Julie Townsend, Brake’s deputy chief executive, says:

“People who drive as part of their job should be taking great care to stay within the law and not put people in danger, but according to these results, at-work drivers are more likely to take many deadly risks than other drivers.

“It’s crucial all at-work drivers take their responsibilities seriously, whether they’re driving a commercial vehicle, company car, or their own vehicle to business appointments. But there is also much more that many employers could do to ensure their staff don’t feel under pressure to take risks – such as by rushing between appointments or feeling obliged to take calls at the wheel – and to make safety their number one priority. While some organisations work hard to ensure the safety of their vehicles and drivers, many others could do far more.

“We are urging all employers to implement comprehensive fleet safety policies, including monitoring drivers, journeys and incidents, and ensuring vehicles are well-maintained, journeys are well-planned, and staff are trained and briefed so they know to always put safety first. Brake provides a range of guidance to help organisations do this through our Fleet Safety Forum, and we recognise and promote good practice through an annual Fleet Safety Awards.

“It’s also vital the government gives greater attention to improving safety among at-work drivers, as these drivers are thought to be involved in such a high proportion of crashes. The government needs to do more to engage and support industry to further develop road risk management. We also believe on-road incidents should be reportable to the Health and Safety Executive, as on-site incidents are, so employers are properly held to account for the on-road safety of staff. The government should also ensure there are plenty of rest areas for long-distance drivers, and ensure there are more traffic police and commercial vehicle enforcement officers to detect dangerous law-breaking and stop dangerous fleet operators.”
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GOVERNMENT

The government should:

- promote and encourage implementation of comprehensive fleet safety policies that include: a commitment to plan all journeys carefully, including the need to make the journey in the first place, and allowing plenty of time to avoiding speeding and stress; a ban on distractions while driving, such as using mobile phones and eating at the wheel; careful monitoring of drivers’ welfare, to ensure they are fit to drive, including regular eyesight, alcohol and drugs tests; thorough vehicle maintenance procedures; a programme of driver monitoring, training, induction and education that ensures all staff understand that safety is their top priority, and how to keep themselves and others safe;

- require all companies to report, record and analyse crashes, including near-misses, to manage their road risk effectively. Health and safety incident reporting rules (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations), or RIDDOR should cover at-work drivers as well as on-site employees;

- ensure all fatal and serious injury crashes involving someone driving for work are investigated through the Health & Safety Executive (HSE);

- deliver targeted publicity and engagement campaigns to warn at-work drivers and fleet managers of risks associated with at-work driving and provide advice on how to manage and cut crashes;

- increase numbers of traffic police and front-line enforcement staff working for the Vehicle & Operator Services Agency (VOSA), to enable heightened levels of enforcement checks on drivers and vehicles;

- introduce tougher penalties against companies flouting maintenance, driver hours or licensing rules, or putting pressure on drivers to break the law and drive dangerously, particularly for repeat offenders.

Fleet Safety Forum

The Fleet Safety Forum is an essential low-cost service run by Brake for any manager with staff who drive for work. It provides vital, up-to-date guidance on a range of fleet safety issues through high quality events, awareness training, expert guidance, case studies and news bulletins. It also recognises good practice in fleet safety through an annual awards. For more information, call 01484 559990 or email fleetsaftyforum@brake.org.uk.
At-work drivers

STRESS AND EMOTIONS

THE FACTS: DRIVING FOR WORK
- Up to one in three road crashes involves someone driving for work.\(^1\)
- Of all work-related deaths in the UK, 75% occur on the road,\(^2\) a much higher proportion than in the US, for example, where in 2000 24% of civilian worker deaths were on the road.\(^3\)
- Drivers who drive for work are 30-40% more likely than other drivers to be involved in a crash.\(^4\)
- 19% of journeys on British roads are undertaken by at-work drivers, and they account for 30% of the distance travelled.\(^5\)

Q1: Within the past 12 months, have you driven while not concentrating because you felt stressed, annoyed or upset due to the behaviour of other road users, work stress, or personal issues?

At-work drivers are nearly twice as likely to admit to driving while distracted due to work stress as people who only drive for non-work purposes, and much more likely to be distracted by personal issues too.
- 50% of at-work drivers admitted driving while distracted by personal issues, compared to 35% of non-work drivers
- 43% of at-work drivers admitted driving while not concentrating due to work stress, compared to 24% of non-work drivers
- 61% of at-work drivers admitted driving while not concentrating because they felt stressed, annoyed, upset at the behaviour of other road users, compared to 63% of non-work drivers.

ADVICE FOR DRIVERS: KEEPING CALM
- Driving requires you to be constantly alert and aware of your surroundings, but stress and strong emotions can be a dangerous distraction. If you feel angry or stressed, you should pull over in a safe place and take a few moments to calm yourself down. You should only begin your journey again once you are able to pay full attention to the road.
- Plan your journey to allow plenty of time for potential hold-ups and rest breaks, and take breaks at least every two hours, to help you stay alert, focused and composed.
- Never jump into a car straight after an argument, or if you are experiencing strong emotions, which affects your concentration. If you are driving back from a tense or challenging meeting or appointment, take some time to relax and focus your mind back onto the task of driving safely.

MOBILE PHONES

Q2: Within the past 12 months, have you driven while sending or reading a text message?

At-work drivers are much more likely to take the deadly risk of texting at the wheel, and nearly twice as likely as likely to do so monthly or more: a horrifying one in seven do this.
- 31% of at-work drivers admit sending or reading a text, compared to 24% of non-work drivers
- 17% of at-work drivers admit sending or reading a text once or twice, compared with 16% of non-work drivers
- 15% of at-work drivers admit sending or reading a text once a month or more, compared with 9% of non-work drivers
- 68% of at-work drivers say they have not texted while driving, compared with 75% of non-work drivers

Figure 1: Driving while stressed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At-work drivers</th>
<th>Non-work drivers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distracted by the behaviour of other road users</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distracted by work stress</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distracted by personal issues</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2: At-work drivers texting while driving

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At-work drivers texting while driving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never, 68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once or twice, 17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month or more, 15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-work drivers texting while driving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never, 75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once or twice, 16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month or more, 9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At-work drivers

LOST LIVES

Maureen Waites, aged 64
In November 2006, Maureen Waites, a self-employed hairdresser from County Durham, UK, was killed in a high speed crash on the A696. The car which crashed into Maureen’s Citroen was driven by 19 year old Rachel Begg, who had been texting at the wheel. Following the collision, it was found that Begg had used her phone nine times in the 15 minute journey immediately prior to smashing into Maureen’s car. Travelling at around 70mph and with her attention on her phone, Rachel Begg drove directly into Maureen’s car, killing the 64 year old grandmother instantly.

Q3: Within the past 12 months, have you driven while using the internet or an app on your phone, for example emailing or checking updates on a social networking site (excluding using it as a sat-nav)?

Fewer at-work drivers than non-work drivers are taking the risk of using the internet at the wheel, but it’s still a significant one in 11 who admit to this.

- 9% of at-work drivers admitted using an app or the internet on their phone while driving, compared with 12% of non-work drivers
- 4% of at-work drivers admitted using an app or the internet on their phone while driving once a month or more, compared with 5% of non-work drivers
- 91% of at-work drivers say they never use the internet or apps while driving, compared with 88% of non-work drivers.

Q4: Within the past 12 months, have you ever driven while talking on a hand-held or hands-free mobile?

At-work drivers are nearly one and a half times more likely to risk talking on any type of phone than people who only drive for non-work purposes.

- 55% of at-work drivers admitted talking on a mobile (hands-free or hand-held) at the wheel, compared to 36% of non-work drivers
- 35% of at-work drivers admitted talking on a hand-held mobile at the wheel, compared to 25% of non-work drivers
- 37% of at-work drivers admitted talking on a hands-free mobile at the wheel, compared to 23% of non-work drivers
- 45% of at-work drivers never talk on the phone at the wheel, compared to 64% of non-work drivers.

Figure 3: Mobile phone use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Phone</th>
<th>At-work drivers</th>
<th>Non-work drivers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talk on any phone</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk on hand-held phone</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk on hands-free phone</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never talk on the phone</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ADVICE FOR DRIVERS: MOBILE PHONES

- Many of us are becoming used to being connected 24/7 via our mobile phones, both for social and work purposes. Increasingly, mobiles act as phone, laptop, sat-nav, music player and social media provider all in one.
- But however attached you are to your phone, and however important it is for you to be connected, when you are driving you need to put it away. Taking or making a call hands-free or hand-held, emailing, texting, inputting details into a GPS application, or repeatedly glancing at the screen, are all major distractions that put your life and the lives of others at great risk. Driving is the most dangerous and complex activity most of us do on a daily basis and it requires your full concentration. Your phone can wait.
- Put your phone out of sight, reach and earshot to avoid temptation: ideally in the boot. If you’re doing a lot of driving, or setting off on a long journey, change your voicemail to say you might not be contactable if you’re driving. If you drive for work, make colleagues and clients aware that you can’t pick up calls while driving, but will come back to them as soon as you can once safely parked – you’ll sound more focused and professional on the call as a result. Take regular rest breaks and use these to check messages and return calls.

ADVICE FOR EMPLOYERS: MOBILE PHONES

- Some employees and even employers still believe that preventing drivers using phones while driving will hinder business. However, companies who have already implemented bans have found this is not the case.
- Fleet managers can overcome initial difficulties by ensuring good consultation, communication and feedback throughout the introduction of a policy to prevent phone use alongside strict procedures for non-compliance.
- It’s important to have a strong message from the top of the organisation in support of a ban on phone use at the wheel, to ensure drivers and managers take it seriously.
- Writing a clear and readily available policy on the restrictions and penalties for non-compliance is essential.
- Employees should return calls during breaks from driving, making them able to give callers their undivided attention. Drivers should set up caller diverts and other suitable systems to prevent any negative impact from being unavailable for periods of time while driving. Companies who take these steps report customers responding favourably to the ban as it shows the company is taking responsible action to protect the welfare of employees and the public.
At-work drivers

THE FACTS: MOBILE PHONES

- Tests have found drivers on hands-free phones take 20% longer to brake in an emergency due to the distraction.

- Talking on a mobile phone has been found to increase the risk of crashing four-fold, whether or not the driver uses a hands-free kit, because of the distraction of the phone conversation.

- Driver crash risk remains higher than normal for up to 10 minutes after the call has ended.

- In laboratory tests, it has been found driving is impaired more during a phone conversation than by having a blood alcohol level at the current UK drink drive limit (80mg/100ml blood).

End notes

1. Reported Road Casualties Great Britain 2011, Department for Transport, 2012
2. DfT Road Research Report No. 51, Department for Transport, 2004
4. Reported Road Casualties Great Britain 2011, Department for Transport, 2012
5. National Travel Survey 2011, Department for Transport, 2012
6. Association between cellular-telephone calls and motor vehicle collisions, Massachusetts Medical Society, 1997
7. Using a hands-free mobile whilst driving can be more dangerous than drink driving, Transport Research Laboratory, 2009
At-work drivers

**SPEED**

**THE FACTS: SPEED**

- There is a direct and evidenced link between traffic speed and road safety because at lower speeds drivers have far shorter stopping distances, and are therefore better able to react and stop in an emergency. Slowing average traffic speed by just 1mph on average cuts crash rates by 5% on any given road.\(^1\)

- Slight increases in speed mean big increases in stopping distances, which can mean the difference between causing a devastating crash, death or injury, or avoiding it altogether. The safest maximum speed for built up areas is 20mph, because it gives greater protection to people on foot and bike. At this speed, your stopping distance is about 12 metres, giving you a good chance of stopping in time if someone, such as a child, suddenly steps out. At 30mph, your stopping distance is almost double this: 23m, or nearly six car lengths.\(^2\)

- If you need to stop suddenly while driving at 70mph, you will travel 21 metres while you’re thinking, before you even hit the brakes. And you’ll travel that distance in less than a second. Your total stopping distance at this speed is 96m, or 21 car lengths.\(^2\)

- 54% of the 18,392,000 fixed penalty notices for driving offences in 2010 were for speeding offences.\(^3\)

- In 2011, 112,761 fines were imposed for speeding offences by magistrates’ courts and the average fine was £162 \(^3\).

**Q5: Within the past 12 months, how often have you driven faster than the speed limit on 30mph, 60mph, or 70mph roads?**

At-work drivers are much more likely than non-work drivers to speed on any kind of road.

- 76% of at-work drivers speed at more than 35mph on a 30mph road, compared to 62% of non-work drivers

- 54% of at-work drivers speed at more than 65mph on a 60mph road, compared with 34% of non-work drivers

- 54% of at-work drivers speed at more than 80mph on a 70mph limit motorway or dual carriageway, compared with 46% of non-work drivers.

**Q6: Within the past 12 months, on motorways, how often have you left less than a two-second gap between your vehicle and the vehicle in front?**

Alarmingly, more than a third (36%) of at-work drivers are failing to leave sufficient gap between their vehicle and the one in front on motorways once a month or more: far more than people who don’t drive for work.

- 17% of at-work drivers fail to leave a two-second gap at least once a week, compared with 10% of non-work drivers

- 12% of at-work drivers fail to leave a two-second gap about once a month, compared with 10% of non-work drivers

- 21% of at-work drivers fail to leave a two-second gap less than once a month, compared with 12% of non-work drivers

- 41% of at-work drivers always leave a two-second gap on the motorway, compared with 65% of non-work drivers.

**ADVICE FOR DRIVERS: JOURNEY PLANNING**

- Careful planning can reduce journey time, stress and tiredness, and help avoid temptation to take risks like speeding, eating or using a phone at the wheel.

- Plan journeys to make use of major trunk roads as much as possible, avoiding minor rural roads and ‘rat-runs’ through residential areas. Plan where you can safely park (and unload if needed).

- Don’t read a map, programme a sat nav or make calls for directions while driving.

- Plan where you will stop for breaks at least every two hours. Use the time to stretch your legs, eat and drink, check your phone and return calls, making sure you spend 15 minutes resting quietly, or having a nap.

- Check for bad weather or roadworks beforehand and allow for potential hold-ups. Check www.highways.gov.uk for updates.
At-work drivers

**Q7:** Within the past 12 months on any roads, have you broken the speed limit even once in any of the following circumstances?

At-work drivers are more likely to admit speeding for every reason given than those who only drive for non-work purposes. The difference is particularly pronounced for the reasons of being on a tight schedule or there not being much other traffic around.

- 56% of at-work drivers admit speeding while overtaking, compared to 44% of non-work drivers
- 39% of at-work drivers admit speeding when there isn’t much traffic around, compared with 29% of non-work drivers
- 36% of at-work drivers admit speeding when they think they can drive safely at higher speed, compared with 33% of non-work drivers
- 32% of at-work drivers admit speeding when late or on a tight schedule, compared to 23% of non-work drivers
- 27% of at-work drivers admit speeding when all the traffic around was speeding, compared to 26% of non-work drivers
- 14% of at-work drivers admit speeding when they think the speed limit is too low, compared with 10% of non-work drivers.

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**ADVICE: OVERTAKING**

- Overtaking on a single carriageway road is incredibly dangerous because it’s impossible to be certain you have sufficient clear road to complete the manoeuvre.

- Where overtaking is concerned, a small error of judgement can easily be fatal, especially if high speeds are involved. The gap between you and oncoming traffic can disappear very fast. If you are driving at 60mph and an oncoming vehicle is also travelling at 60mph, the gap between you closes at 120mph, or about 60 metres a second.

- Overtaking on single carriageways should be avoided unless it’s absolutely essential, such as overtaking an extremely slow moving vehicle. Even then, it should only be done on a long, open stretch with plenty of room to get past and no risk of something coming the other way in that time.

- If you’re stuck behind a faster moving vehicle, hang back and relax, bearing in mind that an overtake will make minimal difference to your journey time, but could have devastating consequences.

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**OVERTAKING**

**LOST LIVES**

**Ken McLeod, 44**

Ken was a much-loved father of two, whose family say they have been ‘destroyed’ by his death. Ken was driving down the A78 in Ayreshire, Scotland, in August 2008. Marcus Brown was coming the other way, overtaking on a bend at 60mph. Brown’s car smashed head on into Ken; Brown said he didn’t see Ken’s car until it was too late. Ken had to be cut free from his crushed vehicle, and was pronounced dead at the scene. Brown was sentenced to five years and seven months in prison for causing Ken’s death by dangerous driving.

**End notes**

1. M C Taylor, D A Lynam and A Baruya, The effects of drivers’ speed on the frequency of road accidents, Transport Research Laboratory, 2000
2. Stopping distances as contained in the Highway Code, Department for Transport, 2012
At-work drivers

DRINK AND DRUGS

THE FACTS: SPEED

- Even very small amounts of alcohol have a significant effect on your ability to drive safely. After just one small drink, your reaction times are slower and judgment of speed and distance are affected. Alcohol also creates a false sense of confidence.
- 15% of road deaths are caused by people driving over the legal alcohol limit: that’s 280 lives lost needlessly, plus 1,290 serious injuries each year.
- An estimated 65 more deaths are caused each year by drivers who are under the limit but have a significant amount of alcohol in their blood.
- Nearly one in 12 drink drivers prosecuted are caught the morning after they were drinking.
- 57% of fleet operators surveyed by Brake don’t have alcohol testing in place for their drivers.

Q9: Within the past 12 months, how often have you driven after drinking alcohol?

Even a very small amount of alcohol impairs driving, but a similar and worryingly high proportion of at-work and non-work drivers – more than one in three – admit getting behind the wheel after drinking alcohol.

- 64% of at-work drivers have not driven after drinking alcohol in the past 12 months, compared with 66% of non-work drivers.
- 5% of at-work drivers have driven after drinking once in the past 12 months, compared with 5% of non-work drivers.
- 24% of at-work drivers have driven after drinking occasionally, compared with 25% of non-work drivers.
- 6% of at-work drivers have driven after drinking once a month or more, compared with 4% of non-work drivers.
- 1% of at-work drivers did not answer.

Q10: Within the past 12 months, how often have you driven first thing in the morning after drinking a lot of alcohol the night before?

Driving the morning after drinking can be just as dangerous, as it can take a long time for alcohol to get out of your bloodstream. At-work drivers are far more likely to take the potentially deadly risk of driving the morning after a heavy night than other drivers.

- 57% of at-work drivers say they have not driven first thing the morning after drinking heavily, compared with 71% of non-work drivers.
- 10% of at-work drivers have driven the morning after drinking heavily once in the past year, compared with 6% of non-work drivers.
- 26% of at-work drivers have driven the morning after drinking heavily occasionally, compared with 21% of non-work drivers.
- 7% of at-work drivers have driven the morning after drinking heavily once a month or more, compared with 3% of non-work drivers.

LOST LIVES

Claire, 18, Jenny, 15, and Carla, 18

Claire Stoddart, 18, of Lowestoft, was driving back from a concert with her sister Jenny, 15, and three friends, Carla, Sarah and Adam. A car came over the brow of a hill and smashed into them, head-on. Claire, Jenny and Carla were killed. Sarah and Adam suffered broken bones. Two passengers in the other car also died. The 23-year-old driver of the other car had drunk more than eight pints of lager. He was jailed for six and a half years for causing the deaths.
At-work drivers

ADVICE FOR DRIVERS: DRINKING AND DRIVING

- Never risk drinking and driving. If you need to drive, don’t drink, not even one. Equally, if you’re planning to drink, or think you might be tempted to, plan ahead to make sure you can get home safely using alternative means or a designated driver who you trust to stay off the booze.
- Don’t try to calculate how much you can ‘get away with’ drinking before you are impaired or over the legal limit. It’s not safe to drive after even one drink\(^1\), even if you feel fine: you can’t judge your own impairment.
- Don’t drive the morning after having any more than one or two small drinks the night before. There’s no way of telling exactly how long it will take to sober up, but it’s probably longer than you think. If you drink three pints of strong lager or three large glasses of wine finishing at midnight, it’s unlikely you will be safe to drive again until 10am the next day, but it could take longer\(^2\).
- If you have to drive for work the next morning, be careful to limit what you drink the night before. Many firms now have zero-tolerance alcohol policies, so you could face losing your job if you’re found with even small amounts of alcohol in your blood, as well as putting yourself and others at risk.

ADVICE FOR DRIVERS: DRUGS AND MEDICINES

- Always read the small print of any medication you are taking, to check whether it may affect your driving.
- If you are unsure, or are taking more than one type of medication, check with your doctor or a pharmacist, making clear to them that you drive.
- If you have a medical condition that requires you to take medication that may impair your driving, tell your employer, as they have a responsibility to keep you and others safe.
- If you have any doubts about whether you are safe to drive because of medication, be cautious and don’t drive until you’ve spoken to a medical professional.
- Never risk taking illegal drugs and driving. The effects of illegal drugs are highly unpredictable, and have been shown to have a significant effect on driving and crash risk\(^3\). The effects of drugs can also last a long time, and it’s impossible to judge whether you’re impaired. Because of this if you take illegal drugs, the only way to be completely safe is to not drive, or vice-versa.
- More organisations are introducing random drug testing for their drivers, so even if you leave long gaps between taking illegal drugs and driving, you may be risking your job as well as your safety.

Q11: Within the past 12 months, have you driven after taking prescribed or over-the-counter medication that recommends you don’t drive?

Many medicines can make people drowsy or otherwise impair driving, but a high proportion of both at-work drivers and non-work drivers don’t check the labels, or ignore warnings. Slightly fewer at-work drivers than non-work drivers admit driving after taking medication that recommends against it in the past 12 months.

- 10% of at-work drivers have driven after taking medication that recommends against driving, compared with 13% of non-work drivers
- 86% of at-work drivers have not driven after taking medication that recommends against driving, compared with 87% of non-work drivers
- 2% of at-work drivers don’t check if the medicines they are taking might impair driving, compared with 5% of non-work drivers
- 2% of at-work drivers did not answer.

Q12: In the past 12 months, how often have you driven after taking illegal drugs?

Appallingly, people who drive for work are more than twice as likely to admit to driving after taking illegal drugs compared to other drivers.

- 5% of at-work drivers admitted driving after taking illegal drugs in the past year, compared with 2% of non-work drivers
- 93% of at-work drivers have not driven after taking illegal drugs in the past year, compared with 96% of non-work drivers
- 2% of at-work and non-work drivers did not answer.

THE FACTS: DRUGS AND DRIVING

- Many prescription drugs can cause drowsiness, which can slow reaction times or even make you fall asleep at the wheel\(^4\).
- Cannabis slows reaction times, affects coordination and concentration and makes you drowsy\(^5\).
- ‘Stimulant’ drugs such as ecstasy, speed and cocaine impair driving by distorting perceptions and making you jumpy. They can also make you overconfident, or paranoid and confused\(^6\).
- Heroin and other opiates make the user feel relaxed and sleepy. This affects driving by slowing reaction times and impairing coordination\(^7\).
- Illegal drugs can remain in your system much longer than alcohol, and it is impossible to know exactly how long you are going to be affected\(^8\). It is also impossible to judge your own level of impairment\(^9\).

End notes

2. Reported Road Casualties Great Britain 2011, Department for Transport, 2012
3. Richard E Allsop, Reducing the BAC limit to 50mg – what can we expect to gain?, Centre for Transport Studies University College London, 2005
4. Reported Road Casualties Great Britain 2011, Department for Transport, 2012
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14. ibid
At-work drivers

DRIVER TIREDNESS

THE FACTS: DRIVER TIREDNESS

- Research suggests one in five deaths on trunk roads are caused by drivers falling asleep at the wheel, but the exact number of casualties is unknown as it’s often difficult to prove tiredness or falling asleep was the cause.
- Crashes caused by tired drivers typically involve vehicles running off the road or into the back of another vehicle. They are often serious, high speed crashes because the driver does not brake.
- Too little sleep radically affects your ability to drive safely: on just five hours’ sleep you only have a one in ten chance of staying awake on a lengthy journey.
- Sleep does not occur without warning and drivers know when they are getting sleepy. Warning signs include: difficulty concentrating; yawning; heavy eyelids; eyes starting to ‘roll’; neck muscles relaxing, making your head droop.
- Drivers who try to fight off sleep often experience ‘microsleeps’, nodding off for two to 30 seconds, often with out realising or remembering it. Although only brief, microsleeps can be fatal: a driver experiencing a six-second microsleep at 70mph on a motorway would travel 200m in that time.
- At-work drivers are particularly at risk from driver fatigue, because they typically spend much longer hours at the wheel.

Q13: In the past 12 months, how often have you driven after less than five hours’ sleep the night before?

Doctors recommend we get eight hours’ sleep a night to feel properly refreshed and allow our brains and bodies to recover. However, a significant proportion of people who drive for work habitually get much less, with 13% driving on less than five hours’ sleep once a month or more.

- 39% of at-work drivers and 56% of non-work drivers have not driven after less than five hours’ sleep
- 10% of at-work drivers have driven after less than five hours’ sleep once in the past 12 months, compared with 9% of non-work drivers
- 37% of at-work drivers have driven after less than five hours’ sleep occasionally in the past 12 months, compared with 27% of non-work drivers
- 13% of at-work drivers have driven after less than five hours’ sleep monthly or more, compared with 6% of non-work drivers.

Q14: In the past 12 months, how often have you driven when feeling tired?

Driving while tired puts you at great risk of causing a deadly crash, and this is far more prevalent among people driving for work. At-work drivers are more than twice as likely to drive tired once a month or more than non-work drivers.

- 20% of at-work drivers have not driven while tired, compared with 30% of non-work drivers
- 6% of at-work drivers have driven while tired once, compared with 9% of non-work drivers
- 56% of at-work drivers have driven while tired occasionally, compared with 52% of non-work drivers
- 7% of at-work drivers have driven while tired about once a month, compared with 4% of non-work drivers
- 10% of at-work drivers have driven while tired about once a week or more, compared with 4% of non-work drivers.

LOST LIVES

Peter Jones

Peter Jones was killed by a tanker driver who fell asleep on the M62. Peter’s taxi had broken down and he was sitting in the passenger-side seat when the tanker ploughed into him, pushing the taxi across three lanes and into the central reservation. Peter was killed instantly. His death devastated his fiancée Tracey and all his friends and family. The driver was later diagnosed with sleep apnoea, a condition that often causes acute daytime sleepiness.
Q15: If you have driven when tired in the past 12 months, when did this happen most often?

People who drive for work are more than twice as likely to be tired driving to or from work than while they are driving at work.

- 38% of at-work drivers were most often tired while driving to or from work
- 14% of at-work drivers were most often tired while driving for work purposes
- 12% were most often tired while driving late at night after a social event
- 22% were most often tired while driving on another type of journey.

Figure 12: journeys on which people who drive for work are most likely to be tired

Q16: In the past 12 months, how often have you fallen asleep at the wheel?

A horrifying one in 15 (7%) at-work drivers have fallen asleep while driving in the past 12 months, and most of these have done so more than once, repeatedly risking tragedy.

- 3% of at-work drivers admit falling asleep at the wheel once in the past 12 months, compared with 4% of non-working drivers
- 4% of at-work drivers admit falling asleep at the wheel more than once, compared with 1% of non-working drivers.

ADVICE FOR EMPLOYERS: DRIVER TIREDNESS

- Employers with staff who drive for work should ensure drivers understand the risks of tired driving and that safety is more important than sticking to a schedule. Tell drivers to rearrange appointments if they are delayed and become tired, rather than pressing on. Tell drivers to stop and stay overnight at the company’s expense if their journey time has been significantly extended and they are too tired to drive on.
- Ensure drivers know the importance of regular rest breaks, even if they are behind schedule, and ensure journeys are planned to allow time for breaks and potential hold-ups.
- Drivers should know the importance of taking steps to prevent tiredness, including getting a good night’s sleep before driving. They should also be educated on the importance of paying attention to warning signs and taking immediate action if they feel tired at the wheel.
- Bus, coach, and truck drivers are subject to European and British legislation relating to drivers’ hours. So if your company operates these vehicles you must ensure you are fully compliant. Failure to comply with drivers’ hours rules can present huge risks to your drivers and other road users, and can also result your operator’s licence being withdrawn.

End notes
4. ibid
5. ibid
6. Sleep Apnoea Trust, Website: www.sleep-apnoea-trust.org