

Mott MacDonald's journey towards improving driver safety

At Mott MacDonald our single most dangerous workplace activity is driving for work. Over the last 15 years we have been working hard to keep our people safer on the roads - finding new ways to reduce fatigue, cut back on car journeys and mitigate incident risk.

Mott MacDonald is a global engineering, management and development consultancy. Our 16,000 colleagues are based in 150 countries around the world. In the UK we employ nearly 8000 staff, and approximately 1750 of those drive on company business.

Like many organisations, we recognised that driving posed the greatest risk for our people at work. Tackling this effectively would require a culture change. We took a multi-pronged approach – starting with the right training, followed by initiatives to reduce the number of miles driven, effective fatigue management and steps to ensure our safer driving values are imparted to our supply chain.

“Driving is the single most dangerous work activity for our staff. Over recent years we’ve had a clear focus on reducing the number of accidents and serious injuries through raising awareness, changing behaviours and training our people.”

Cathy Travers
Regional General Manager, EUNA



The beginning

15 years ago, our 'Safety Wheel' classroom training programme for high-speed roads was launched to protect colleagues driving and conducting surveys or project site visits on live high-speed carriageways. 18 months later, when research indicated that most near misses and small incidents happened in rural areas, we introduced 'Safety Signal' training, for roads with a limit of below 50 miles per hour. Driver awareness training was the next step, covering all general road risks for anyone who drives on company business.

Each of these courses is bespoke – designed specifically for the work our people do at Mott MacDonald. They are constantly updated to include changes in legislation, updates from road safety organisations and incorporating lessons learned along the way.

Training must be renewed every three years. Without it, no member of staff working in the Highways division is permitted to drive for work. The use of mobile phones (including hands-free) is always strictly forbidden for drivers, regardless of the circumstance.

This rule has led to our people feeling empowered to stop a call if they discover a client is driving while using a hands-free device.

A driving at work handbook was published for all staff, providing advice on road rage, fatigue, distractions, journey planning and vehicle checks, amongst other key areas.

Our Driver Entitlement Consent form, completed every three years (giving permission for driving licences to be checked with DVLA), and annual Driver Vehicle Declaration (confirming vehicle road worthiness and insurance for personal car use), are also a mandatory requirement for anyone driving for work.



The present

Everyone knows the best way to avoid danger behind the wheel is to avoid driving completely. Accepting this isn't always possible, the Mott MacDonald Driver Management Plan (DMP) challenges our people to consider alternatives to driving. This process ensures careful thought about weather conditions, parking, rest breaks and fitness to drive.

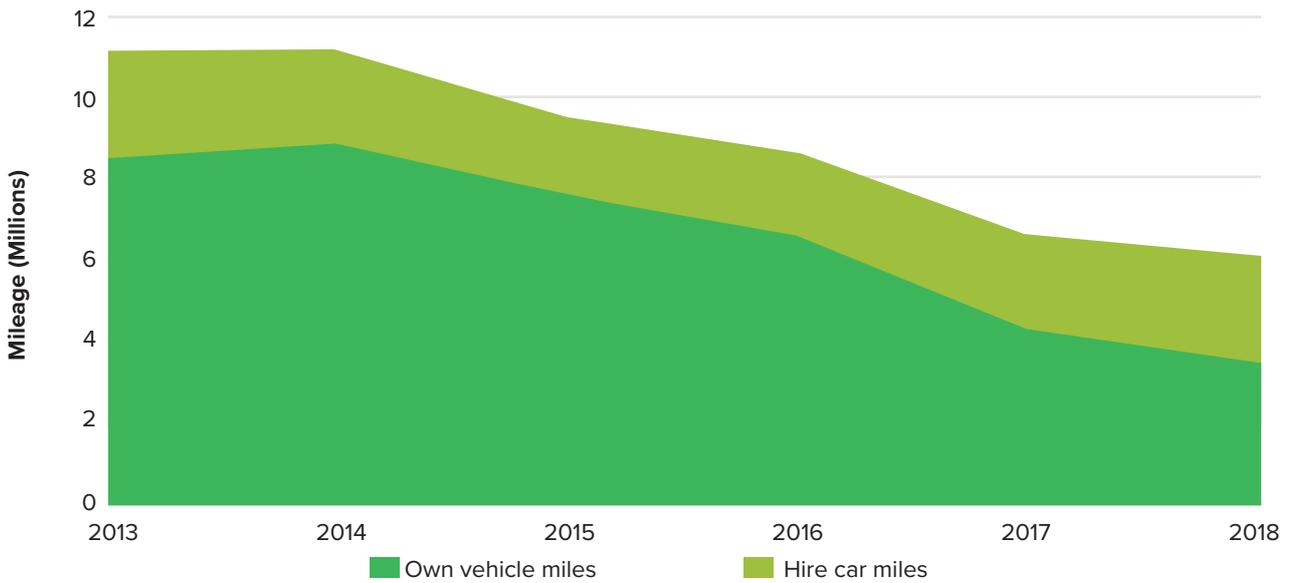
Once complete, the traveller must discuss and agree their plan with a Driving Safety Advisor before embarking on any journey for business by car (either personal or hired).

A copy of the signed plan must also accompany any car hire request, or mileage expense claim.

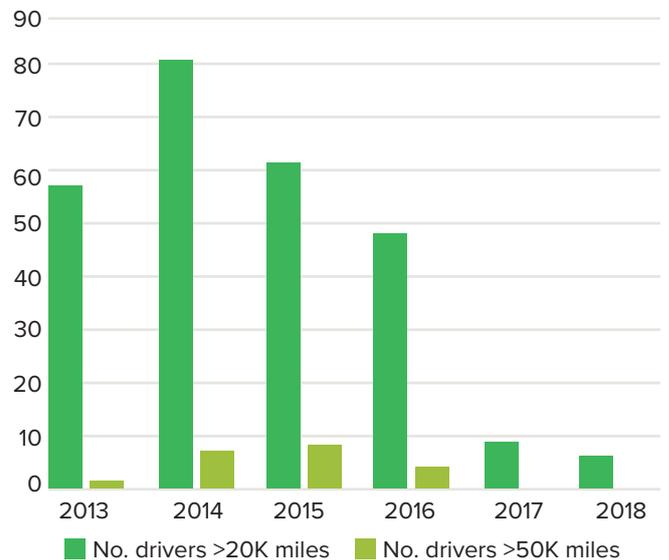
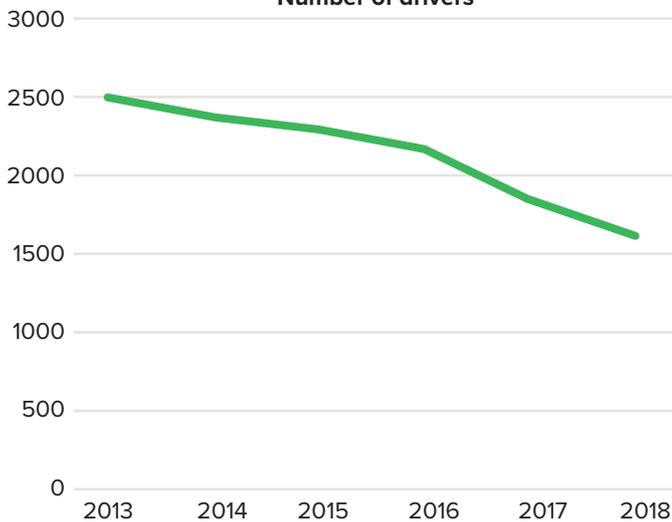
The Highways division in Mott MacDonald also formed the Driver Focus Group – tasked with finding ways to further reduce the number of driving related incidents. We put extra support in place to make public transport arrangements quick and simple to make. A new rule was implemented, whereby none of our people are permitted to drive if it will take them over a 12-hour working day. In these instances, overnight accommodation will be provided.

As a result of these initiatives, since 2013 average business miles driven have reduced by 45%, the number of drivers has reduced by 35% and the number of colleagues driving over 20,000 miles has reduced by 92%, as indicated below.

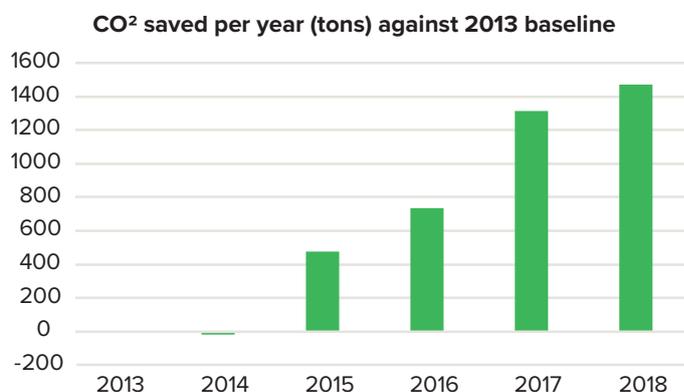
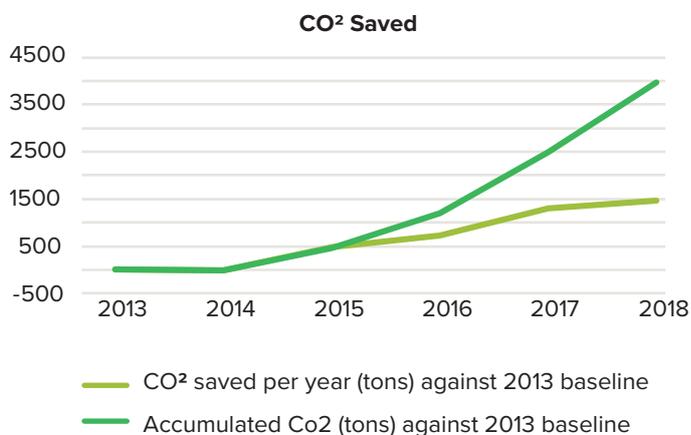
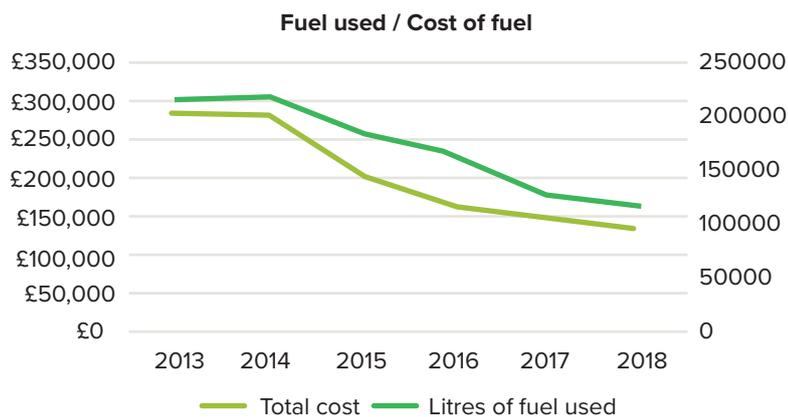
EUNA business miles 2013-2018



Number of drivers



Another positive side effect of this sharp reduction in miles driven is significant fuel and carbon savings as shown in the graphs below.



Another area of concern at Mott MacDonald was inadequately experienced drivers travelling on unfamiliar roads or in challenging conditions. This issue required a more hands-on approach.

In 2018 we trialled a new driver assessment programme. Initially an online test, the assessment looked at a range of risk factors – including driving experience, annual mileage, behaviours and knowledge – to help determine an individual’s overall “exposure to risk”. Staff who are deemed to be at ‘medium risk’ are required to undergo a 1 hour in-vehicle assessment.

This time is used to assess an individual’s behaviours behind the wheel as well as provide an opportunity to identify potential improvements. Meanwhile, those at ‘high risk’ are required to complete a half day in-vehicle driving session.

These practical sessions can help to reduce some of the risks associated with driving.

Other Driver Focus Group initiatives include:

- Everyone is empowered to refuse a hire car provided if they would not feel safe driving it
- Staff are trained on how to check cars for noticeable defects
- Emergency vehicle kits are provided in case of break down or long delays (including first aid kit, warning triangle, water and food, high viz jacket emergency contact details and in-car phone charging kit).

We have promoted our approach to driving externally to fellow members of the Consultants’ Health & Safety Forum and at the Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation (CIHT) Annual Awards 2019, where our Driver Focus Group initiative won the Health & Wellbeing Award. We will endeavour to share our good practices and achievements with our supply chains, in order to raise awareness of the benefits of managing occupational road safety risks.



The future

Improving driver safety is an infinite task. There will always be challenges to overcome and new ways to protect our people. We continue to look for solutions and initiatives to reduce road incidents across our industry and build a wider awareness and stronger culture of driver safety. Our future aim is to reduce our daily duty limit from 12 to 11 hours for any working day including driving, in line with government guidelines.

Feedback so far shows our people feel more valued knowing that their safety is prioritised.

We are now in the process of digitising our driver management plans to save time and improve efficiency. After a successful driver assessment trial, a similar scheme has recently been rolled out in Mott MacDonald across Europe.

Awards

- ROSPA Fleet Driver Award
- 2019 Highways England Supplier Recognition Awards - shortlisted
- 2019 CIHT Health and Wellbeing Award

“The in-vehicle assessment was good and provided useful feedback. The assessor made a valid point about my awareness of the nearside blind spot that I need to watch. Obviously, once you pass your driving test you are left to your own devices, so it is useful to get constructive feedback from a professional assessor.”

Andrew Monk-Steel
Acoustic Engineer

Engineering. Management. Development.

For further information about Mott MacDonald's safer driving initiatives, contact **Martin Thorpe**

Our journey to better driver safety

