

Road Worker Safety Strategy

Safety for our road workers





Foreword

by Chris Mole MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport

Working on the Highways Agency's roads continues to be a high risk occupation.



By delivering key elements contained in the 2006/7 Road Worker Safety Action Plan, working together with our service providers and key partners, we have achieved significant improvements for the people who carry out this vital work – a step change in safety performance.



But we need to do more, because the number of fatal and serious injuries continues at an unacceptable level. We will take forward initiatives to remove the need for workers to be on the live carriageway, influence the design of road works and enhance risk awareness for road workers.



Our Strategy over the next two years will deliver further improvements to ensure that our roads are as safe as possible for drivers and road workers alike.



*The Highways Agency
Industry and Key
Stakeholders continue
to work in partnership
to improve road worker
safety.*



Introduction

by **Graham Dalton, Chief Executive, Highways Agency**



Delivering safe roads and reliable journeys is at the heart of what we do. Over the last five years we have seen improvements in road user and road worker safety, journey time reliability and network capacity. These improvements reflect the work that our road workers do in keeping the traffic moving on our network. This includes the efforts of our Traffic Officer Service to reduce congestion and our Supply Chain's work to maintain our network in good condition.



We believe the people who work on our network have a right to be safe. The safety of our road workers has improved over the last few years through our commitment to the Road Workers' Safety Forum and the delivery of actions in our 2006 Road Worker Safety Action Plan. However, every year a small number of road workers are still seriously injured or killed while maintaining our road network and others suffer less serious harm. This is not acceptable and we feel we can do more to keep our road workers safe.



At the Highways Agency we have decided to adopt an "Aiming for Zero" approach to health and safety. One part of this strategy is to eliminate all fatalities and serious injuries to road workers maintaining our road network. Delivering this aim will require us to work with the industry – our consultants and contractors - to find new ways to reduce risk and improve safety.

A key part of delivering our vision will be reducing the need for road workers to be on foot on a live carriageway where they are most at risk. We have



therefore decided to set ourselves and industry a goal of “Exposure Zero”. This aims to eliminate the need for road workers involved in routine maintenance of our network to be on foot on the live carriageway. It is our intention to lead a process which can deliver significant reductions in carriageway crossings via the Road Worker Safety Strategy being launched today, with the goal that Exposure Zero can be achieved by building on the sound foundations that the new Strategy will provide.

Delivering our “Aiming for Zero” vision will require a major change in the way we deliver road works across our network. This will require us to work in close partnership with our suppliers in order to provide safe roads for both our customers and our workforce. I believe this is a unique opportunity to change the way we work. It will require radical thinking and innovative approaches. The Highways Agency cannot do this alone: we need a cross industry approach with commitment to change.



Purpose of this Strategy

Background

In 2005 there were five fatalities on the Highways Agency's strategic road network, which was more than double that of previous years. The average fatality rate for this specialist group continues to be one of the highest for employment sectors reported by the Health and Safety Executive. Our commitment to a step change to improve road worker safety in our 2006/7 Action Plan, which carried Ministerial support, has reduced casualty levels in this work group.



However, risk levels remain high and we are committed to do more, working with our service providers and key partners. We will make further changes to reduce the risks for those working on the live carriageways, which is the most hazardous area for network operations.



Road workers include all operatives working on the Agency's network who are directly exposed to risks from network users. These include all workers engaged in traffic management activities and incident support services, maintenance and renewal schemes, vehicle recovery operators and any other activities where live traffic is present.



How can we improve road worker safety?

The Highways Agency can influence the health and safety of road workers by working in partnership with the service providers and stakeholders to improve training and performance, and by changing the operations on the network.



This can be achieved by: -

- ✚ Removing road workers from the live carriageway whenever possible and reducing risk exposure when they are working on the network, by consistently maintaining the highest standards of practice.
- ✚ Highlighting the importance of road workers and their safety to drivers (or road users) by raising awareness to influence driver behaviour.
- ✚ Improving communication methods on road worker safety issues throughout Government and supply chain forums to give a consistent approach to improve performance.



This work is in addition to the actions already in place for continuous improvement of health and safety management in the Highways Agency. The proposed actions will further improve the health and safety for everyone using and working on the network.

The Highways Agency will liaise with other Highway Authorities, so that they are aware of our approach and are able to actively support this initiative.



Road Worker Safety - Strategic Plan

Our Strategic Aims



Building on our successful 'Strategy for Action' launched during 2006, we will continually review working practices to reduce risks to road workers. This will specifically include:

- a. Establish the mechanisms for the regular use of speed control through road works on short term and overnight works by Spring 2010.
- b. Achieve a substantial reduction in the need for workers to cross live carriageways on foot by the end of 2011.



Working with leading organisations, we will seek to improve driver behaviour through road works, especially the use of excessive speed, to reduce incidents and improve traffic flow, thereby reducing risks to workers.



We will take steps to improve the communication of road worker safety initiatives and the sharing of best practice, working through leading professional groups and organisations in our supply chain, so that all stakeholders can contribute to improving road worker safety and work together to drive improvements.



Key actions



1. Use speed detection and enforcement techniques as a key lever to manage the speed of vehicles through road works, including consideration of the use of a National Blanket Order to facilitate reduced speed limits for overnight and short term works.
2. Actively explore alternatives to the placing of advance warning signs, cone tapers and lengths of cones for delineation of road works, by use of fixed and mobile gantry mounted signs, high level nearside signs, use of lane-blocking vehicles and smarter information and instructions to motorists.
3. Support the mechanisation of the placing and removal of cone tapers and longitudinal cone delineation, to remove workers from the carriageway.
4. Collect and share evidence of good and poor practice on design for maintenance to enable decision pathways to be reviewed, thereby enabling road worker safety design improvements for future projects.
5. Provide two training vehicles for use by our supply chain at depots, sites and work locations, to enhance the awareness of road workers to hazards and the correct behaviours to minimise risks.
6. Use the Agency's Strategic Safety Action Plan to drive Area Team activity, by inclusion of local targets to improve road worker safety in each Area Action Plan, detailing the tools and techniques which can be used and monitoring the improvements delivered.



7. Produce driver behaviour influencing tools to enable effective training, influencing and briefing sessions to take place in a wide range of settings.



8. Develop an Occupational Health Strategy for our major projects and maintenance work, leading our supply chain to improve the health of road workers.



9. Close-out all outstanding actions from the 2006/07 Plan and appoint a lead administrator to monitor and update the new Road Worker Safety Action Plan on a quarterly basis, sharing the status report with all interested Groups and organisations on a quarterly basis.



**Road Worker Safety Strategy
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Tower of London**