

## Summer driving - Guidance for managers

Summer driving brings unique driving challenges: more vehicles on the road, more children playing outside, more tractors, cyclists and motorbikes. Journey times are longer and traffic jams more likely.

Those who manage drivers need to be aware of these issues and work schedules should be planned accordingly. As well as planning journeys for the eventuality of holiday traffic jams, there needs to be a focus on vehicle condition and detailed information should be provided to drivers on allergies, preventing fatigue and minimising glare from the sun.

The following information should prove useful for managers to communicate to drivers and maintenance teams.



### Vehicle maintenance

- Check vehicle coolant levels more regularly through the summer
- Keep washer bottles full and ideally provide an additional bottle of screen wash in the vehicle. Windscreen smears caused by insects can impair visibility so windscreens need to be kept clean
- Check tyres for damage as hot weather increases the risk of puncture
- Also check tyres for suitable tread depth because sudden summer showers can leave road surfaces flooded or slippery
- Ensure that your air conditioning is maintained and effectively working.

### Allergy time

Hay fever causes itchy and watery eyes, blocked and running noses and sneezing, which present a real distraction to drivers. It is advisable to ask those drivers who suffer from hay fever to follow these steps in order to reduce the chance of an accident due to allergy distractions:

- Use non-drowsy Antihistamines such as loratadine and cetirizine
- Dehydration can make symptoms worse so keep a bottle of water in the vehicle
- Keep a good supply of tissues in the vehicle
- Wear sun glasses to keep pollen away from your eyes
- Keep windows closed and use the air conditioning system to keep the vehicle cab cool.

Managers should ensure that drivers:

- Regularly vacuum the vehicle cab to remove pollen
- Are provided with weather warnings when pollen counts are expected to be high
- Provide vehicle purifiers and ionisers to reduce pollen particles in the vehicle cab.

## The Country Code

If your routes cover rural areas, it's useful to remind your drivers about the 'Country Code':

- Tractors can turn unexpectedly and do not need indicators for daytime driving
- Tractors can have front loaders so overtaking may take longer than expected
- Mud on the road that has been left by a tractor can be extremely slippery after rain.

## Warm Weather Fatigue

Your drivers are more likely to feel fatigued in warmer summer months. Tachograph controls will dictate that commercial vehicle drivers take regular breaks but for those who drive vehicles without a tachograph, the following recommendations should be communicated to drivers:

- Break a 3 hour journey with a 20 minute stop
- Take a break every two hours for longer journeys
- Regular short stops of 20 minutes are better than one long stop, take a 15 minute nap
- Avoid eating a heavy meal before driving
- Drink a couple of cups of strong coffee
- Chew some gum to stop the yawning.

## Avoid the glare

Glare from the sun can cause road accidents. Wearing the correct sunglasses can help reduce glare and keep the drivers seeing clearly. It is recommended that your drivers have their eyes tested by an optician every 2 years. If a driver requires prescription lenses their sunglasses should also have the same prescription lenses.

Some lenses in sunglasses are not suitable for use by drivers. Class 4 lenses let through little light and are not suitable for driving use. Class 1,2 and 3 lenses let through adequate light for use in the day but not at night and Class 0 lenses have no limitations but have over 80% light transmission. Managers should check that drivers have the correct type of lenses in their sunglasses. Design features like deep arms should also be avoided as they obstruct periphery vision.



## Summary of Key Points

Driving in the summer introduces hazards for your drivers in the same way as winter driving can have its unique challenges. It is recommended that managers raise the awareness of their drivers on the issues in this guidance note and take the following action

- Consider the chance of traffic jams caused by holidaymakers when journey planning
- Check that drivers who need corrected vision have sunglasses that have prescription lenses tinted to an acceptable standard
- Talk to drivers without tachographs about taking additional breaks and remind professional drivers about fatigue prevention techniques
- Look at vehicle maintenance and inspection regimes from a summer driving viewpoint and check that air conditioning systems are working effectively
- Monitor pollen count forecasts and work with drivers to ensure they are best placed to control the effects of hay fever.

Following this guidance note can help you prevent driving at work accidents by keeping your drivers focused on the road through managing vehicles, fatigue and allergy reactions effectively.

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