



Delivering the message Campaigning on OSH in the road transport sector

This factsheet presents some findings from a report containing examples of campaigns and initiatives to improve occupational safety and health (OSH) in the road transport sector⁽¹⁾.

Effective means of communication are paramount to ensure that drivers and their employers are fully aware of the dangers associated with road transport and have a good understanding of what can be done to improve safety. However, for a number of reasons, disseminating information within the road transport sector is particularly challenging. The majority of companies are small enterprises employing fewer than 10 workers and many drivers are self-employed. Drivers often work away from a fixed base, and many have long experience and are used to very independent ways of working.

This independence coupled with the highly competitive nature of the road transport sector can also make drivers and their employers reluctant to implement new ways of working. Drivers have a tendency to trust their own experience most, and are reluctant to accept OSH advice from outside bodies, even if they are aware of it. And there appears to be a lack of communication on OSH between drivers and their employers and managers or, in the case of owner-drivers, the companies that contract them. Those working in road transport are more likely to take notice of practical and visual information, provided they see it as relevant.

The examples featured in the report used a variety of approaches.

- Forty-four cases used an individual approach, with the aim of modifying knowledge or attitudes. This approach requires relatively few resources and can be a cost-effective way of reaching a large population.
- Twelve cases used a collective approach, with the aim of making structural and/or cultural changes. This approach has often proved to offer significant OSH improvements.
- Four cases used a concerted approach which aimed to modify both knowledge and attitude whilst also striving to initiate structural and cultural change. This approach requires more resources, but is considered to have the greatest effect.

From the examples, a variety of success factors can be seen and suggestions made, which can be divided into a number of interrelated key issues:

- using an evidence-based, risk management-based and practical approach;
- giving special attention to reaching the target audience;
- engagement and partnership;

⁽¹⁾ Delivering the message: Programmes, initiatives and opportunities to reach drivers and SMEs in the road transport sector.



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- tailoring actions to the audience;
- using a variety of measures and media.

The characteristics of drivers mentioned above, such as their expertise and independence, have various implications for communication such as:

- using places they frequent — truck stops on highways, etc.;
- ensuring approaches are practical but not patronising;
- ensuring that advice and solutions are based on drivers' practical experiences; using drivers as advocates;
- involving drivers intimately in solutions — solutions need to be developed by drivers for drivers (using participatory methods) to incorporate their experience and to gain their acceptance.

The report suggests that engagement and partnership should go beyond drivers. Targets may need to include employers, managers, vehicle operators, loading staff, and both receivers and dispatchers of goods. Partnerships may include OSH organisations, road transport sector stakeholders including social partners, and road safety organisations. Some activities may be targeted generally at drivers' families and the general public.

Interesting approaches and innovative features seen in the examples include:

- a holistic approach to interventions; focusing on both the prevention and management of risks in the workplace and on the road;
- the incorporation of a variety of partners outside the road transport sector to help support the promotion of drivers' health and safety;
- events targeted not exclusively towards the driver, but more generally towards their families — the involvement of the driver's family and the wider community may facilitate greater overall interest and participation in the programme;

- the use of interesting and unique exercises and displays at events to increase participation and the interest of drivers;
- targeting supply chains to disseminate information more effectively;
- promoting the exchange and sharing of experiences, for example through networks and awards schemes for best practice;
- using places drivers frequent — truck stop rest areas, etc.;
- adopting approaches that are practical but not patronising;
- providing advice and solutions that are based on drivers' practical experiences and are relevant to their experience;
- using drivers as advocates to communicate good practice information to other drivers;
- involving clients and customers;
- one-to-one contact with drivers at truck stops — this is relatively expensive and can only reach a limited audience but is one of the best ways to gain the commitment of drivers;
- offering something practical and tangible — a service such as health tests or driving tests, or a free resource to support risk assessment;
- truck stops providing healthy eating options and distributing information;
- a 'responsible management' programme that employers sign up to;
- producing information in various languages if the target audience includes foreign workers.

Conclusions

No single technique for disseminating information is a panacea to the challenges posed by the road transport sector. However, each specific technique has its own particular merits. The most appropriate means of communication depends on the type and complexity of information to be disseminated, the target audience and the scope of the campaign. Probably, a combination of techniques is most effective in reaching drivers and those who employ or contract them. Adopting particular methods of communication at various stages of a campaign can help maximise exposure.

For SMEs in particular, interventions involving direct contact with employer and drivers, especially if offering a service or resource, are probably most effective. One-to-one contact with drivers, although relatively expensive and only reaching a limited audience, is thought to be the best way to gain driver commitment.

It appears useful to develop knowledge-transfer networks within industry and among the social partners, in order to support dissemination of information, resources and best practice within

industry. This should include collaboration between government agencies, intermediaries and private industry.

What is clear is that practical approaches taking into account the realities of the sector and the experiences of employers and drivers are needed. In this respect a greater number of solutions related to changing employers' attitudes to safety and health would be an asset.

To improve campaigning in this sector there is a need for:

- effective partnerships between those involved in promoting road safety, those involved in promoting OSH and stakeholders from the sector;
- continued exchange and sharing of existing experiences; and
- further investigation to explore the problems and success factors in promoting OSH among both employers and drivers.



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The Dutch 'Fit on the road' campaign used various strategies: firstly, road shows and the media were used to gain the attention of drivers, then their awareness was raised through health and fitness tests. Individual drivers were then invited to fitness sessions and given support and information to help them adopt a healthy lifestyle.

How to get the report

The full report is available in English at:
<http://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/reports/>
 where it can be downloaded free of charge.
 This factsheet is available in all EU languages at:
<http://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/factsheets/>

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