

November 2016

City of Sydney

Calculating crash costs improves driver performance, bottom line

No. of Staff: 1,900 (1,200 drivers)

Fleet: 350

CASE STUDY



NRSP
NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY

PARTNERSHIP
PROGRAM

PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

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Case Study:

Calculating crash costs foundation for improving safety, engaging drivers

Key Outcomes:

- Multiple strategies working in combination, including management support, driver awareness training and tracking crash data, maximises effectiveness of road safety programs
- A strong partnership with your insurer can help achieve road safety outcomes by providing data on numbers and costs of crashes, showing opportunities for improvement and strategies that are working
- As well as reducing the bottom line, such data can inform driver training and crash prevention programs and is powerful in influencing culture and behaviour when used as a training and awareness tool
- Having a dedicated road safety position who 'coaches' drivers, rather than focusing solely on driver instruction, can be effective in improving road safety outcomes
- Employing someone in that position with driving experience and the ability to empathise and build rapport with drivers increases acceptance and improves road safety outcomes.

Synopsis:

Rising demand for services is increasing the risk of crashes in the City of Sydney. In response, the City has developed a comprehensive road safety program that tracks crash data to inform driver awareness programs and prevent incidents while also improving the bottom line.

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Introduction

Major population growth in Sydney in recent years has seen an increase in demand for services provided by the local authority, in particular waste collection from the greater number of residential properties and the maintenance of roads, properties and parks.

Increased demand on enforcement and health and community services are also expected to put further pressure on the City of Sydney's operations.

With the majority of services provided relying, to some extent, on motor vehicles to get the work done, the City operates a fleet of 343 motor vehicles, half of which are light trucks and vans, a third cars and utility vehicles and heavy vehicles over GVM 8 tonnes, mainly used by Cleansing and Waste, making up 13 per cent.

The City also operates 12 buses for community services and a considerable number of plant and moveable equipment, including trailers, mowers and forklift trucks. Vehicles and plant are subject to heavy workloads to meet demand. On a busy day there can be as many as 13 vehicles operating per sqkm to provide services for a population of almost 8,000 per sqkm. About two thirds of its 1,900 staff are authorised drivers.

This large scale of operations creates an above-average risk of crashes, from minor incidents to fatalities, as well as the potential risk of bad publicity due to errors or behaviour of City drivers and risk of damage to council equipment and property.

The City's primary road safety objective is to reduce the number of crashes involving its vehicles and drivers to reduce injuries, fatalities, costs and associated productivity losses resulting from crashes.

Organisation overview

Sydney is a vibrant, cosmopolitan city with a diverse population and a rich history, internationally-recognised tourist attractions and an exciting calendar of events.

The City of Sydney is the local government authority responsible for the city centre and more than 30 suburbs across 26sqkm, extending from Sydney Harbour at Rushcutters Bay, to Glebe and Annandale in the west, from Sydney Park and Rosebery in the south to Centennial Park and Paddington in the east.

The City provides essential local services for more than 200,000 residents and 20,000 businesses including libraries, street cleaning, road maintenance, assessing development applications, collecting waste and recycling, and maintaining parks, playgrounds, gardens, sports venues and community centres.

Between 2005 and 2015, the City's population increased by almost a third to about 206,000 – by 2031, it is projected to reach 269,000. An influx of workers and visitors into the City swells the population to more than 1 million each day.

The City of Sydney aims to foster the best possible standard of city living by delivering an appealing urban environment and attractive leisure, recreation and community facilities for an ethnically diverse and young population – almost half of its residents are aged 18-34, about the same proportion were born overseas and a third speak a language other than English.

Regardless of our job, as soon as we take control of a City of Sydney vehicle, in the eyes of our customers, we are seen as professional drivers.

We must display an exemplary standard of driving ability.

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The right direction

As road safety measures have taken effect in recent years, the City of Sydney has begun to achieve its objective of reducing the number and cost of crashes.

Crash costs across the council have dropped by a considerable amount. The number of insurance claims, for example, have almost halved across the past two financial years and there has been an almost 40 per cent reduction in crash costs over the same period. The proportion of crashes where City drivers are at fault is also tracking downwards.

The City's insurer, CGU, provides monthly crash data, which also includes information on the type of crash and which party is considered at fault. This allows the City to research and analyse crash data, identify causal and outcome trends, and examine why crashes happen.

Crash data can also be broken down by business unit. City Rangers and those working in waste management, two of the higher risk categories due to the size of vehicle and time spent on the road, have shown significant crash reductions.

The City also records all fleet maintenance and repairs data on an Ausfleet database. Reported damage to vehicles and plant is entered into this database before considering whether repairs can be completed in-house or whether an insurance claim is submitted.

All this information is incorporated into the City's driver coaching, training and awareness programs. It can help to show drivers where there are opportunities for improvement and, over time, demonstrates whether introduced measures are having an impact.

Such information is also crucial in preventing repeats of incidents and ensuring minor incidents do not escalate into major ones in the future. Importantly, the focus is on using the data as a learning and awareness tool rather than singling out drivers.

In combination with a range of other factors, including policies and driver handbooks that outline expectations and strategies to achieve them plus management support for road safety, tracking the costs of crashes has proven an effective tool in improving road safety, which in turn has improved the City of Sydney's bottom line.

The results have also been recognised externally, with CGU awarding the City its 2016 Benchmark motor fleet award for its "focus on driver safety and reducing pollution." Brake, the international road safety charity, also recognised the City with the Company Safe Driver Award. "It's great to be able to recognise those organisations that are taking positive steps towards reducing vehicle incidents through fleet safety initiatives, which help to create safer drivers and safer roads," said Gordon Brown, CEO of award sponsor SurePlan.

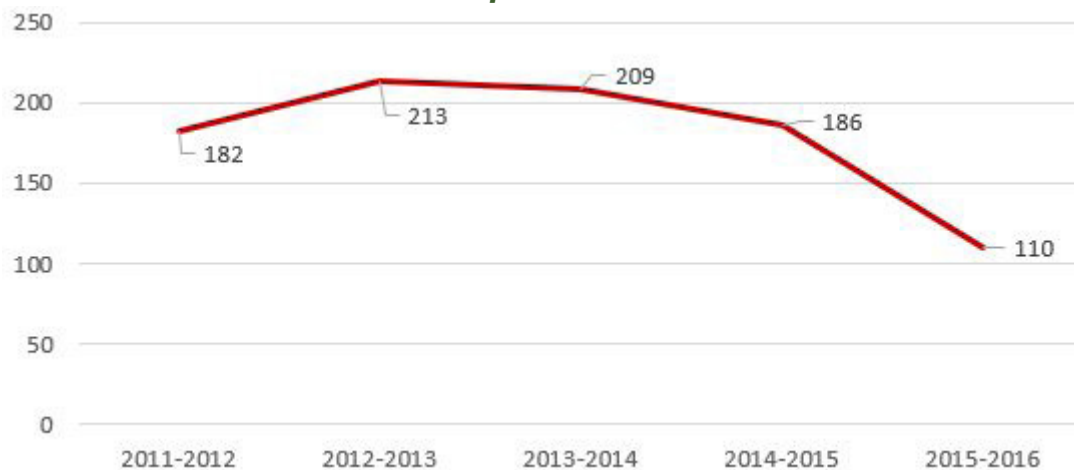


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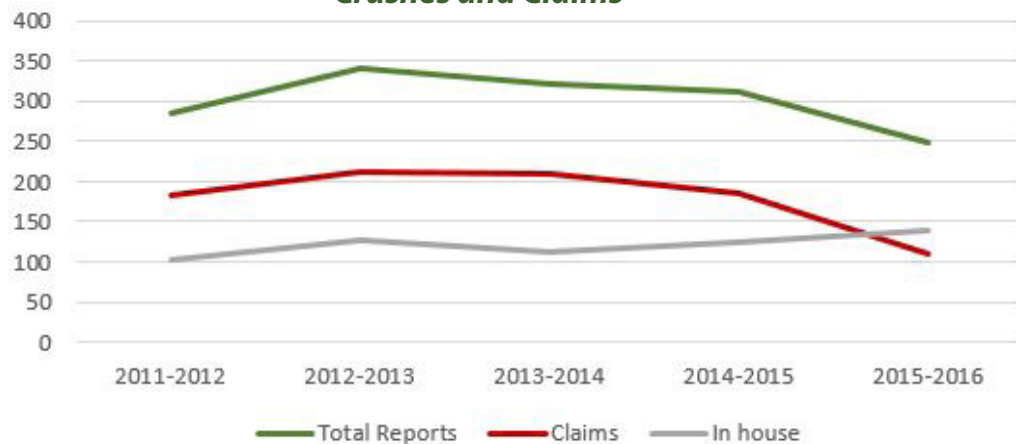
Crash Costs April 2011 to March 2016



Crash Claims April 2011 to March 2016



Crashes and Claims



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No flash in the pan

As the local roads authority, the City of Sydney has been providing road safety and community education programs as part of the NSW Local Government Road Safety Program since 1994.

The Safe System approach, which aims to reduce road trauma by enabling safer people, safer vehicles and safer roads, guides the City's approach to road safety.

Safer people

- Reduce the level of use of motor vehicles without compromising efficiency
- Provide training and encourage low-risk driving and riding behaviour
- Promote road rules compliance
- Increase driver safety awareness through coaching, promotion and advertising
- Reduce the level of risk taking by road users
- Improve awareness of safe travel speeds
- Ensure staff using fleet vehicles are aware of responsibilities

Safer vehicles

- A minimum 5 star rating will apply to passenger vehicles in the City's fleet
- Purchase and use the safest vehicles in their class

- Provide the highest standards of vehicle and equipment maintenance
- Comply with the City's WHS procedures for vehicles, plant and equipment
- Ensure the correct vehicles are provided for each task
- Monitor, review and implement Council's fleet safety policies

Safer roads

- Identify and notify traffic managers about high risk locations
- Report defects and hazards on the roads
- Provide feedback to appropriate City units regarding high risk road systems



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Practical road safety awareness

As a major fleet operator, the City is committed to its key road safety target “that by 2020 the level of road trauma in the City of Sydney should be half of the 2012 number of people injured on the City’s roads. This means 512 or fewer casualties.”

To do this, the City has developed and implemented several practical on the ground measures supported and outlined in policies and handbooks to ensure all employees are aware of the City’s road safety goals, how it plans to achieve them and the role they play in that objective.

Practical initiatives like in-vehicle driver evaluation and training and experienced drivers mentoring new operators are combined with the City’s Fleet Services Crash Management Strategy, for example.

This strategy, which outlines the City’s key road safety objectives and sets a framework to reduce the number of crashes involving fleet vehicles, aims to promote and embed a zero-crash culture; support and improve driver skills, behaviours and awareness; develop staff pride in driving professionally; identify the causes of vehicle crashes; and provide strategies to minimise vehicle crashes.

The City also developed the Low Risk and Eco-driving Handbook to provide practical driving advice that makes driving as low-risk, enjoyable and environmentally friendly as possible. Low-risk driving practices almost always result in lower fuel or battery use and fewer emissions. The City takes this attitude a step further by supporting ‘active transport’ (see breakout box’).

Regularly revised to reflect the latest strategies in safe driving principles, the handbook includes information on how to manage risks associated with driving, vehicle safety and what to do in the event of a crash.

A user guide for drivers, it must be read and understood before driving City vehicles.

The City’s Fleet Services unit also provides assistance on the operation of any vehicle, from bicycles to heavy trucks.



Get active, get on your bike

The City of Sydney is well known for supporting ‘active transport’, the use of transport modes that reduce its impact on the environment, investing in a ‘fleet’ of bicycles.

Increasingly, staff are using bicycles as work vehicles, saving staff time and reducing vehicle running costs and emissions.

The bike fleet travelled 12,000km between January 2015 and June 2016, and almost 100 staff have completed the City’s Cycling in the City course, which is required to maintain safe riding practices.

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Building awareness and rapport

The handbook is also a foundation of the City's internal training programs, driving content for ongoing annual online or face-to-face 'policy and procedure' training for all driving staff.

For the past decade, the City has also dedicated a position to improving safe driving, evolving from simply delivering driver training to an in-house Driver Development Officer (DDO) focussed on providing up-to-date and ongoing internal driver awareness training.

With the aim of implementing and sustaining a zero-crash culture and maintaining the welfare of drivers, the role focuses on operators of vehicles and provides programs that increase awareness and knowledge and transfers it into sustained improvements in driving ability and performance.

In-vehicle driver evaluation and training is undertaken by the DDO using a standard format with the driver's evaluation, skills and responses to situations presented to the driver's supervisor. Where appropriate, drivers are considered for upgrading their driving licences, which improves driving standards and encourages pride in driving.

Regular in-vehicle training is supported by quarterly in-house training delivered through toolbox talks and aimed at employees whose roles include daily or regular driving. A monthly training session is also held for drivers who have been involved in a crash in the previous month.

While all crashes in City vehicles must be reported, and there is a disciplinary and formal counselling procedure to deal with repeated driver-at-fault crashes or complaints, the monthly sessions are viewed as a learning opportunity that aims to prevent major crashes or repeated incidents by dealing with minor incidents.

Indeed, with a background in road safety spanning 30 years, the City's DDO approaches his role as a 'driver coach' maintaining the welfare of the City's drivers, rather than a driving instructor, delivering training in a way that promotes behaviour change.

The City follows the 'Swedish Telecom' example in its approach to driver training. In the 1990s, Swedish Telecom considered whether to implement driver training or in-house training in response to problems with its fleet vehicles. It was found that getting small groups together to discuss their driving had the same or better effect than simply sending employees to driver training.

As the City DDO points out, most City drivers have a high level of driving skill. The issue is making a safe choice and doing the right thing on the road at any given time. So rather than driver instruction, the focus is on increasing driving knowledge and awareness and encouraging drivers to think about their driving practices.

Good driving reduces the chances of causing a crash.

Low-risk driving increases the chances of avoiding a crash.



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A spy in our midst

Implementation of low-risk safe driving programs faced some initial resistance from City drivers, who resented 'being told how to drive'. As a long term Head Office employee, the City's Driver Development Officer also faced perceptions of being a company 'spy' when he took on the role.

The DDO's ability to build a rapport with drivers, based on taking a personal, non-dictatorial approach and using coaching rather than training methods, soon dissolved those barriers as drivers realised the position was focussed on improving their welfare.

Likening himself to a football or sports coach, the DDO made it clear to drivers his role was to try and prevent City employees being involved in an incident that would stop them driving.

Combatting the common perception of driving instructors – as simply testing and failing drivers – he aims to improve drivers' abilities to keep them driving.

Having many years of experience in road safety and as a truck driver also plays a critical role. The DDO began driving trucks in the army in the 1970s and as well as managing training and development for the British School of Motoring, the world's largest driving school, he has driven trucks in the UK, Africa, Asia and Europe.

He also recently re-sat his heavy vehicle tests as part of updating his own qualifications as a driver trainer. As well as keeping him up to date, re-testing has given him empathy with the situation drivers are in when he is assessing them from the passenger seat. A good sense of humour also helps put drivers at ease.

The sum of the parts

The City of Sydney's approach to improving road safety demonstrates that introducing a comprehensive program that identifies and incorporates several factors increases the likelihood of driver engagement and achieving aims.

A detailed training program aimed at improving driver awareness and supported by policies and procedures that ensures drivers understand expectations is important. This makes effectively communicating those expectations and, more importantly, the strategies put in place to achieve them, vital.

In addition to regular driving briefings at business unit meetings or toolbox talks, the City of Sydney also distributes a newsletter linking a team of staff involved in driver development and prepares in-house road safety coaching resources including videos, workplace flyers, posters and presentations.

Having a dedicated Driver Development Officer, rather than simply a driving instructor, and employing someone in that role with driving experience and the ability to build rapport with drivers is critical.

However, the foundation of any organisation's road safety program must be management support, particularly at the middle-management and team leader level. The attitude management has towards road safety strongly influences the behaviour and attitude of all other staff.

That attitude is reflected by David Riordan, Director City Operations, who is responsible for fleet management. "I strongly support driver education as a key factor in reducing crashes and improving driver behaviour and performance. The City's drivers can also play a key role in promoting low-risk driving to all fleets operating within the City of Sydney."

For more information and case studies please go to www.nrspp.org.au