# **Case Study - Scottish & Southern Energy**

## Profile

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| Company Name: | Scottish & Southern Energy |
| Business Sector: | Energy, Building, Communications, Transportation |
| Postal Address: | SSE, Inveralmond House, 200 Dunkeld Road, Perth. |
| Postcode: | PH1 3AQ |
| Fleet Size Overall: |   |
| HGV: | 600 |
| LGV: | 2000 |
| Company Cars: | 1100 |
| Private vehicles used for business purposes: |   |

## Company Overview

Driving is an integral part of working for SSE due to the very nature of the business, and to this end it has been recognised that employees are most at risk whilst out on the road. Many accidents occur as a result of drivers failing to adequately risk assess their journey and in most cases can be attributed to being caused by any one of or a combination of factors.

* Driving too fast for the conditions or in excess of the speed limit
* Driving too closely to other vehicles in front
* Poor hazard perception
* Distractions such as those caused or created by the use of mobile phones (Both hands free as well as hand held)
* Fatigue

To this end, members of the executive together with the Health and Safety team have recognised the need to have within the organization, specialists who can address these issues, educate and assess those individuals who in the short term have been identified as being in need of assistance to raise their driving standards, and who in the longer term can raise standards at all levels throughout the company.

## Nature of Operation and Driving Activities

SSE is a leading national supplier of energy, with offices spread throughout the UK and most recently the Republic of Ireland. It also has within its fold telecommunications, building and transportation departments.

The range and variety of drivers within SSE is wide and varied. These range from employees who drive both company and private cars to travel around the country visiting various sites, van drivers operating out in the field (street lighting, power generation etc) along with specialist HGV plant and equipment.

## Organisational Structure

In respect of the structure of road safety within SSE, the command structure is led by the Chief Executive. The direction of the plan is then as follows.

* Gary Barnes (Group Health and Safety manager)
* Vince Butler (Special Projects Manager)
* Tony Carter (Safe Driving Advisor – South)
* Ed McLaren (Safe Driving Advisor – North)
* Team of Driving Champions (In house trained driving assessors located throughout the UK)

## Occupational Road Risk Guidance

The Management of Occupational Road Risk is covered in depth within the company health and safety manual and covers everything from daily vehicle checks to driving behaviour and procedures when and if involved in a road traffic accident.

There is a company requirement that all journeys of 250 miles or more in any one day are subject to a full risk assessment being completed by the driver and must be signed off by the employees line manager prior to the commencement of the journey

## Road Safety Procedures

Any driver involved in a class 1 RTA (as defined in the SSE health and safety manual) who is considered to be at fault, or any driver who has committed an breach of road traffic regulations is suspended from driving a company vehicle until such time as any investigation and/or driver assessment has been carried out.

New employees who are young and/or inexperienced are subjected to a driving assessment prior to being granted a permit to drive at work. Any driver who is suspected of driving below the standard of a reasonably competent driver, or is subject of a complaint is also required to undertake an assessment.

SSE driving assessors are currently being trained up in house by the company safe driving advisors and are required to attain a minimum standard in respect of their own driving ability as well as their ability to diagnose, rectify and offer coaching to fellow employees. They are also instructed in how to prepare reports, as well as the consequences of their finding where it is found that someone is driving to an unacceptable level.

Within 12 months of qualifying as an assessor, the individual is also required to pass the RoSPA advanced test at a minimum silver standard, thereby ensuring that standards are maintained and offering external accreditation which affords credibility to that individual when assessing their peers and colleagues.

One of the safe driving advisors is already and advanced driving examiner of many years standing, the advisor based in Scotland will become the first ever non Police qualified advanced driving examiner in the UK, but only for the conducting of tests within SSE but under the supervision of the established examiner

In the near future, the company will start to introduce a three to four year roll out of its driver assessment programme where over this time every company driver will be assessed and will include a check on their driving safety, Highway Code knowledge, Hazard perception and eyesight.

This programme has already started with the assessment of the Chief Executive and the board, but in the main will commence with the high risk users first finishing with the lowest risk.

## Specific examples of procedures

A new employee had their driving assessed prior to taking up a role in London which required the individual to drive on a daily basis.

It was quickly established that the standard of driving from this individual was so bad it was unsafe, but the person concerned was not prepared to accept constructive advice or assistance. It was found out that this person also has a history or road rage.

These facts were established before they were issued with a company vehicle, and as a result they were offered alternative employment which has been declined.

The assessment was carried out by the company safe driving advisor, and was able to provide constructive, detailed and precise reports thereby avoiding any allegation of collusion, and which came from an employee who is qualified to offer expert advice and opinion.

## Auditing and review

Vehicle fleets are audited, but no driver audits are currently in place.

However, once the driver champion/assessors are up and running, an annual audit will be conducted along with a review of procedures and practices.

## Performance measures

Records of all accidents along with details of those reported for traffic offences are kept and compared year on year. How successful the programme is deemed to be will become more apparent at the end of the first full year.

## Cost and Benefits

Last year SSE paid out over £1miliion as a result of company vehicles being involved in RTAs (SSE is a bonded company). It is estimated that this figure will reduce substantially, but it is too early to forecast an exact figure.

## Lessons learned

No statistics yet available, but already it has become very apparent that the outlook on driving is changing for the better within the company, specific areas are now targeted such as excess speed, driving too close and use of the mobile phone, and the company has adopted a zero tolerance policy in respect of poor driving standards.

New disciplinary policies are being put into place with regards to breaches of driving conduct, and safety on the road is now at the top of the safety agenda as a result of having to driving specialists.

Too many departments have gone their own route resulting in information and advice being fragmented. Information being passed to employees is now consistent and can be transmitted through the driver champions on behalf of the company driving advisors thereby ensuring that consistency is the key.

In light of the pending introduction of the Corporate Manslaughter bill, many companies are making approaches to SSE offering their services as being unique and the only companies able to offer the level of training required by a company of our size. The company driving advisors are able to ensure that only those companies with unique qualities (For example HGV or 4 x 4) are considered as many others see SSE as a quick way of making substantial amounts of money.

## Current and future developments

A number of long term goals are on the agenda, such as the training and assessment of young apprentices and employees prior to being given access to a company vehicle.

A 3 yearly assessment of all company drivers will be rolled out in conjunction with the issue a of a 3 yearly renewable driver permit which will contain details of all driver qualifications (currently the permit lasts for life and is an A4 sheet of paper). Our future plans include improved administration in respect of driver training records.

Driving licence checks will be conducted at least twice a year and hopefully a quarterly check will be introduced.

Once the base level of safety has been established (Base level defined as the DSA L test standard) employees will be encouraged to attain a RoSPA advanced standard. We will additionally commit to investment in suitable training aids both documentary and technical to improve standards.

## Additional information

The company is working very closely with RoSPA and is developing its relationship with RoadSafe.

We are limiting the amount of association we have with other external organizations as it is felt that this could devalue the working relationship we have with the two main recognised bodies, namely RoSPA and Roadsafe.