

PRAISE

Preventing Road Accidents and Injuries for the Safety of Employees

Case study: ESB

ETSC's PRAISE project addresses the safety aspects of driving at work and driving to work. Its aim is to promote best practice in order to help employers secure high road safety standards for their employees.

In this interview, **Grainne Coogan, Road Safety Bureau Communications Officer** at ESB, a major Irish company involved in the production, supply, distribution and maintenance of electricity throughout Ireland and internationally, discusses how the organisation got to grips with road safety management and cut incidents dramatically over a ten-year period.



FACTFILE

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| Company: | ESB (2011 ETSC PRAISE Award Winner) |
| Sector: | Electricity |
| Fleet: | 2000 vehicles (plus 2500 'grey fleet' vehicles covering 17 million km of business travel every year. |

What processes has the company put in place to tackle work related road safety for its employees?

Recognising that driving for work was a significant risk, the Safe Driving Bureau, a cross-business unit, was set up in 2004 to deal with safe driving requirements, and a communications officer was appointed. Its aims were to capture and analyse collision information, to develop policies and plans, to input into vehicle specifications and training programmes and report on their effectiveness on driving culture in ESB, and to generally raise awareness of good driving habits. Safe driving programmes were designed with the co-operation of steering groups comprising senior management from all business units.

In the period 2004 to 2008 the first Safe Driving programme “Safe Driving – It’s my responsibility” focused on the areas of driver training, awareness and collision and cost reduction.

In 2008 the Safe Driving programme was reviewed and re-invigorated, and a revised programme “Achieving Road Safety Excellence”, was developed for implementation during 2009 to 2011. We evaluated where we were with the existing programme and then set new targets. A new cross-company steering group was appointed and a strategic alliance was forged with the Road Safety Authority, the national agency responsible for road safety in Ireland.

During 2012 the cross-company ESB Road Safety Steering Group conducted a review of the road safety programme, which identified a number of key challenges still to be addressed:

- To further embed the road safety policy for commercial and grey fleet, as a cross company initiative;
- Development of risk assessment for driving on ESB business;
- Development of a new centralised recording system for auditing, risk assessments, licences, collisions and near misses;
- Set new commitments for the European Road Safety Charter.

This led to the [ESB Road Safety Strategy 2013 – 2020: Our Journey to Excellence](#) which is moving towards achieving a cultural shift in the organisation – a move from an initiative based programme to a culture based programme which is a longer-term vision. There are now systems and policies in place to support this transition.

What kind of initiatives related to road safety has the company started?

Fleet management system

A fleet management system has been installed on all fleet vehicles and allows for management of driver behaviour. It is used to review and report on fleet activity and incidents:

- Management of high-risk road users - speed, harsh braking and acceleration
- cost recording - fuel, damage, maintenance, insurance
- Vehicle specification

The Fleet Management System is core to gathering detailed information and data, which will improve the management of high risk road users, through coaching, training and development, improvement plans and risk reduction control measures.

External support initiative

3000 staff have attained Advanced Driver status and by 2016 it is proposed that all staff who drive on business, in either a commercial fleet or a grey fleet vehicle, should have met that standard. With that in mind, we have engaged the services of an external support organisation which will maintain and enhance

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the standards we have already set in our programmes to date, and which will recognise the standards already reached by many of our drivers.

Advanced driver training

Advanced driver training has been on-going since 2006 and approximately 3000 ESB staff have completed training. This has been set at the competence standard for drivers by ESB and by 2016 it will be mandatory for all staff who drive on business.

Driving and transport risk assessment

Driving and transport risk assessment has been developed for all businesses to implement, which includes risk assessment of the driver, the journey, the vehicle and the workplace.

Post Incident Support Training

Drivers involved in a serious collision which has the potential for serious injury or fatality, must undertake post-incident support training prior to returning to driving duties. This involves risk assessment of the driver which may involve further development training before the driver is allowed to drive an ESB vehicle.

Young drivers

This new ESB programme will address young employees through a number of initiatives such as a specific young driver training programme including on-road driver training as part of an apprentice programme, advanced driver training, an online road risk course as part of the induction programme, involvement of young drivers in road safety initiatives e.g. Safety Week, regular reporting of road traffic collision statistics associated with this age group's past performance and appointing road safety champions within the apprentice programme.

Some other past initiatives include:

- Reversing sensors fitted on all large and medium vans since 2007 and to all vans since 2010;
- Wheel nut indicators are fitted on all fleet vehicles and equipment;
- Licence requirement stickers are displayed on the driver side window of all fleet vehicles;
- Reverse in / drive out policy is indicated by signage in all ESB locations;
- Local quarterly audits are conducted in locations for seatbelt use and daytime running lights.

What have been the economic effects after achieving road safety improvements at ESB?

The reduction in the number of collisions, particularly serious collisions, has led to a reduction in expenditure in relation to collisions:

- Reduced costs for lost time;
- Lower costs for damage repair. €1million in 2003 vs €650,000 in 2013;
- A substantial reduction in insurance costs - ESB commercial fleet insurance costs in 2013 were 25% of costs of insurance in 2004;
- Less exposure to potential compensation claims and associated costs. 152 at fault collisions versus 67 in 2013 – 85 fewer compensation cases;

Can you provide some evidence showing the improvement of safety levels and the reduction of vehicle damage, collision or personal injury within your organisation?

The number of collisions recorded annually for the commercial fleets in ESB fell from 291 in 2003 to 121 in 2013. The number of P1 collisions* also fell from 63 in 2004 to 13 in 2013.

ESB uses the following definitions to distinguish between collisions:

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| P1 Collision Major | Serious or potentially serious injury (e.g. van overturning or head on collision) lost time injuries, or fatality. |
| P2 Collision Intermediate to Major | Material damage not likely to have potentially serious injury. Minor injury e.g. cuts, scratches, bruises. Material damage is in excess of €2,000.00 |
| P3 Collision Minor | Minor material damage e.g. no potential injury to people e.g. broken mirror, material damage less than €2,000.00 |

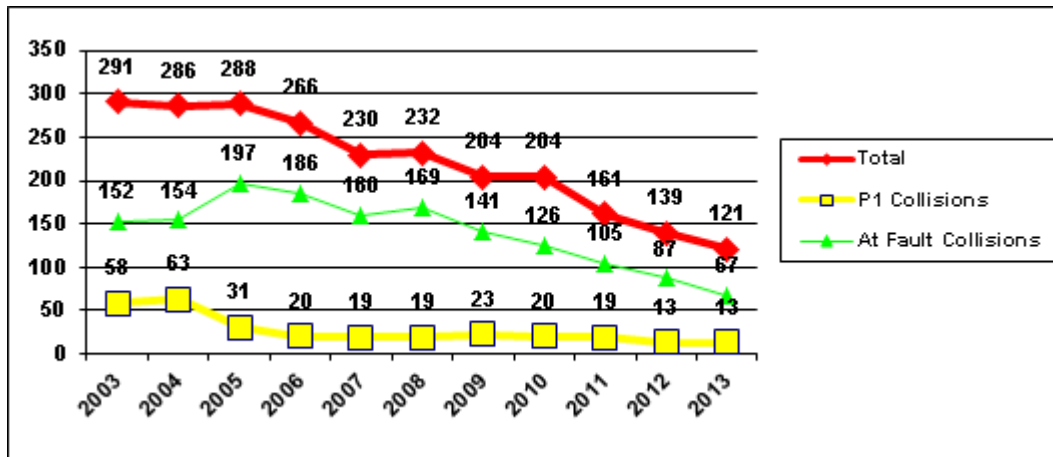


Fig 1. Reduction in collisions at ESB 2003-2013

Please provide details in relation to who is responsible for developing and implementing road safety processes and initiatives, including how top management (including CEO/Director) is involved at ESB.

The programme has the leadership and support of the Executive Director Team and is sponsored by the Group Finance Director. ESB has also set up a Road Safety Steering Group where each business line in ESB is represented by a senior manager. The Road Safety Steering Group drives delivery of the programme in ESB. Members are accountable for their individual business line’s implementation of the programme. The duties of the working group members are to recommend strategy and policy, development of the programmes, and oversight of implementation of the programme in their relevant businesses. The steering group reviews the programme quarterly each year for its duration.

The integration of road safety into business line safety and health improvement plans is another important element of the strategy which ensures that businesses take active ownership of driving risks.

Local safety plans include driving and are now in place in each of the businesses. The responsibilities of implementing policy and programmes are delegated across ESB management in the business functions who are responsible for staff in their own areas.

Management of the safe driving risk and other transport issues is the responsibility of the line manager in each of the businesses. Each business line, and its line managers in turn, is/are responsible for transport issues and compliance with legislation.

The Road Safety Bureau has responsibility for following up on reporting, investigation and classification of all incidents. It maintains and develops communications resources and guides the implementation of initiatives. It conducts research and provides advice on policy. In addition, the bureau researches and considers new safety practices, techniques and approaches which can improve road safety performance.

What are the trends or changes you can identify?

Clear downward trends are observed in all categories. Despite a rising trend nationally in collisions, ESB continues to record a decrease in collisions over 2013 and 2014.

What would you say are the main drivers/reasons for your company's effort in road safety?

ESB is fully committed to protecting the health and safety of our colleagues, contractors, and the people we serve. We aim to be a national exemplar in road safety excellence and to continue to strive to embed excellent work-related road safety behaviours in staff and contractors, as well as ongoing promotion of the road safety message to staff, families and the wider community.

ESB's commercial fleet consists of over 2000 vehicles and approximately 2500 of our staff drive their own cars on ESB business – in 2013 the total mileage for these fleets was 50 million km. ESB recognises that driving for work, and other activities on our roads and workplaces represent a significant risk. The primary objective of any Road Safety programme is the reduction of collisions and the consequential injuries and fatalities. We recognise that our commercial fleet presents a high public safety risk given the size of many of our vehicles, hence our specialised vehicle training programmes.

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The cost of repairs to the fleet is also a consideration. The number of collisions recorded annually for the commercial fleets in ESB fell from 291 in 2003 to 121 in 2013. The cost of repairs to the fleet in 2003 was in excess of €1 million compared to €650,000 in 2013. This doesn't include the significant number of vehicles written off as a result of collisions over the years. The number of P1 collisions also fell from 63 in 2004 to 13 in 2013, a factor which contributed to a substantial reduction in the company's motor insurance premium.

Since neither a special driving licence nor vocational training is needed to drive a van, a gap in terms of professionalism can be expected. Are the van drivers at ESB receiving any training?

It is ESB's ambition that all drivers in both the commercial and grey fleet will achieve and maintain high capability and competence in their driving behaviours, i.e. Advanced Driver status. Since advanced driver training began in 2006, almost 3000 staff have completed the course, with a further 1000 staff who drive to complete the training by 2016. In 2016 it will become a requirement that anybody driving on ESB business must have completed advanced driver training.

ESB's commercial fleet comprises a wide variety of vehicles, some of which require specialised driving skills, and internal training courses have been designed to cater for these needs. ESB Training has developed and provided training to over 1400 staff for the use of specialist vehicles such as ATVs, generator trucks, hoist vehicles and 4x4 vehicles. We are one of the few utilities with 4x4 vans as well as off-road 4x4s, and specialist training is provided for drivers of such vehicles.

When new vehicle models are introduced into ESB Fleet, drivers/operators receive operator training as required.

Staff identified as high risk through the Fleet Management System or drivers involved in P1 collisions will have specific training tailored to meet specific behaviours.

Approximately 60 staff in the professional driver category have completed CPC (Certificate of Professional Competence) training.

Vans also have poorer aerodynamics and stability than cars. Does ESB provide guidelines on van loading, how to manage cargo while driving and checking other safety aspects (tyre pressure, mirrors etc.)?

ESB policy on vehicle loading, load restraints and towing is set out in the comprehensive driving policy "Fleet Drivers' Handbook". To improve stability in 4-wheel-drive vehicles there are ESB imposed speed limits for 4 wheel drive vehicles fitted with on/off road tyres and off road tyres.

Since 2009, all vans have manufacturer-supplied steel bulkheads fitted. Mirrors and cameras have been retrofitted to most vehicles where blind spots have been identified.

All new vehicles have these items included in the design specification where available.

All commercial vehicles use wheel nut indicators to allow the driver and others to check wheel nut tightness visually during daily and weekly checks.

Daily Vehicle Safety Check

ESB's '60 second vehicle safety check' procedure is ESB policy and drivers of all ESB vehicles are required to carry it out daily prior to commencing the first journey. It is a simple and effective way to spot potentially dangerous issues before vehicles are used.

Weekly Vehicle Safety Checks

ESB NETWORKS

VEHICLE SAFETY CHECK

It only takes a minute...

60

WEEKLY CHECK

- Engine oil & fluid levels
- Dashboard & vehicle clutter-free
- Tyre pressure & wear
- Vehicle tools, incl. fire ext.,
- 1st aid kit, warning triangle

DAILY CHECK

- Mirrors, wipers, windscreen
- Bodywork incl. steps
- Tyre damage
- Wheelnut indicators
- Lights, beacon & horn
- Security of load & equipment
- Steering
- Brakes
- Seatbelts
- Dashboard warning lights
- Fuel level & air gauges
- Reversing beeper/sensors/camera

Road Safety Bureau
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In addition to the daily 60 second Vehicle Safety Check, all staff driving ESB Fleet vehicles must undertake a weekly vehicle safety check. This check must be carried out in accordance with the fleet sticker.

Short-range deliveries can lead to low seat-belt wearing rates and parking offences, especially in city centres. How do you handle that issue?

ESB policy, as set out in the driver handbooks, is that seatbelts must be worn by all drivers and passengers at all times when driving. Quarterly seatbelt audits are carried out at ESB locations to monitor and record compliance. ESB staff driving fleet vehicles who incur penalty points or fixed charge notifications for whatever reason, are solely responsible for paying the associated fines, details of which are notified to them through line manager intervention.

Rapid, short and often 'last minute' interventions force drivers to stay connected through smart phones. Has ESB adopted a management strategy to optimise safety by minimising driver distraction?

Currently ESB policy is that drivers must not use a hand held mobile phone while driving. Mobile phone use whilst driving should be kept to a minimum.

Did you develop a journey-planning system to maximise route efficiency? If so, how is it implemented?

Optimised Scheduling System (OSS) is a work-planning system in operation in ESB Networks. It is based on routing jobs to the nearest driver, to ensure the shortest travel time and to maximise work output. With the on-going development of the Fleet Management System (FMS), we will be in a position to review drive-time from a safety perspective also.

How do you ensure compliance with speed limits and drink-driving legislation?

ESB staff driving fleet vehicles who incur penalty points or fixed charge notifications for whatever reason, are solely responsible for paying the associated fines.

The ESB road safety bureau speed policy

It is the responsibility of all staff who drive on ESB business to always observe the relevant legal speed limits, to plan the journey and allow sufficient time to complete it safely. There are ESB imposed speed limits for 4 wheel drive vehicles fitted with on/off road tyres and off road tyres.

Monthly FMS reports are utilised to manage high risk drivers and reduce incidents by addressing the issue of speeding and non-compliance with policy amongst Fleet drivers. Where worrying trends are spotted, this is addressed with Middle Managers (MM) who discuss it with drivers. The Road Safety Bureau provides the manager with support and educational material aimed at changing individual driver behaviour in efforts to keep our staff & other road users safe.

- The data from FMS for the last 7 months shows an overall decrease in the number of vehicles exceeding the vehicle limit by >20km
- There have been 4 P1 collisions to end August 2014 which is a decrease on the same period last when 8 had occurred.
- Positive engagement from MMs who appreciate having tangible facts and support info to work with when addressing the issue

Alcohol, Drugs and Driving

ESB staff are not authorized to drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs, as specified in the Fleet and Private Drivers' Handbooks. Where staff are found to be in contravention of this policy, which has happened occasionally over recent years, they are stood down from driving duties and disciplined. They are warned to take particular care when driving 'the morning after'. Regular communications are issued to staff to increase awareness of issues such as speeding, safe tyres, tyre tread depth, Drink/Drug driving.

Partners

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