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HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION

Preventing Workplace Transport Accidents - A Proposal to Introduce Management Standards for Driver/Operators

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Issue

1. Progress with the Safe Driver component of the Workplace Transport Priority Programme following the Commission's advice on training at the meeting on 10 February 2004.

Timing

2. Routine.

Recommendation

3. That the Commission supports, in principle, the development of a set of management standards to help tackle workplace transport accidents.

Background

4. The Commission received a paper on Workplace Transport (Safe Driver) in February 2004 (HSC/03/128) when HSE presented proposals to introduce a formal training requirement for workplace transport drivers by amending Regulation 9 of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER). The Commission was not convinced that a regulatory approach was right and asked for a non-regulatory alternative to be considered.
5. HSE has conducted research into alternative ways forward, including examining approaches adopted by some overseas administrations. We considered the dual legislative/standards approach imposed by the United States authorities, but considered this to be too prescriptive. We also considered the high level standards promoted by the Australian State governments, but found these do not provide the level of guidance requested by our stakeholders. Taking this into account and after considering the direction adopted by the Stress Priority Programme, HSE now considers that developing guidance in the form of Management Standards for Workplace Transport may be the best way forward to help improve competence in operators and supervisors.

Argument

6. Research has revealed that though training is essential to provide the individual with the necessary skills, the way in which individuals choose to perform a task is more likely to be influenced by attitudes and beliefs. This means that a way of changing the culture in organizations is required.
7. To do this the Workplace Transport team proposes to mirror the approach adopted by the Stress Priority Programme and to develop a set of standards for managing workplace transport activity.

8. We envisage that the work will include:
 - a. working with partners to develop clear, agreed generic standards of good management practice for a range of driving skills and competences;
 - b. involving others actively to develop a more comprehensive approach to managing Workplace Transport;
 - c. launching a phased national awareness raising campaign to inform employers and workers and encourage adoption of the standards.
9. The first step would be to hold a series of 6 national workshops (provisionally Glasgow/Edinburgh, Cardiff, Manchester, Birmingham, London and Exeter) to engage stakeholders and develop the standards. We would propose a range of areas for standards development (Appendix 1) to test with stakeholders. Appendix 2 gives an example of what a standard might look like. The development process is planned over two years.

Consultation

10. The Workplace Transport Priority Programme Board has agreed to this approach and we have tested the idea in discussions with a range of stakeholders, including some local authorities, all of whom expressed their willingness to support the work in principle. If a set of draft standards is developed, the Commission will be asked to agree that they go to a full public consultation.

Presentation

11. Agreed standards could be launched in a phased national awareness raising campaign in 2007/08 aimed at spreading information about the new Standards as they are developed, encouraging take up, monitoring adoption and developing case studies highlighting benefits. A communications plan will be developed in line with objectives of a wider programme to disseminate information about new management standards and implement them. The stress management standards should provide some useful lessons. Meanwhile, evaluation of a pilot campaign using regional media (radio and newspaper adverts) in the North East to make business aware of the vulnerability of delivery/collection drivers on clients' worksites will provide information on barriers to behaviour change and preferred communication channels to help inform our communications planning.

Costs and Benefits

12. HSE's Economic Advisors Unit has advised that Workplace Transport accidents cost between £540 million and £544 million in 2001/02. Research suggests that driver error related accidents in that period accounted for 20 – 30%, i.e. £108 - £163 million of the total. If our detailed proposals start to take effect in 2007/08 following engagement with stakeholders there could be some impact upon accident figures during the current 3-year plan period for the PSA target and before 2010 when the revitalising targets need to be met. However the development work over the next two years should raise awareness of workplace transport related risks and thus could impact on the statistics earlier.

Financial/Resource Implications for HSE

13. The total (estimated) cost for the delivery of Workplace Transport management standards is £1.22 million. We will be in a position to provide firmer figures in the next Commission Paper.
14. We estimate that the 6 national workshops (paragraph 9) would cost £20K in staff to develop and manage/lead the consultancy support (estimated at £200k) required to expedite the delivery and evaluation of stakeholder feedback.
15. Research to further develop the standards following consultation with our stakeholders would cost an estimated £430K (external and Health & Safety Laboratory) plus £60K staff costs.

16. It is estimated that the consultation exercise (paragraph 10), including the Regulatory Impact Assessment would require £35K staff costs to develop and run with a further £15K staff costs to analyse the results.
17. We will further test our findings/proposals by way of a public/stakeholder survey. We estimate this will cost £35K plus £10K staff costs.
18. Having consulted with Strategic Communications it is too soon to estimate the level of resources for the phased national awareness raising campaign, however, they will be determined in the light of the impact achieved in the NE pilot campaign. That said, we consider they will be in the region of £350K with £65K staff costs for support (paragraph 11).
19. A high level Project Plan/Milestone Chart for the development and delivery of Workplace Transport management standards can be seen at Appendix 3.
20. If the Commission agrees the proposed approach the resource implications will be taken into account in the business and operational planning for the next 3 years.

Environmental Implications

21. None.

Other Implications

22. None.

Action

23. The Commission is asked to agree, in principle, to the proposal to develop management standards, for safe driving to help tackle workplace transport accidents.

A LIST OF HEADINGS FOR POSSIBLE MANAGEMENT STANDARDS FOR DRIVER/OPERATORS OF WORKPLACE TRANSPORT

The suggested headings are:

- Selection of drivers, establishing and maintaining competence of drivers
- Selection of supervisors, establishing and maintaining competence of supervisors
- Fitness to drive
- Fitness to supervise
- Selection of vehicles
- Maintenance of vehicles
- Layout and maintenance of worksite
- Systems for visiting drivers
- Management and supervision
- Demands

EXAMPLE OF A MANAGEMENT STANDARD FOR DRIVER/OPERATORS OF WORKPLACE TRANSPORT FOR CONSIDERATION AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

(December 2004)

Management & Supervision

Aimed at ensuring that employers fulfil their duties in respect of establishing procedures and safe systems of work and monitoring work activities

The standard is that:

- managers/supervisors are adequately trained to know:
 - the capabilities of the vehicles;
 - the environmental and operating requirements of the vehicles, e.g. ground load specifications for working platforms, safe gradients for lift-trucks etc.;
 - how to assess employees levels of skill;
 - what their employees have been taught;
 - what is and what isn't acceptable in terms of vehicle operations;
- safe systems of work and procedures are in place, and
- the work activities of employees are proactively and physically monitored.

What should be happening / states to be achieved:

- employers, managers and supervisors have:
 - adequate knowledge of the capabilities of vehicles, their environmental and operating requirements;
 - the ability to assess levels of skill;
- safe systems of work and procedures are easily and readily available to all workers;
- employers, managers and supervisors proactively promote a strong safety culture in the organisation, encouraging workers not to tolerate unsafe practices;
- the employment contract should reinforce the need for employees to act in a safe and responsible manner, clearly spelling out the disciplinary procedures for non compliance; employers, managers and supervisors have adequate Human Resource skills to intervene when employees fail to work safely and act accordingly.

PROJECT PLAN/MILESTONES FOR WORKPLACE TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

