

FLAGSHIP IN BRIEF

March 2008

Michael Kemp reporting affairs as he finds them



Unison sets RiskMaster public sector lead Union giant launches own driving 'licence'

UNISON has created its own driving 'licence' - a work Permit to Drive - by adopting FSG's RiskMaster occupational road risk (ORR) protection programme.

The huge public sector union's 350 work driving staff is being enrolled now and 150 of its workforce who use their own cars on Unison business will follow. It is a 'take notice' signal to local government, industry and commerce.

RiskMaster is a unique set of procedures that keeps an employer (company and management) legally compliant with H&S and duty of care commitments in working vehicles and gives major protection against new corporate killing legislation, in law from April 6.

That is achieved by ensur-

ing and recording that every reasonable precaution is constantly in place to prevent an accident, as H&S laws demand.

The detailed programme requires work driving employees to annually apply for an employer's Permit to Drive and make a quarterly return giving a licence/vehicle/personal status update.

RiskMaster establishes an audit trail demonstrating that the employer took every reasonable precaution to prevent such an incident - if an employee at work at the wheel causes a death crash. Such proof is the only defence against manslaughter and/or H&S prosecution.

Ian Smith, Unison Staff Health & Safety Officer, says: "The biggest risk our staff take at work is on the road

going to meet members, or see new members, or employers.

"RiskMaster is to provide Unison with facts, figures and trends. It is an affiliation enabling us to use our resources efficiently and effectively.

"We have no influence over our members' employers but when speaking to, say, a county council we will now be showing an example."

Unison is illustrating how it expects the public sector to live up to its H&S liabilities. Last year "H&S Rules for Directors" was updated with union movement approval.

Unison's 1.3m members are in the NHS, local government, business and environment, education, police staff, communication and voluntary services.

Ignore it at your peril...

ADRIAN Walsh, director of motor industry-led road safety organisation RoadSafe, which is managing the Government's 'Driving for Better Business' programme, says:-

"That Unison has taken the importance of ORR management on board should encourage all public sector organisations to focus on ensuring they have robust at-work driving H&S policies and procedures in place.

"The Government is looking for organi-

sations to champion ORR management and I hope that Unison's decision is the catalyst for other unions, as well as companies, to ensure initiatives are put in place to reduce road crashes involving at-work drivers."

Soon employers will ignore H&S at the wheel commitments at their peril. For up to 20 road deaths a week involve working vehicles - each a potential corporate killing charge.

Legal facts we need to know

MULTIPLE charges are possible under the coming corporate killing law.

THE penalty, a fine based on turnover, could wipe-out a

council's budget.

BEWARE of disgruntled employees. They could land a company in court.

POLICE are applying 'mur-

der routine' in investigating every road death.

*Kevin Basnett employment law specialist at Goughs Solicitors Chippenham & Calne.

New car paint slashes CO₂

A DuPONT new car painting advance combines primer and surfacer in one water soluble 'eco' basecoat, eliminating spray booth and curing oven, cutting CO₂ by 45-50kg p/vehicle built.

ENGINE design ace Ricardo has a 'formula' for engine and transmission 'settings' to help motor firms meet ultra-low emission high mpg targets.

LAMINATED glass is to 'silence' new car interiors by keeping out road and wind noise, to improve comfort and radio/hi fi acoustics.

OSRAM light emitting diodes (LED) provide all lighting including main beams in a new Cadillac. The big energy saving and styling advance is to go industry-wide.

ABS PLUS, a VW advance in anti-lock braking, operates on gravel and off-road where normally ABS is inactive.

PERFECT driving position, with base of the spine in the back of the seat, is essential for health, alertness, vehicle control, vision, quick reaction and safety, says IAM.

AT 20mph a petrol car is 5.8mpg less efficient than at 30mph and emits up to 1-tonne more CO₂ p/mile, says the AA. Greens want a UK-wide urban 20-limit.

IVOR ATKINS, an FSG founder and its first Finance Director, has died aged 86. A perfectionist, he set the bedrock on which FSG was created, developed, expanded and is still growing in stature. His ethical guidance was embedded for ever.