

Driving at work – let's make it safer

Whether you drive a vehicle to and from work, or are employed to drive, it is imperative that everyone is aware of the hazards and how to mitigate them,

says Gosha chairman **Andrew Mills**



LOTS of people drive in connection with their work in Guernsey. They may drive a car to and from their place of employment, they may drive a work vehicle to a meeting, to deliver something or to collect a parcel. Or they may be driven, on a bus, in a car share, in a taxi and so on.

We use vehicles a lot in Guernsey (we have nearly 91,000 vehicles registered and around 19,000 movements per weekday according to gov.gg) and it is human nature, it seems, to become complacent when a task is undertaken frequently and generally safely.

But driving in Guernsey can be hazardous, with lots of vehicles on the road especially at busy times, and some of our roads are narrow with limited, if any, pavement space. Lots of bumps and accidents occur daily.

According to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), driving is one of the most hazardous activities many people will do at work. In Guernsey, the Health and Safety at Work (General) (Guernsey) Ordinance, 1987, requires employers to ensure the health and safety of their employees while driving for work.

Some of the injuries which occur are very serious indeed, often caused by sheer carelessness, sometimes excessive speed. They can be life changing, sometimes life-ending.

Did you know that Guernsey's largest reported personal injury payment to one individual reached a new high last year? Previously, the record was just under £14m. for a cyclist who was knocked off his bike by a car and suffered horrendous injuries. The new record, set in 2025 for an incident in November 2021, is around £23m. for a passenger catastrophically injured in a car which crashed in Rue du Friquet (Royal Court case JG v AC 2025).

The terrible injuries suffered have ruined lives, brought about huge compensation payments and, as a result, have increased the motor insurance premiums we pay – and there is no avoiding the costs of premiums as motor insurance is compulsory, as you will know.

Motor vehicles are dangerous things. In our everyday lives, it is easy to forget how dangerous they can be. Around a ton of metal being driven up to 35mph, with increased impact speed and force if two vehicles collide head-on, on small island roads by some people who are not paying attention, some of whom don't maintain their vehicle well either. That combination can cause death, serious injuries and lots of damage.

Driving a vehicle is a privilege – they make our lives easier and more enjoyable, they allow us to do more, have nice experiences and generally make the most of some of life's opportunities.

But they can also end life, inflict the most



serious life-long injuries and cause lots of unintended damage.

Employers and their drivers, have a duty to act responsibly, to act well.

Vehicles should be adequate and maintained/serviced for the task, used by people who are competent and appropriately licensed and instructed.

Does your employer issue guidance and instructions and provide training, especially for vehicle types in respect of which you are not familiar? Some employers correctly provide written guides/policies and procedures as well as appropriate training.

Do you, as an employer, check that guides/policies and procedures are implemented, is the driving schedule reasonable for the circumstances? For example can the schedule be driven without breaking speed limits?

Who carries out basic checks on the vehicle to ensure it is roadworthy? Who checks tyres, water, battery, lights and so on and do you walk round your vehicle before using it? Is insurance arranged as required by applicable law? Check the certificate of motor insurance to ensure it can be used as required.

Are drivers checked for valid licences, conviction and accident records and health matters which could affect driving?

Vehicle use in Guernsey is vital to support the nice, productive ways we live.

If we do it well, our lives are better but if we do it badly, the consequences are often dire.

What can you do to make your use of motor vehicles more healthy, more safe?

More efficient and safe vehicles protect your most valuable asset (your employee), your customers and the public in general. Running costs should also be lower.

The HSE has produced a helpful guide which you may like to refer to at www.hse.gov.uk – it's called A Guide To Workplace Transport Safety and you may like to look through it. The guide contains a lot of helpful information.

Let's make Guernsey a safer island in which to use a motor vehicle.

◆ www.gosha.org.gg



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