# **Case Study - Gloucestershire County Council**

## Profile

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| Company Name: | Gloucestershire County Council |
| Business Sector: | Local Government |
| Postal Address: | Shire Hall, Gloucester, Gloucestershire |
| Postcode: | GL1 2TH |
| Fleet Size Overall: | 175 |
| HGV: | 5 |
| LGV: | 110 including minibuses. |
| Company Cars: | 60 |
| Private vehicles used for business purposes: | Gloucestershire has approximately 1500 “essential users” who provide a car for business purposes. In addition other employees may provide a vehicle as a casual user. |

## Company Overview

**Gloucestershire County Council** provides services for the 500,000 plus people living and working in the county.[www.gloucestershire.gov.uk](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/) Service areas provided:

* Education
* Environment (archaeology, roads, planning, minerals, waste, travel, road safety and transport)
* Social Care services
* Fire And Rescue
* Trading Standards
* Libraries and Information
* County Record Office
* Registration Services (births, marriages and deaths)

## Nature of Operation and Driving Activities

The County Council has a grey fleet of employee owned vehicles that drive as part of their duties or drive to locations to deliver services. The grey fleet covered over 7.5 million miles in 2008.

We have a Council fleet of 175 vehicles that are used to deliver services to the residents of Gloucestershire, this fleet is made up of both standard “off the shelf” cars, vans and minibuses and purpose built vehicles such as mobile libraries and wheelchair accessible minibuses.

## Organisational Structure



## Work related Road Safety Policy and Procedures

The Council recognises the need to protect employees and others from the dangers of work related driving. The Council is committed to the principle that transport accidents, including road traffic accidents, are not an expected and acceptable fact of life but serious, costly and often avoidable events.

**Gloucestershire County Council** has general duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure the safety of employees and others affected by its work activities, and a duty to assess significant risks under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. In practice, risk assessment needs to take place not only at an organisational level (by service area or line managers), but also at a personal level by the individual driver.

The Council will:

• Comply with regulatory requirements;

• Provide standards not less than those set out in any relevant approved Codes of Practice;

• Take all reasonable steps to ensure as far as reasonably practicable that employees driving at work do so in a manner that reduces the risk to themselves, other employees or any other person who could be affected.

Staff involved in driving of vehicles, whether council owned or private vehicles on work matters should fully familiarise themselves with the contents of this document.

## Work related Road Safety Guidance for Drivers

Areas covered:

* Risk Assessment
* Driver Competence & Training
* Vehicles
* Journeys
* Transporting passengers including children and service users
* Insurance
* Driving Licences
* Documentation Check procedure
* Use of Mobile Phones in vehicles
* Smoking in vehicles
* Driver Health
* Further Information and assistance

## Specific examples of procedures

This is one example contained in the policy document:

**Eyesight:**

The safety of any driver is affected by eyesight defects and all drivers have a legal duty to satisfy the eyesight requirements in the Highway Code.

Drivers should ensure that they have periodic eyesight tests to ensure that they do not require corrective lenses for driving purposes or where corrective lenses are worn that the prescription remains valid.

**GCC**undertakes to provide eye and eyesight tests free of charge on request to drivers of***GCC***fleet vehicles, lease car holders and essential car users.

## Auditing and review

This procedure will be updated when necessary by distribution of a complete replacement. Amended or additional parts of revised pages will be marked by a vertical black line in the right hand margin. SHE procedures will be reviewed at intervals of not more than 14 months.

The review would include responses to legislative changes and incident reporting as well as staff and manager feedback. The recent review for example added guidance on the use of SatNav systems.

Compliance with policies is audited throughout the organisation by auditing establishments and service areas on a rolling programme anywhere from once a year to once every three years on a risk basis.

## Performance measures

Managers are responsible for ensuring that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are in place for driving activities and that these are adequately communicated to staff. Risk assessments should be proportionate to the level of risk involved in the driving activity. Assessments should reflect the range of risks arising from the particular driving activity.

In many instances staff simply driving between different work locations may be regarded as relatively low risk and the assessment will be relatively brief. In other instances risks will be more significant and the assessment more detailed.

The Council’s Safety, Health and Environment Unit audit all service areas and functions. The audit process includes verification of compliance with the council’s policies on managing road risk including ensuring adequate document checking regimes are in place, drivers are appropriately trained and competent, vehicles are managed and serviced appropriately etc.

Audit findings are reported to the Council’s health and safety Committees for monitoring purposes.

## Accident reduction

This area is still being developed. A review of vehicle provision, mileage travelled and car allowances is currently being undertaken.
Staff must promptly report all work-related transport and road traffic incidents using **GCC**’s incident reporting system (whether using their own private vehicle, a lease car, a **GCC** owned/fleet vehicle, some other form of transport or as a pedestrian).

Reporting and managing crashes

These are reported as per any other accident, incident or near miss using the [GCC](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=14941)[procedure](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=14941) and are investigated by the line manager.

An example of a road traffic crash incident was a collision pulling out of a **GCC** premises which had an exit with limited visibility. The entrance was subsequently moved to give a better visibility.

Site transport routes are now included in the Health and Safety audit regime to proactively identify any such issues.

It is suspected that many minor vehicular accidents occurring during business driving go unreported, as they are dealt with by the individual's own insurance. The **GCC** Safe Driving Policy does instruct staff to report all such incidents.

## Financial and other benefits

This area is still being developed. A review of vehicle provision, mileage travelled and car allowances is currently being undertaken.

## Lessons learned

This is not an easy task to do, especially working in such a large organisation The three tiered check regime (spot checks for low risk, annual checks for medium risk and third party checks for high risk) was unnecessarily complex with sample checking for low risk drivers proving difficult to programme in effectively so managers typical opt to check all drivers documents annually - typically tacking it on to the annual performance appraisal.

Evaluation of foreign national's driver licences could prove difficult for managers. Limited cases in Gloucestershire but other authorities have experienced these problems, especially when evaluating non-EU licences, such as South African or Australian.

This may be included in subsequent review - proposed guidance would be that where managers are unsure about whether a foreign licence holder they seek advice from Road Safety or H&S section to establish whether it entitles driver to drive on UK roads and consider undertaking an 'assessed drive' with a Road Safety Officer to review driver competency/skills.

## Current and future developments

The Council is also in the early stages of an Energy Saving Trust fleet review. This is expected to highlight areas where further improvements in vehicle use can be made.