

Staff Working on Roads (Road Maintenance) : Management Briefing

Key risks and controls:

Staff working on the highway are at very high risk. For staff working in live carriageways this is recognised as one of the highest occupational risks of any work activity in the UK including construction and mining.

In addition to the risk to the staff undertaking the work there is also a risk if the work is not correctly managed of causing risk to road users.

The New Roads and Streetworks Act 1991 includes specific requirements for the training and qualification of those working in the highway and their supervision and these staff have to be registered on a register of competence following completion of the qualifications. Chapter 8 of the Road Traffic Signs Manual lays down specific requirements for signing lighting and guarding of temporary works in the highway.

The particular risks associated with staff working in the road include:

- working at night - ensure you know how many hours your staff and contractors should be working for. Familiarise yourself with the Working Time Regulations, especially concerning working at night and make sure that all agreements are filed and reviewed. Make sure all staff sign in and out so that you have a clear record of how many hours each worker has completed
- working on or next to the carriageway - it is essential that your staff are trained to work on or near roads. They need to be provided with high visibility clothing and personal protective equipment (PPE) and understand how to use it. They also need to be trained in how to safely and effectively use any work equipment, road signage, lighting and guarding and how any traffic management plans work. Staff must understand all signage and the rules of the traffic flow, even if English is not their first language. All staff must understand the process involved if there is an accident or incident
- crossing the carriageway - the following must be considered when employees are crossing carriageways:
 - 1) appropriate PPE
 - 2) seeing and being seen by oncoming traffic
 - 3) ensuring safe gaps in the traffic
 - 4) safe distances at the side of the road before and after crossing
 - 5) safe gaps in the traffic
 - 6) walking directly across the road
 - 7) avoiding cats eyes and other tripping hazards
 - 8) minimising risk through not carrying things
 - 9) safe carrying of signs so as not to confuse drivers
 - 10) not obscuring high-visibility clothing
 - 11) greater crossing times in poor weather and when carrying loads. Greater distances at night and where traffic speeds/crossing times are high

Did you know?

- In the ten years to 2012, 13 road workers were killed while working on motorways and major A roads in England

- 80% of road workers have been physically or verbally abused by motorists.

Legislation

Key legislation:

- The New Road and Streetworks Act 1997

- The Working Time Regulations 1998/ (as amended)

- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

- Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 1992 (PPE).

Additional legislation:

- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER)

- Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 (as amended in 2012)

- Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 (as amended)

- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013.

Key Actions

Employers and those with a responsibility for those working around live traffic must ensure:

- an understanding of relevant legislation and compliance
- training, qualification and registration for staff and supervisors
- new staff undertake an induction
- staff who do not speak English as their first language fully understand all safety advice
- that all staff know their responsibilities
- all staff are appropriately trained and undertake ongoing training
- staff understand how to safely and effectively use equipment
- that all traffic plans are safe and effective to segregate traffic and pedestrians as well as meeting all requirements in terms of lighting, signage, speed limits etc
- inspections are conducted and inspection checklists are filled out and reviewed as appropriate
- that all risk assessments are undertaken by a competent person, implemented effectively and kept under review
- that staff are aware of all initiatives that can help support them in their role
- that traffic management plans, risk assessment, inspection checklists, audits etc are undertaken and kept under review as necessary.

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