A program in:
Safety Management for the Occupational Driver

Road traffic injury is the leading cause of death, injury and absence from work in Australia. Over 30% of vehicles on Australian roads are driven for work-related purposes. At certain times of the day, two out of three vehicles are making work-related trips. There is also evidence to suggest that more people are injured driving work-related vehicles than non-work related vehicles.

**Aim**

Safety Management for the Occupational Driver Program aims to develop the skills of supervisors in identifying situations in which their drivers may be at risk on the road (e.g., drivers are tired, stressed, under pressure to meet deadlines) and to manage these situations effectively. The goal of this program is to create sustainable safety management systems that are focused on reducing work-related road traffic injury and death.

**Overview**

In Australia Road traffic injury is the leading cause of work-related death. Despite this, limited attention has been given to preventive strategies, beyond individual compliance. Workgroup supervisors (those who monitor and regulate drivers in their performance of assigned tasks, both driving and non-driving related) play a pivotal role in creating a safe work environment. For example, a supervisor showing concern for a driver through increased safety-related discussions is associated with safer driving behaviour by the employee. Despite the acceptance of the link between leadership and safety outcomes, there is little guidance about the mechanisms in which supervisors can change safe driving at work.
Program elements

Safety Management for the Occupational Driver Program addresses this need by identifying and developing key elements of supervisory skill that facilitate change in driver safety. The development program will address the following elements to assist supervisors in managing the safety of work-related drivers:

1. How to effectively develop leadership in the safety management of drivers;
2. How to effectively integrate safety management within existing work role tasks;
3. How to create awareness of and attention to a workplace context in which safety is valued; and
4. How to effectively adapt to a management style that identifies with the safety and well-being of drivers.

Overview

This program will be run over a 4 month period with a half day group-based development session each month. Informed from exercises covered in each monthly development session, supervisors will be asked to implement their newly learnt skills in their workgroups and discuss their experiences in the next development session. Supervisors will be encouraged to monitor their own behaviour following each session by observing, evaluating and recording aspects of their own behaviour and interactions with their drivers.

Organisational capability

Safety Management for the Occupational Driver Program is developed and facilitated by expert staff within the Monash University Accident Research Centre (MUARC). MUARC is Australia’s largest and most respected transport research centre with world leading expertise in occupational transport safety. MUARC conducts research of the highest standard and provides incisive interpretations of research findings. The Centre does this by identifying emerging injury problems, undertaking research to determine solutions and closely monitoring international safety developments. It works cooperatively with both public and private sector organisations to define the scope of research projects and encourages the adoption of recommended injury prevention measures.

Located in Melbourne, MUARC has more than 90 research staff drawn from a wide range of academic disciplines including psychology, medicine, human factors, ergonomics, engineering, epidemiology, statistics, computing and education. The Centre has six professorial level staff members and supervises a large number of postgraduate research students. More information about MUARC can be found at MUARC’s website: www.monash.edu.au/muarc

Who to contact?

Dr Sharon Newnam

Dr Sharon Newnam is a Senior Research Fellow at MUARC and is recognised as a world leader in the area of work-related transportation safety. She has demonstrated significant impact in advancing knowledge of factors that influence the safety of work-related drivers and developing interventions to reduce the social and financial impact of crashes. Using an evidence-based approach, Dr Newnam’s contributions to the field have been recognised at the industry level with significant improvements in safety outcomes (e.g., reduced crashes, traffic infringement notices, insurance premiums) identified within several partner organisations. Dr Newnam conceptualised and led a large scale Australian Research Council grant designed to develop, implement and evaluate work-related transportation safety interventions in the non-profit sector and is currently leading a NHMRC project that aims to estimate the magnitude and organisational determinants of work-related road traffic injury.

Email: sharon.newnam@monash.edu
Phone: (03) 9905 4370

“Leaders must be close enough to relate to others, but far enough ahead to motivate them”

– John C. Maxwell