

Embedding Road Safety in Businesses

Hannah Parnell, Ruth Graham, John Wall

Centre for Road Safety, Transport for NSW

Abstract

In NSW, one in six workplace fatalities are a result of road crashes at work. All businesses have an obligation under Work Health and Safety law to ensure a safe work environment. This includes when on and around the road. The Centre for Road Safety has developed an easy-to-read guide to help businesses understand the key road safety issues and risks, and ways to help their employees reach their destination safely. It also provides clear steps to help businesses embed road safety within their organisation.

Introduction

Every road user has the right to travel safely on the road network. In NSW, one in six workplace fatalities are a result of road crashes at work (SIRA, 2017). NSW crash statistics show around 25% of fatalities are from crashes involving a vehicle being used for business (four-year average, 2013-2016). Fatal and serious injuries from crashes should not be accepted. Road safety is a shared responsibility – everyone has a role to play in keeping ourselves and others safe on the road, including businesses. However, businesses vary greatly in their application of road safety practices.

Road Safety Guide content

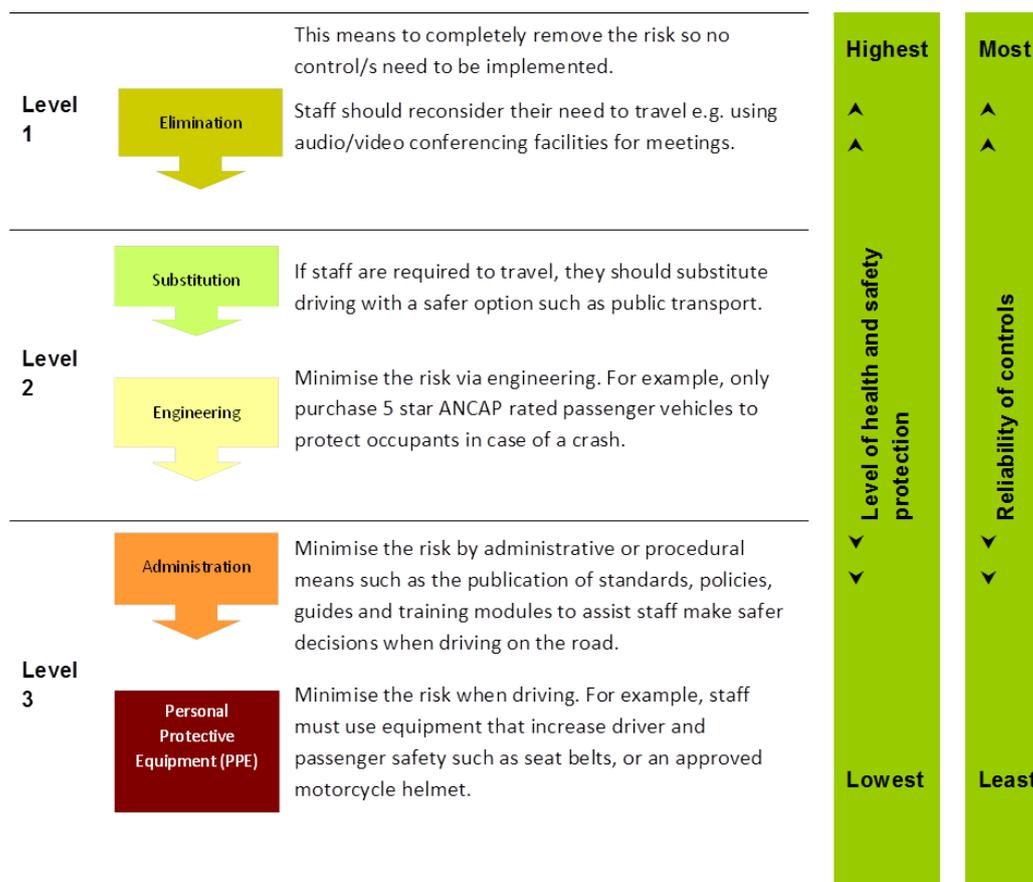
The Road Safety Guide for Businesses explains the principles of the Safe System approach, and how the four elements – safe roads, safe vehicles, safe speeds and safe behaviours – work together. This helps organisations understand, for example, that selecting a safe vehicle fleet for their workers is just as important as encouraging safe behaviours.

Even with a good understanding of road safety, it can be hard to know how to achieve a road safety culture within a business, or where to start with developing a road safety policy. The Road Safety Guide for Businesses outlines the seven steps to achieving this:

1. Gain executive support
2. Understand staff travel and associated risks
3. Set clear and measurable goals
4. Develop accountability systems
5. Document policy and guidelines
6. Launch your policy
7. Monitor, review and improve.

The 'hierarchy of controls' risk assessment model is also presented (Figure 1). Businesses can use this to understand the controls for three levels of risk – from elimination of risks, through to providing personal protective equipment. Examples are provided at each level to aid businesses with their risk management.

Figure 1. Hierarchy of controls risk assessment model applied to driving



The most substantial part of the Road Safety Guide for Businesses is about managing the risks. The first and most important task is to consider the need to travel. This can eliminate the risk altogether. Staff can be encouraged to use audio/video conferencing, use public transport, or work from a different location.

If workers have to travel, businesses are provided with safety initiatives for both them and their staff, via all elements of the Safe System approach. For example, to manage speeding employers could ensure they schedule work to allow enough time for staff journeys, including rest breaks, and/or fit vehicles with tracking systems that monitor speed. Employees can be encouraged to employ safe behaviours such as staying under the posted speed limit, following advisory speed signs, and driving to the conditions. Specific guidance on the risks and managing the risks is not only provided for drivers, but also for motorcyclists, cyclists and pedestrians.

The Road Safety Guide for Businesses is expected to be launched in 2018. The Centre for Road Safety hopes to partner with organisations with large fleets, to help them develop policies and guidelines and firmly embed road safety within their business. Each positive change a business makes is one more step Towards Zero.

References

SIRA (State Insurance Regulatory Authority), 2017. NSW Workers Compensation Statistical Bulletin 2014/15. State Insurance Regulatory Authority and SafeWork NSW. Available at: (<https://www.opengov.nsw.gov.au/publications/16732>)