



Grey Fleet and Work-Related Driver Safety

What is grey fleet?

A work-related driver is referred to those who drive at least once per week for work-related purposes. This definition includes those work-related drivers using a company vehicle or their own vehicle (i.e. grey fleet).

What is the extent of the problem?

Road crashes are the most common form of work-related death, injury and absence from work in Australia. Australian and overseas annual data show that approximately one quarter of work-related fatalities occur in work vehicles.

Research has also found that after adjusting for exposure in the vehicle, work-related drivers have above average crash frequencies compared with non work-related drivers in personal vehicles.

In addition to their human and societal impacts, work-related vehicle crashes also impose a heavy financial burden on society. For example, the annual cost of road traffic injuries in Queensland has been estimated at over \$500 million, and related property damage increases this figure to over \$1 billion. These figures provide strong financial and corporate governance arguments for undertaking research into factors contributing to work-related driving safety, and investigating interventions with the potential to improve work-related road safety outcomes.

Research has identified that risk of crash involvement among company vehicle drivers is not uniformly spread across all groups of work-related drivers. For example, those individuals who receive a vehicle as part of their salary package (i.e. salary sacrificed vehicle driver) have been found to be at particular risk of crash involvement. As such, this research suggests that groups of work-related drivers perform differently on the road and that intervention should focus on addressing strategies to reduce crash risk.

How can we increase work-related driving safety?

Managing the duty of care to employees driving for work is a legal requirement and this includes employees driving their own vehicle for work purposes. In addition to developing a policy on driving for work including a statement on driving your own vehicle, the management of grey fleet travel should also include a cultural change component.

Dr Sharon Newnam, Dr Ioni Lewis, and Professor Barry Watson at CARRS-Q developed an intervention focused on promoting cultural change within the work-related driving safety context.

This study focused on educating and encouraging key management staff to engage with their drivers on particular issues that challenged some key salient (but incorrect) beliefs that individuals associated with unsafe driving.

Monthly safety sessions were scheduled with management where context specific audio recorded safety messages were distributed (on CDs) to these individuals. The safety messages aimed to challenge not only managements' beliefs associated with safe driving, but more so, work-related drivers. At the end of these sessions, management were encouraged to ask their drivers to listen to the safety messages and discuss any safety concerns.

The results of this study found that a significant improvement in the work-related driving safety culture was associated with safer self-reported driver behaviour. As such, this study provides support for an intervention aimed at promoting cultural change in enhancing work-related driving safety outcomes.

Contact CARRS-Q for further information about developing driving safety cultural change programs.