways), hazards (road works, accident 'hot spots'), traffic densities (time journeys to avoid peak traffic hours) and high-risk features such as schools or busy shopping centres.

If using a SatNav, drivers should input their destination before setting off, and if they need to change it, stop in a safe place to do so.

Plan where to stop for regular rest breaks (every two hours - or sooner if feeling tired - for at least 15 to 20 minutes).

The Transport Direct website (www.transportdirect.info) uses live travel information for both road and rail to make journey-planning easier. Live traffic information on motorways and main trunk roads is provided on the Traffic England website: www.trafficengland.com, the Traffic Wales website: www.traffic-wales.com and the Traffic Scotland website: www.trafficscotland.org. If possible plan an alternative route to avoid any major delays. Sites such as Transport Direct are useful to help establish route options, distances and journey times.

Reduce distances

Set indicative in-house limits on maximum driving distances per day, per week, per month and per year. When requiring employees to drive to and from a location to carry out a work task, set reasonable maximum mileages which drivers should not be expected to exceed in a single day. Support this with clear policies that allow staff to take overnight stops, or ensure the driving can be shared.

Control drivers' hours

Set in-house limits for unbroken driving hours, including daily, weekly and monthly limits for all classes of drivers. As a working rule, no driver should be required to drive continuously for more than 2 hours without at least a 15 minute break. The drivers' hours rules for professional drivers are the statutory maximum. Breaks and break locations should be planned for in advance of starting journeys.



Optimise schedules

Ensure that journey scheduling allows sufficient time for drivers to take account of reasonably foreseeable weather and traffic conditions and to comply with speed limits. Schedules should seek to reduce night driving and avoid those times of day mentioned above when falling asleep at the wheel is more likely. Payment by customer contact or 'job and finish' regimes must not encourage drivers to disregard road traffic law or the organisation's own driving rules, standards and policies.

Overnight stays

Where employees have to travel a long distance to a work location at the beginning of the day or the journey is likely to take more than two hours, consider asking staff to travel the night before and stay overnight. Similarly, at the end of a work period at a remote location, employers should make provision for employees to stay overnight so that they do not have to drive a long distance home when tired.

Also be aware that some employees may prefer to avoid overnight stays, for example, for domestic reasons, so check work schedules and journey plans to ensure they are not tempted to undertake long journeys when they are likely to be too tired. If they do not wish to stay away overnight look at work scheduling to see if it is possible for them to get home safely by other means.



Review shift arrangements

Night shifts and rotating shifts can cause severe sleep disruption. Workers on 12-hour shifts (compared to eight hours) are significantly sleepier at the end of their shift, especially at 7.00 a.m. Review shift arrangements to see that these do not lead employees to drive while fatigued. Where problems are identified, including increased risk during commuting, consider providing safer, alternative transport.

Promote safe driving

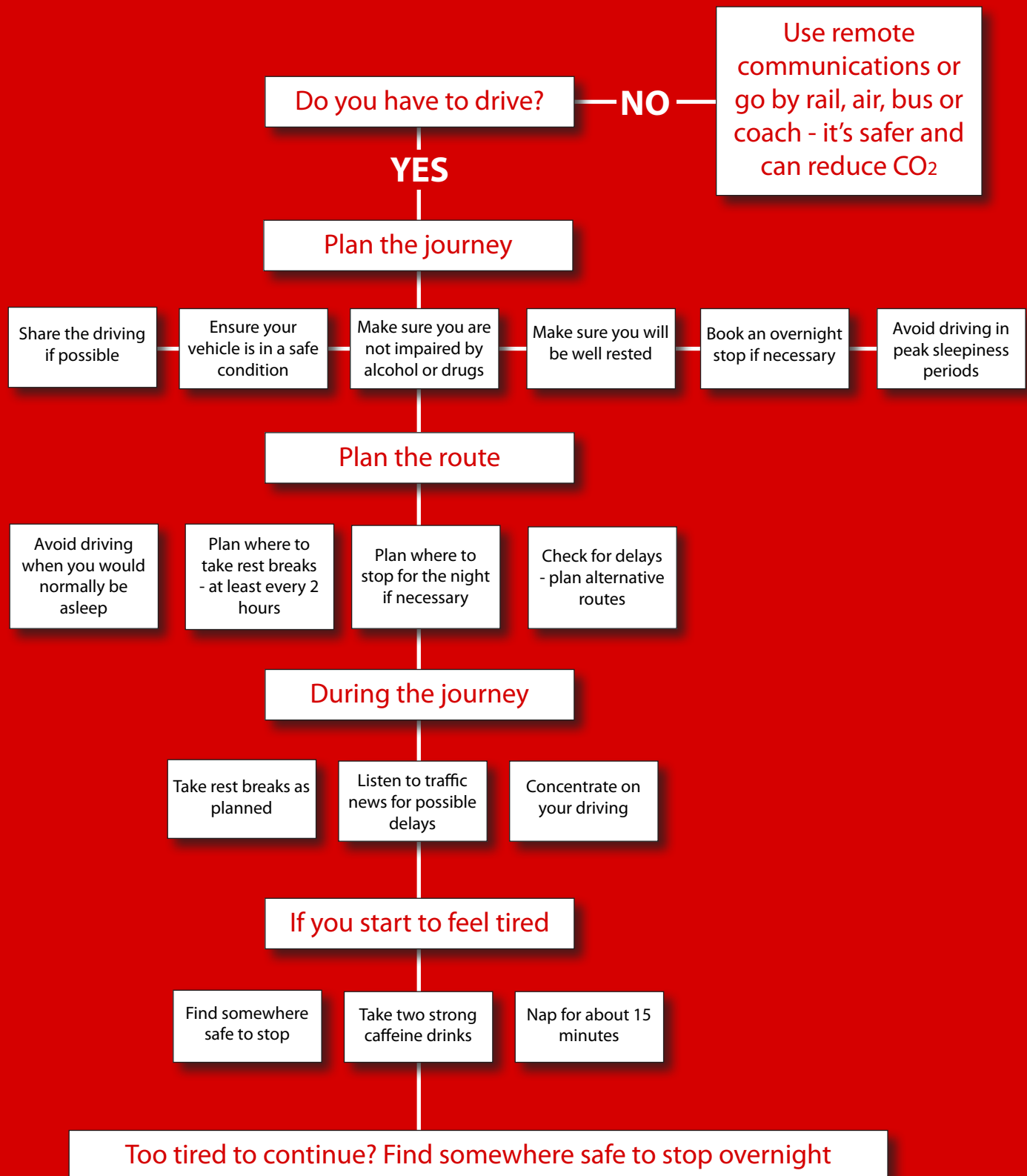
Develop policies, advice and training for line managers and drivers:

- **Safe speeds:** Ensure drivers understand the need to stay within speed limits and that working practices, such as schedules, do not encourage speeding. See “Driving for Work: Safer Speeds” at www.rosipa.com/roadsafety/info/workspeed.pdf
- **Distraction:** Don't expect drivers to make or take phone calls, send messages or transact business whilst driving. Stipulate that these activities must only be done when parked. See “Driving for Work: Mobile Phones” at www.rosipa.com/roadsafety/info/workmobiles.pdf
- **Sleep:** Remind employees of the importance of having adequate good quality sleep before driving. Rest is not a substitute for sleep.
- **Caff napping:** Remind employees of the value of taking caffeine and having a short, 15 minutes (but no longer) nap as a way of coping with the onset of tiredness. This is an emergency measure to complete a journey safely and should not be used more than once during a journey.
- **Impairment:** Provide advice on avoiding drink and drug (including prescription and over-the-counter medicines) driving, and on fitness to drive (eyesight, illness). See “Driving for Work: Drink and Drugs” at www.rosipa.com/roadsafety/info/workdrinkdrugs.pdf and “Driving for Work: Fitness to Drive” at www.rosipa.com/roadsafety/info/workfitness.pdf
- **Journey planning:** give staff written advice; the “Safer Journey Planner” can be downloaded free from www.rosipa.com/roadsafety/info/safer_journey.pdf
- **Raising concerns:** Encourage drivers to raise concerns with their line manager, and line managers to respond positively. Be aware that some staff, especially younger employees or those new to the company, may not feel able to raise concerns for fear of jeopardising their relationship with the company or their manager
- **Incident procedures:** staff should know what to do and whom to contact in the event of an incident/emergency. Staff who travel alone or for long distances should have access to a mobile phone, but be advised on its safe use.

Avoid driving in adverse conditions

Actively discourage driving at night and in adverse weather conditions, particularly fog, very high winds, ice, snow or flooding or where there is a danger of drivers becoming stranded in remote locations. Ensure your staff feel able to postpone journeys or change routes if the police and travel organisations advise against road travel due to weather conditions, and that they know your organisation's reporting procedures in such instances. Also consider what emergency equipment should be carried in the vehicle in case the driver gets stranded.

Journey planner



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