# **Case Study - Atkins**

## Profile

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| Company Name: | Atkins |
| Business Sector: | Atkins is one of the world's leading providers of engineering and design consultancy and support services |
| Postal Address: | Woodcote Grove, Ashley Road, Epsom, Surrey, UK |
| Postcode: | KT18  6BW |
| Fleet Size Overall: | 7,750 |
| HGV: | 225 |
| LGV: | 225 |
| Minibuses, MPVs etc: | 300 |
| Company Cars: | 2,500 |
| Private vehicles used for business purposes: | 4,500 |

## Company Overview



Atkins is a multinational engineering and design consultancy, providing expertise to help resolve complex challenges presented by the built and natural environment. Atkins is the largest multidisciplinary consultancy in Europe, the largest engineering consultancy in both the UK and the Middle East, and the UK's largest architecture firm with 18,000 employees based in 175 offices in the UK and in over 80 offices outside the UK.

Atkins is the official engineering design services provider for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The simplest articulation of what we do is "Plan, Design, Enable".  For our multinational clients, we **plan**projects, conducting feasibility studies and impact analyses covering technical, logistical, legal, environmental and financial considerations; we **design**systems, processes, building and civil structures. We develop cutting edge solutions and combine them with tried and tested technologies to achieve an optimal result; and we **enable**our clients’ complex programmes, delivering one-off projects and managing processes to reduce timescales, cost and disruption.

Our size brings significant value to our clients, allowing us to harness an unrivalled pool of creative, professional people to produce outstanding solutions to challenging problems.

Atkins operates through twelve business segments:

* Asset Management;
* Defence Aerospace and Communications
* Design and Engineering
* Energy
* Faithful+Gould
* Highways and Transportation
* Management Consultants
* Rail
* Water and Environment
* China
* Middle East and India
* USA

## NATURE OF OPERATION AND DRIVING ACTIVITIES

Work-related vehicle driving is an essential and integral part of the delivery of the services that we provide to clients. We employ high quality people to plan, design, and enable services for our clients, but work place driving is only a secondary activity to their main service provision.

Work-related driving risk in Atkins is characterised by the involvement of a wide population of drivers, undertaking a variety of journey types using an extensive fleet of company-provided and privately-owned vehicles.

Atkins’ staff use 7,000 cars, driving 25 million miles a year, with one third provided as company cars: the remainder comprising the grey fleet or hired for short term use.  Atkins operates a further 750 highway maintenance and other vehicles (minibuses, vans and Multi Person Vehicles, etc) that drive 20 million miles a year; some of these vehicles are regulated by operating “O” licences.

## ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



The Atkins Board establishes strategy and objectives consistent with quality, safety and environmental (**QSE**) policies and regularly reviews overall QSE performance to verify implementation, and monitor continuing suitability and effectiveness.  This activity is supported by the business QSE forum, which provides strategic direction and guidance on safety, quality and environmental management issues.

Our health and safety policy statement is driven by the Chief Executive Officer, Keith Clarke, supported by the Group QSE director. Each business has a Board director responsible for health and safety supported by a business QSE director. They are responsible for making sure that health and safety strategy and any updates are clearly communicated and cascaded throughout the business.  Business health & safety advisors have been appointed to advise their respective businesses on health and safety matters and a network of health & safety co-ordinators based at office or site level provide a direct and local interface with employees in respect of all health and safety issues.

## WORK-RELATED ROAD SAFETY POLICY & PROCEDURES



Atkins is committed to achieving high standards of quality, safety and environmental performance for our clients, employees and those affected by our activities.  In pursuing these aims, the Chief Executive Officer issued the quality, safety and environmental policy statements which are communicated throughout the organisation.  In implementing these policies, Atkins adopts formal management systems as a means for planning, controlling, monitoring and improving company processes.

In the policy manual Keith Clarke, Atkins Chief Executive Officer states, “I commend these principles to all our employees and businesses are required to comply with our QSE standard. I anticipate your support and professionalism in ensuring its successful implementation in undertaking duties on behalf of Atkins”. .

Work-related road safety is an integral part of Atkins’ safety culture, and Atkins’ safety culture in turn is an integral part of the whole quality, safety and environmental ethos of the company.

The company’s safety management systems meet the requirements of OHSAS 18001 occupational health & safety management system and because compliance is externally certified by Lloyds Register Quality Assessment, this provides a credible level of assurance that ensures we maintain our ability to plan, design and enable solutions for our clients with high standards of health and safety performance throughout.

### Risk Management

Risks have to be managed and controls implemented by employees and line managers alike, in accordance with Atkins policy. Atkins applies the fundamental principles of risk management in executing risk assessments of its operations and services; i.e. risks will be eliminated, reduced, isolated or controlled. Control measures include procedures, training and monitoring arrangements.

Our suite of risk assessments is used to control hazards from our routine operations. They cover the types of work we do every day and address the hazards that will always be present when performing these tasks. They can be easily adapted to cover additional hazards and tailored to make them into task specific risk assessments.

All employees and line managers must adopt a risk-based approach to work-related driving and must understand their responsibilities as defined in the safe driver’s handbook which specifies the following policies.

Employees must:

* Drive only when fit to drive, taking account of their medical fitness, eyesight, alcohol and drug consumption and level of fatigue.
* Comply with all driving and vehicle laws.
* Have insurance cover in place which covers them and their car when driving on company business.
* Assess whether there is a safer alternative to driving, and if there is no safer alternative, plan the journey and the route, taking into consideration any weather conditions, and prepare the vehicle prior to use.
* Drive in a safe manner – this will ensure reduction of  the environmental impact of the journey.
* Ensure vehicle and personal security are managed.
* Complete the Atkins safe driver e-learning training and be familiar with the contents of the safe driver’s handbook.
* Participate in a driving review with their line manager to identify further training.
* Report all driving accidents.

Line managers must:

* Lead by example by adhering to their employee responsibilities.
* Regularly and visibly reinforce the importance of safe driving.
* Monitor employee work-related driving and ensure appropriate controls are applied.
* Provide training, guidance and advice for employees.
* Ensure that employees involved in accidents receive the proper support and participate in an appropriate accident investigation with recommendations implemented.

Atkins Group will:

* Select Atkins-managed vehicles that are appropriate to business needs, and will not give rise to unacceptable safety, ergonomic or environmental issues.
* Effectively manage the Atkins vehicle suppliers and maintenance service suppliers.
* Review and report on company vehicle performance.
* Review driving related accident statistics and respond accordingly.
* Provide guidance on suitable training.
* Oversee the management of driving risk by all parts of the business.

### Mobile Phones

Atkins’ mobile phone policy covers the use of mobile phones whilst driving and also whilst working in other hazardous environments.  The policy aims to raise awareness of the risks involved in the use of mobile phones whilst at work and applies to all Atkins full-time and temporary employees. It states that if you are calling a mobile phone you must always ask if it is safe for the other person to talk and offer to call back if it is not.

Atkins prohibits the use of hand held mobile phones, including portable hands free kit, whilst driving an Atkins company vehicle and / or driving a vehicle on Atkins company business. Only car fitted hands free kits are allowed.  Whilst driving, making calls with a car fitted hands free kit must be restricted and kept to a minimum.    When answering an incoming call, the driver is instructed to always inform the caller that they are driving or set up in advance auto-answering functions of the mobile phone such as the messaging service.

## WORK-RELATED ROAD SAFETY GUIDANCE FOR DRIVERS

Drivers of HGV highway maintenance vehicles continue to be regulated by strict ‘O’ licence requirements under UK domestic transport rules, and we have decided that we will treat drivers of LGV highway maintenance vehicles in the same way.  These drivers all receive toolbox talks on a wide range of safe working issues including safe driving.

For staff driving company cars or their own cars on company business, Atkins decided to concentrate on the education of staff and line managers so that they understand the responsibility of the company and individual. All drivers should be able to apply appropriate control solutions to the wide variety of driving situations encompassed by our business.

### Atkins Safe Driver’s Handbook

It was felt that this was the most appropriate approach for a professional workforce – we will not mandate, for example, a maximum number of miles or hours to be driven in a day, but we will place responsibility on individuals as to what is expected, for example to make an overnight stay if delayed rather than risk driving when tired.

As a result, Atkins issued the comprehensive Atkins safe driver’s handbook to all staff who drive on business. Although the driver is ultimately responsible for how a vehicle is driven, Atkins recognised that we should support our employees by providing good training, clear guidelines and sound advice for work-related driving activities. “The Safe Driver’s Handbook has been developed to provide our employees and their managers with clear roles and responsibilities as well as useful guidance for work-related driving. Many of the issues raised therein can also be usefully applied to private driving”, said Keith Clarke, Atkins’ Chief Executive Officer.

The Safety Health & Environment (**SHE**) Induction handbook has been produced in association with the SHE induction e-learning course available on Atkins’ intranet, to all staff and new starters to the company. The handbook is designed as a basic introduction to SHE issues which affect staff and should be kept as a handy source of reference and advice.

The driving safely section covers issues like driver responsibility, medical fitness, fatigue, effects of drugs and alcohol on driver performance, complying with the UK law, planning journeys (including consideration of alternative modes of transport), journey and vehicle preparation, vehicle breakdown and driver review by line managers.

A number of e-learning modules were installed on the company intranet site as part of the safety health and environment induction in January 2004, completion of which was made mandatory for all staff who drive on business. The safe driving module covers the same material contained in the handbook but in addition covers issues such the responsibilities of line managers, treatment of inexperienced drivers and options for training, and the staff are tested to ensure they have understood the key points.

Atkins holds its own transport seminars to train our higher risk commercial vehicle drivers. Their main role is not driving, but we train them to the same standards as professional drivers.

## SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF PROCEDURES

Atkins introduced a Safe Operation System (SOS) for the Highways and Rail businesses, enabling drivers to log details of their journeys with a central control room on a 24/7 basis. Through the Safe Operation Systems, control centre operators manage and monitor the safe working environment and practices of the workforce on any network, in real-time. This system ensures compliance with lone working regulations and that the workforce only carries out activities that they are competent to undertake.

It is a proactive system that can identify the potential for problems, enabling operators in the control centre and staff on the network to take preventative action.  The system captures the location of the work site, the ‘at risk’ time of the workforce and site or driving specific risk assessments undertaken in real-time.  Lone workers are given a unique status within the system which generates hourly checks, and all drivers are monitored at the planned finish time of their journey. This enables any incidents or near misses to be recorded, and permits an escalation procedure to be implemented if the driver cannot be contacted.

It is particularly important when a driver responds to an out-of-hours emergency, and in these cases the respondents are monitored by the control centre from leaving home to arriving safely home again.  Sub-contractors who carry out work on Atkins’ worksites must now use the system and it is also available to staff working for our joint venture companies. “I just felt so much more confident about driving when I knew that someone else was monitoring my progress”, said Louise, a young, inexperienced company driver.

For the Highways business generic risk assessments have been created for driving and these must be used in exactly the same was as any other risk assessment for any workplace activity.

For example, the generic risk assessment for driving at work includes the following hazards together with appropriate control measures:

* Driver error leading to an accident
* Adverse weather
* Defective vehicle – potential for accident
* Inappropriate vehicle
* Fatigue and illness, and
* Young persons

Reference is made in the risk assessment to the company safety policy statement and manual, the company car policy, associated company health and safety procedures and standards, the Atkins business management system and health and safety procedures – in particular ‘Lone Working and Out-of-Office Working, and the Highway Code.’

Where the nature of activities varies from those on the generic risk assessment the employee/project manager must undertake a specific risk assessment. This requirement will need to reflect the occupational hazards associated with cars, works vehicles, motorcycles and bicycles.  Employees should also have relevant training for specific hazards if applicable.

A driver training initiative via the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) was launched in 2007, and continues to be rolled out across the company.  Staff are invited to undertake an online assessment that assesses their risk as a driver.  All medium and high risk drivers are then put forward to the next stage: one to one training for high risk drivers and a training seminar for medium risk drivers. Part of the duty of care to review the Group’s risk in relation to the Corporate Manslaughter Bill was to implement a process of self certification to check all driver documentation (driving licences, insured for business usage, road tax and MOT) on an annual basis and provide a full audit trail.  This is done by an online self certification survey which is held on our Intranet site.  It commenced in January 2008 when a survey was emailed to about 6000 employees who had made a fuel or mileage expense claim in 2007. This is now being repeated on an annual basis.

Employees who are non compliant on any aspect will have a communication sent to their line manager / HR manager advising they are not to drive on company business until they produce the relevant documentation.

All our PCV drivers in our transport operation are given a driver assessment by a qualified assessor before they drive for Atkins.

## AUDITING AND REVIEW

The Atkins Board regularly reviews overall quality, safety and environmental performance to verify implementation and monitor continuing suitability and effectiveness. As part of the accident and incident performance, the Board regularly reviews driving related accident statistics and responds accordingly.  It oversees the management of driving risk by all the individual parts of the business.

Line managers monitor employee work-related driving and ensure appropriate controls are applied and are suitable for the scope and scale of the driving activity, including an annual self certification by all UK staff who drive on company business.

Six monthly driver licence checks are now being followed up more closely . Where a driver does not produce their driving licence to their line manager, they are required to sign a mandate enabling Atkins to immediately check the validity, entitlement to drive and endorsements etc of the driver’s licence via the internet.  Where the licence has been found to be no longer valid, or not valid for the type of vehicle being driven, our duty of care requires us to immediately withdraw their approval to drive.

### Director’s Safety Tours

All company directors undertake an annual director’s safety tour to observe peoples’ behaviour in real work situations, engage with staff through positive discussion, exploration of their behaviours, coaching in solution seeking, agreement and commitment from them to permanently change unsafe behaviours.

In the same way senior managers in the Highways and Transportation division undertake monthly behavioural task audits.  This is a type of inspection that concentrates on behavioural aspects and people’s attitude to safe working. About 90% of all accidents are caused by the unsafe acts of people and this is where Atkins concentrates its effects on behaviour and attitude - task auditing helps to do that.  The safety tours involve asking questions in a way that explores safety attitudes and highlights safe and unsafe practices and conditions.

Task auditing also allows unsafe acts to be captured - behaviour that may lead to future near misses or incidents. These are recorded through an Usafe-Acts Index calculation to allow leading indicator data to be compiled which we can tie into KPIs to assess and improve Atkins safety culture.

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Our health and safety accident performance for last year is within the Accident Incidence Rate (AIR) benchmarks set by Atkins over three risk profiles of office, engineering and construction for our staff and contractors.  These benchmarks are set at Atkins plc Board level at the start of each financial year, and always reduced year-on-year. For example, our benchmark in 2008/09 for office was 5% and for engineering and construction was 10% below the previous year's benchmark. The safety performance figures are calculated every quarter and compared against the pro-rata benchmark. This allows us to see how we are performing through the year. The overall trend over the last four years is generally decreasing and is better than industry performance as compiled by the HSE Labour Force Survey.

The AIR is a widely used calculation that could be used to compare different sized companies and allow us to examine our safety performance against other companies and our supply chain partners. However we can’t do this effectively because everyone measures their accident performance differently

We also actively encourage the reporting of near misses. As a result, reported near misses have doubled, which is a positive step towards accident prevention.

Atkins set targets and monitor progress against the following key performance indicators:

* Accident incident ratio
* Accident severity rate
* Fault to non-fault ratio,
* Business to non-business use ratio
* Accident damage ratios
* Near miss to incident ratio

## ACCIDENT REDUCTION

Last year 66% of company car accidents occurred whilst “on business”, a reduction of 6% from the previous year.

Driver training and risk assessment has helped to reduce this ratio as well as address the large proportion of younger drivers having incidents.

## FINANCIAL AND OTHER BENEFITS

Atkins has made significant changes to the safety culture of staff whilst at work, and it is hoped that this improved safety culture will spill over into the private lives of all staff.

The emphasis on safety that promotes the safe return of all staff to their home at the end of the day, demonstrates Atkins concern for the safe wellbeing of its staff.

Since introducing the Safe Operation System (SOS) there has been a dramatic increase in Near Miss reporting because users are asked for accident and near miss details when ending their SOS.  It also ensures that we are aware of the location and contact details of all staff at all times - particularly valuable in emergency situations.  The SOS system also can identify deficiencies in training if staff members are unable to answer task related questions correctly when taking out an SOS.

Atkins’ transport specialists recently started a series of depot inspections to audit commercial vehicle drivers, and their record keeping.

Environmental benefits around carbon reduction and car sharing have also been achieved.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Driving licence checks have begun to reveal that some drivers are being caught out with the expiry of the photo card type of driving licences that only last for 10 years.

Driver training seminars have been organised in various parts of the company, and these have proved exceedingly beneficial in picking up poor practice, and lack of understanding.

The various auditing regimes to check compliance with safety policies and procedures is the most effective way to ensure that employees and managers place the highest importance on safety.

## CURRENT AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Our highway services training team has now been tasked with providing driver assessment for all commercial vehicle drivers.

In the highway services business, there has been a big improvement in the number of behavioural task audits carried out and in future we will be recording the number of unsafe acts observed during these audits in order to engage all involved in working safely. The form and procedure will be amended slightly and training will be provided.

We have very recently introduced a new accident / incident reporting system which should bring better trend analysis, and tracks the actions from accident / incident investigations.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION





