

# Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS)

Speech - 1 November 2018

Martin Temple CBE, HSE Chair

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to you today.

Today I am going to talk to you about transport, not surprisingly, but more specifically I am going to talk about the logistics and transport chain.

First, I want to mention the bigger picture. The statistics for deaths, injuries and ill health are in some way remarkable and in other ways depressing.

The statistics for Great Britain in 2017/18 show over 1.4 million people suffering from a work-related illness, of which 44% is from stress, anxiety or depression, 35% is from musculoskeletal and 21% are from other types of illness. This would fill over 1,500 Airbus A380 planes.

The number of injuries incurred at work would fill over 740 trains from Euston to Birmingham (555,000), and 144 workers were killed at work.

Just think what public outcry there would be if people saw these trains and planes together representing such depressing statistics.

The remarkable figure is the degree to which the UK has reduced the deaths at work, as traditionally reported to the current level, but more about that in a moment.

Injuries are important because, firstly, they should not happen and they do affect people's lives, but so often they could easily have been a death.

The depressing figures are those related to ill health. For decades now, the emphasis in the UK has been on safety, we can see it, we can fix it, we can inspect it and when people are killed or injured, it has immediate impact.

Health has been the poorer relation for many reasons, perhaps mainly because the impact of it is usually delayed – it manifests itself years later as either respiratory problems, musculoskeletal problems or, more common than society has been prepared to admit, as stress or mental health issues.

That is why HSE has a strategic programme going forward to tackle work-related ill health on a major scale, working with duty holders and others in the health chain to tackle it at source.

Our key word is 'prevent'. We are concentrating on the areas I have just mentioned. We know what causes it, we know how to fix it, we know the costs, we know the anguish and we cannot let more decades to go by accumulating a reservoir of ill health, which we see today in our hospitals, social service and sadly our mortuaries.

Now moving on to the specific topic for today. Similar to health, we are now turning out attention more to road related deaths, injuries and ill health. Why?

The statistics I quoted earlier excluded road deaths. The current estimate is around 500 work-related road deaths per year. It shows that there is a problem, more so when injuries and ill health are brought into the equation.

Apart from the horror of a death, in terms of the individual's loss of life, and impact on their families, there is also a massive negative economic impact. Road transport is at the heart of the British economy.

The sheer scale of road transport is quite staggering. But the statistics are worth repeating.

Last year, in total, vans and lorries on GB roads travel 66 billion miles a year. Add to this the 254 billion vehicle miles travelled by cars, and 5 billion by other vehicles – the total number of vehicle miles travelled amounts to 325 billion per year.

In other words, there are enough road miles driven on Britain's road network to get to the moon and back 1,863 . . . and a half times – every – single – day. Many of the miles driven are by people who are driving for work.

It is not only the scale of the industry, but the level, range and complexity, the number of duty holders and their diversity and in addition, of course, the pace of change, that together present a real challenge to health and safety. That's why it's not easy.

As you know, the regulation of road transport in all its facets fall to several organisations with overlap in a number of areas.

What is key is that we all play to our respective strengths, and where enforcement powers are the right ones for our roles.

We want to make a new impact, so the journey that HSE is on, is to add a vital voice and actions to the sector, initially by building up our relationship with influential people and organisations in this area.

We have sector plans for all our areas of work, and as part of the Logistics and Transport Sector Plan, this year a literature review of work-related road risk is being carried out by HSE's Science Division. They are also undertaking research to establish current good practice on management of work-related road risk and developments in technology to establish whether the joint HSE/DFT guidance "Driving at Work" requires updating.

Over the past two months, I have met a number of key people, such as Nick Starling and David Davies in June (from PACTS), Chief Constable Anthony Bangham of West Mercia Police and policing lead for the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), Chief Constable Dee Collins of West Yorkshire Police and Bridget Rosewell, Chair and Gareth Llewellyn, Chief Executive of the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA).

The meetings with Anthony Bangham and Dee Collins focused on road safety and a West Yorkshire pilot joint with DVSA, local authorities, Highways England (HE) and Humberside and West Yorkshire police on load safety.

The pilot seeks to establish new and better links to enable us to work more effectively. This is not only data sharing but also an enforcement led approach that will allow targeting of those businesses that are not effectively managing the risks around loading of vehicles.

The additional information collected includes the site where the vehicle was loaded so it allows HSE to identify consignors who are regularly sending non-compliant vehicles onto the road network, endangering other road users and those involved in unloading the vehicle.

Our first monthly tranche of data from the police and DVSA shows that 91 vehicles were dealt with for insecure loads. Enforcement action included 44 roadside prohibitions and 73 fixed penalty tickets.

The most common load defect was no load securing **whatsoever**. This was the case on 40 out of 91 vehicles. A further 15 had inadequate load securing, which usually meant that just a last row of pallets had been secured, and the rest left unsecured. In one instance, part of the load fell out of the vehicle when the curtain side was pulled back for inspection!

Many of these loads were heavy items, such as concrete pipes, metal castings, bricks, large beer kegs, and pallets weighing more than a tonne. These are load types we know kill and injure when they are not secured properly for transport.

Incidents with vehicles shedding loads and non-fatal collisions cause significant delays and disruption on the road network,

increasing the pressures on everyone not just on the logistics industry. Insecure loads create risks for road users and those clearing up the debris on the road, and also those who have to unload it.

For example, a local authority inspector in West Yorkshire recently carried out the first consignor site visit under the pilot. The company was a major national company with sites across the UK. The visit identified a number of issues relating to how vehicles are loaded and unloaded, and how the company controlled the risks of their transport operation. Shortly prior to the visit, the company reported an incident on one of their sites where part of a vehicle's load fell out during unloading and struck one of the warehouse staff.

HSE cannot tackle these issues alone, so we are actively seeking to work with others.

It is important to acknowledge that the transport industry has made progress in improving safety over the last few years, in load securing, work at height, and manual handling. Automated sheeting, ground-level coupling, fall-arrest systems, and ground level load securing equipment, which all help to make loading vehicles quicker and safer for everyone. But what more can be done? How can risks be managed down the logistics line?

There has been suggestion that extending RIDDOR to reporting work-related road safety incidents will improve overall performance on work-related road safety.

Most injuries resulting from vehicle movement on public roads are not reportable under RIDDOR, instead they are enforced by the police, as they have a primary responsibility for enforcing road traffic legislation. We have asked the police to make small amendments to their STATS19 and the CRASH database, where they record road traffic incidents, to capture the additional information we need to challenge duty holders.

Alan Craddock, Head of HSE's Transport and Public Services Unit, who I'm sure some of you know, has also been developing a strategic role and getting involved in police led projects looking at how road traffic accidents are investigated.

Alan sits on the National Policing Intelligence Forum where he can help HSE through working with other stakeholders to make a greater impact.

This has come about following meetings with Martin Evans, the lead for the investigation of serious road incidents for the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC).

I am, however, particularly concerned that on most road related deaths the driver is seen as the person to blame and the sanctions are invariably against them. I acknowledge that in some cases this may be the correct decision.

But I strongly believe that it is not enough to say that the driver is responsible and no-one else is.

Can it be right that frequently a driver has to drive a lorry that is unstable because they have not had an appropriate opportunity to check and ensure that they have a safe load? In some cases, not even allowed to go to the toilet when at a depot.

Is it always the fault of the driver of a vehicle which has not got the correct equipment to secure the load?

Unfortunately, despite this, it is often the driver who appears to carry the can for others in chain. It seems not right to me – my question is, 'is it?'

The issues cannot be tackled in isolation. Everyone has a part to play and must consider the effects of what they do, how they do it and how it impacts on the health and safety of all those in the transport chain.

Is it right to pass on responsibility or neglect of duty of care to others? The assessment of risk and the effect it can have on others in transport should also consider what happens way down the line, many miles away from the depot or point of loading.

We believe that we have the powers to go up the chain of activities to bring to account those people and organisations who fail the drivers and the general public through the unreasonable conditions they impose on their drivers. Our West Yorkshire pilot will add to our knowledge and understanding to inform us on how best to take this forward.

We must also remember that work-related road deaths are not confined to lorries and unsafe loads. The imposition of extremely tight deadlines on delivery is, we perceive, very significant.

A number of organisations, notably railway track workers, report that injuries and death on trackwork are at a low level, but the journey to and from one job to another as a result of fatigue is the most dangerous part.

Additionally, how many businesses ban the use of mobile phones whilst driving? In fact, many still see their workforce as contactable and able to receive instructions when driving. There are of course degrees of proportionality to this, but it does come

back to the whole health and safety culture in the organisations that do not see this as an important part of their safety regime.

HSE and DVSA are committed to improving road and workplace safety. We want to keep the roads flowing smoothly. We want to keep people healthy and safe at work.

As you will see, HSE's health and safety plans for logistics and transport have a strong focus on improving load security and management of overall work-related road risks. We plan to work closely with all regulators and the industry to realise these ambitions.

Health and safety is a business enabler, it is not a cost it is an investment, and should be seen as such.

Why is it an investment? Well, just think of the costs to business of congestion on the road network, through accidents or lost loads, traffic fines, rejected deliveries through late arrivals or damaged goods, and most importantly of the incalculable cost of human lives lost or injured in road traffic incidents, which makes getting the management of risk right in the industry crucial.

Managing risk well benefits businesses and benefits society as a whole.

Thank you for listening. Transport is a sector that underpins the entire British economy and today we have an opportunity to contribute to Helping Great Britain to work well.