

Case Study Five

Powergen UK PLC

COMPANY OVERVIEW

Powergen plc is a transatlantic energy provider involved in the generation, distribution and supply of electricity and gas to business and residential customers. The company incorporates the East Midlands Electricity distribution business in the UK, as well as LG&E Energy in the US Midwest. Its headquarters is located in Coventry.

NATURE OF FLEET AND DRIVING ACTIVITIES

In the UK, driving operations consist of:

- Approximately 300 commercial vehicles
- Approximately 100 panel vans
- 50 Nissan Terrano 4x4's for off road use
- 20 car derived vans
- 100 Land Rovers
- 30 other vehicles (including specialist Unimogs and Tower Wagons)
- Approximately 400 long-term lease cars
- Widespread use of short-term hire cars
- Some staff use private cars for work purposes although this is not actively encouraged

There are approximately 1,000 vehicles in the Powergen fleet.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE (as at 1st October 2001)

Within Powergen, there are three main safety functions.

The Group Safety team is responsible for developing Group policy and guidance, ensuring common safety standards across the Group, ensuring that the systems necessary for sound corporate governance are in place across the Group, and collating and reporting Group health and safety performance statistics. Group Safety is managed by the Head of Safety, who reports to the Group Personnel Director, who in turn reports to the Chief Executive.

There are also UK business and US business Safety Teams, each of which has its own manager. These teams are responsible for assisting in the development of country specific safe systems of work, providing safety advice and expertise, training and so on.

A Safety Advisor within Group Safety is currently predominantly responsible for Occupational Road Risk issues, and the development and maintenance of any Group guidance on this issue. The practical management of company vehicles within Powergen and East Midlands Electricity in terms of specifications, purchasing etc is the responsibility of Fleet Managers within the appropriate parts of the business.

Health and safety guidance developed within Group or UK Safety is made available to the business for comment before it is issued. Information is primarily electronically disseminated via an Intranet Lotus Notes system. The current guidance, '*Management of Occupational Road Risk*' is in draft form, and will soon be electronically distributed to all employees.

Under the Powergen Health and Safety Policy, line managers are made clearly accountable for the implementation of safety management systems within their part of the business. This includes the management of occupational road risk for their staff.

OCCUPATIONAL ROAD RISK GUIDANCE

Why the guidance was developed

Powergen has an excellent record in the management of the health and safety of its employees at work. It recognised, however, that it needed to formally extend its view of what constituted 'work activities' to include employees who drive on company business. Statistically, driving is one of the most hazardous activities that most of us engage in on a regular basis, yet Powergen did not have any company guidance for managers on how to manage this risk. Defensive driver training was, and is, widely used across the company but usually this was the only control measure being used. Many staff were doing a large number of business miles as part of their job without necessarily considering all the risks associated with scheduling, routes, the type and condition of the vehicle, use of mobile phones and so on (see awareness poster in attachment 1).

The first step taken in developing the guidance document was to set up a focus group, which included representatives from Group Safety, the EME Distribution business, Powergen Fleet Management, Powergen Power Technology centre, Risk and Insurance, and Facilities Management. This group brainstormed the issue of occupational road risk, collated some basic information and statistics from both inside and outside Powergen, and put together a discussion document for distribution to the UK business for comment. Advice was also sought from external organisations, including British Telecom who had recently introduced a new occupational road risk management programme, and the Warwickshire Traffic Police with whom Powergen had worked via their 'Fleetsafe' driver training programme. After a number of iterations and internal consultation exercises, this discussion document has finally resulted in a guidance document to be included in the Powergen Health and Safety Management Handbook.

From Group Safety's perspective, the development of this guidance is also a very effective way of communicating the concept of 'risk assessment' to many staff who may not have considered this concept before. Driving is a task that we are all very familiar with, but the guidance shows how the task can be broken down into a series of potential hazards, and then proposes control measures which can be used by drivers and their managers to mitigate these risks.

What the guidance covers

The management of occupational road risk guidance includes:

- Driver responsibilities and fitness
- Vehicle ergonomics and maintenance
- Best practice for the use of the vehicle and on the road
- Journey planning
- Accident reporting
- Managers responsibilities
- Risk assessment

Examples of related documents and resources used within Powergen include:

- *Fleet Safe – Educational Strategy to Reduce Accidents* (Warwickshire Constabulary)
- *Distribution Business, New Ways of Working – Joint Framework Agreement on Teleworking and Travel Planning* (joint venture between AEEU, GMB, T&G, EMA, Unison, and East Midlands Electricity)
- *CHP Engineering Department – Managing Occupational Road Risk*
- An East Midland Electricity Local Management Instruction on *Safe Driving*
- Laminated pin-up sheet, *Westwood Responsible Managers' Health and Safety Charter*

ROAD SAFETY

The following elements are included in the guidance:

Risk assessment	Covers occupational road risk and where to find guidance on the general principles of risk assessment (in Powergen's Health and Safety Management Handbook). Responsibility for carrying out risk assessments lies both with Responsible Line Managers and with individual drivers.
Driver training	<p>There are two main types of driver training promoted by Powergen.</p> <p>One is called <i>Fleet Safe</i>, which is run by the Warwickshire Traffic Police. This is a one-day classroom based course which covers driver attitudes to road safety, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining vehicles • Motorway safety • Speed • drugs/alcohol <p>Fleet Safe asks drivers to take the current driving test theory exam at the beginning of the course to find out how much they really know about road traffic law and the Highway Code.</p> <p>The second is the defensive driver programme offered by 'Drive and Survive'. This practical, one-day course involves the assessment of individual drivers on the road by a competent trainer. Detailed feedback on performance and areas for improvement is given to the drivers as well as their Responsible Line Managers.</p> <p>In addition, there are other driver training opportunities outlined in the guidance document including Advanced Driver Training and Task Specific Training such as off-road or skid control.</p> <p>Training for drivers of specialist vehicles, such as Unimogs is also provided by manufacturers.</p>
Driver assessments / authorisations	Responsible Line Managers are encouraged to fill out and sign a Driver Authorisation Record, which is found at the back of the guidance document. This form includes licence checking, accident history, most recent training, vehicle details, and records of business mileage.
Alternative means of transport	The use of alternative means of transport is encouraged as is the use of video and teleconferencing facilities in order to reduce the need to travel to external meetings.
Guidance on mobile phone use/hands free sets etc	The guidance states that hand-held mobile phones should never be used whilst driving. The use of hands-free kits should also be kept to an absolute minimum. Ideally mobile phones should be turned off whilst driving and messages picked up on arrival at the destination.
Vehicle maintenance procedures	Regular maintenance checks by drivers are encouraged in addition to manufacturers servicing requirements. Drivers are also encouraged to take '30 seconds' to carry out a visual check of the vehicle, paying attention to the condition of tyres, windows, and light glasses. In addition, drivers are to periodically check light bulbs, wiper blades, water jets, and the level of essential fluids. The frequency of regular maintenance depends on the type of

	vehicle.
Vehicle Loading	The guidance outlines the ergonomic hazards associated with handling large or heavy vehicle loads.
Journey Planning	The guidance discusses route planning and frequency of rest breaks. Adverse weather is also a consideration in journey planning. Employees who have disembarked from long haul flights should not drive immediately back to work or home. Responsible Line Managers should arrange for alternative means of transport to convey the employee to their destination.
Breakdown assistance and Emergency Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakdown assistance details are included in a handbook kept with the vehicle at all times. The guidance also recommends that an emergency kit is kept with the vehicle at all times, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Aid kit • Warning triangle • Torch • Ice scraper • High visibility waistcoat • Mobile phone
Incident reporting	Accident reporting is detailed in the guidance document. Drivers have a responsibility to report road traffic incidents to the police, to their line manager and to the Risk and Insurance department. Employees are also encouraged to report 'near-misses'.
Tiredness/Fatigue	Detailed outline of how to minimise the risk of fatigue whilst driving including route planning, rest breaks, avoidance of driving long journeys if alternative transport is available.
Drink/Drugs	Strict prohibition of drink driving. Drivers should consult with doctors regarding the effects of any medication they are taking.
Medical/Eyesight tests	No formal 'driver fitness' medicals or eyesight tests are done.
Vehicle Ergonomics	The guidance stresses the importance of good ergonomics and driver comfort. Poor vehicle design or driver positioning can lead to poor posture, tiredness, irritability, and lack of concentration.
Vehicle Safety Features	Drivers must choose company vehicles with ABS brakes, 4 doors, and airbags. These features also apply to any hire cars. The drivers themselves recognise that they need to select these features, but also recognise that if they receive a hire car dropped off at their house in the dark, they probably don't check safety features.
Seatbelts	The number of occupants in the vehicle must be limited to the number of seat belts provided.

SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF PROCEDURES

Management of Occupational Road Risk guidance document

The guidance document is available electronically to all staff via Lotus Notes system. It forms part of the company Health and Safety Management Handbook. The document covers in detail all of the information discussed in the table above.

Fleet Safe

One-day classroom training course run by Warwickshire Traffic Police. Includes car care, motorway safety, accident and breakdown procedure, the consequences of drinking and

driving, and the effects of speed and driver attitudes. The Fleet Safe course involves delegates taking the current driving theory test as an ice-breaker at the beginning of the course, to find out how much they really know about road traffic law. Approximately 200 company car drivers have been through the course and all East Midlands Electricity van drivers are due to go through it also.

Distribution Business, New Ways of Working – Joint Framework Agreement on Tele-working and Travel Planning

This document outlines a joint venture between the EME Distribution business and the unions aimed at reducing business travel by increased tele-working, reducing costs, reducing stress levels, achieving a better work/life balance, and promoting more flexible working hours.

AUDITING AND REVIEW

There is currently no formal system of auditing or reviewing the management of occupational road risk. Accident and repair costs and incident reports are available with driver name, age, vehicle registration, insurance cost, and details of the incident.

COST AND BENEFITS

The overall cost of implementing the Powergen occupational road risk guidance is not considered to be significant, apart from the time and human resources involved in developing the guidance document. The policy has taken about 18 months to develop. It is intended that the document will be modified and updated to ensure it remains current.

The main benefits of implementing the guidance are seen as improved driver safety and reduced accident rates, lower accident repair costs and increased employee understanding and awareness of the concept of risk assessment.

LESSONS LEARNED

The success of any risk management approach is a function of the degree to which it is embraced by the individuals who implement it – in this case line managers and drivers. Powergen's approach to general health and safety management has always been to provide line managers with the information and tools they need to make informed decisions, rather than to impose corporate policies on them. This allows line managers the freedom to implement systems which fit with their particular business and its activities. For this reason, Powergen feels that guidance is the most appropriate approach to the management of occupational road risk. For this to succeed, however, it is important that the safety culture in the organisation is sufficiently well developed that line managers do actually take on board the principles of the guidance.

Driving represents a particular challenge as it is one of the few activities that we all do outside work as well as at work, and we all think that we are good drivers. By offering sound, sensible advice for the work environment, it is hoped that this will have an impact on safety levels outside work, which is ultimately also beneficial for Powergen.

CURRENT AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Powergen recognises that the main areas that need to be developed are:

- The use of actual accident data to improve occupational road risk management within Powergen and focus attention on key risk areas (e.g. specific driver groups, vehicle types, driving activities etc.)
- The implementation of an audit or review process that covers occupational road risk in order to assess the quality of systems being implemented by line managers.



THE MANAGEMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL ROAD RISK



DID YOU KNOW THAT:

- 3 drivers are **KILLED EVERY WEEK** in the UK whilst driving on business;
- Driving is one of the most hazardous activities which most of us regularly carry out;
- The Highway Code is based on legal requirements and failure to comply may mean that the driver is committing a criminal offence.

DONT DRINK AND DRIVE (OR TAKE DRUGS AND DRIVE)



affect your ability to drive safely)

SEAT BELTS



- It is the drivers responsibility to ensure that seat belts are worn at all times by any passengers under the age of 14.
- In law, passengers over the age of 14 are responsible for themselves.

(If you are taking prescribed or over-the-counter drugs you should ensure that the drugs do not have side effects that may

FEELING SLEEPY?

Then **STOP** immediately and have a short nap and / or drink a non-alcoholic drink such as coffee or fruit juice.



VEHICLE MAINTENANCE



As well as a regular **SERVICE**, every time the vehicle is used, you should spend 30 seconds to carry out a visual check of the vehicle, particularly the condition of tyres, windows, and light glasses.

MOBILE TELEPHONES

Powergen does not expect any driver to make or receive calls which might place them in danger or cause them to break the law.



For more in-depth information, please see GS-MP9 'The Management of Occupational Road Risk' which can be found in Section A6 of the Health & Safety Management Handbook.