



accidents don't have to happen

# Protecting gig workers: Risks and enforcement

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# What is the gig economy?

**Definition:** Short-term, flexible jobs, rather than traditional contracted employment with set hours

- Workers often face irregular hours, variable pay, and limited access to traditional employer protections
- According to the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH), there are 1.7m people working in the gig economy
- 20 per cent of gig workers class this work as their main source of income
- Expected to grow by 300% by 2027



# What are the health and safety risks?

1. **Road accidents** – cyclists, motorbike couriers
2. **Manual handling injuries** – lifting heavy loads without proper training
3. **Slips, trips, falls** – at events, construction, or temporary work sites
4. **Fatigue and stress** – long hours, irregular schedules
5. **Exposure to hazardous environments** – construction sites, outdoor work in extreme weather



# What does the research say?

- A study by the UCL on over 200 taxi drivers and parcel and food couriers working in the gig economy:
  - 63 per cent were not provided with safety training on managing risks on the road
  - 65 per cent said that they are not given any safety equipment such as a high visibility vest and over 70 per cent resort to providing their own
  - 47 per cent said that they would break the speed limit to meet time pressures
  - 42 per cent said they had damaged their vehicles in a collision at work
  - 30 per cent had driven through a red light
  - 16 per cent reported struggling to stay awake at the wheel



# Legal responsibilities: Employers

- Even if workers are labelled self-employed, duties still apply
- Employers / duty holders should:
  - Check they can legally drive or ride vehicles
  - Check they are fit to drive legally and safely
  - Carry out risk assessments
  - Provide training and guidance
  - Ensure safe systems of work
  - Avoid incentives that increase risk
  - Monitor incidents and near misses



# Legal responsibilities: Employees

- Check you are:
  - Properly licensed
  - Insured for work
  - Fit to drive
- Plan your journeys safely and comply with traffic laws
- If you use your own vehicle for work (not commuting), your motor insurance policy must include business use cover
- Vehicle must be registered, taxed and have a valid MOT certificate

# What Enforcement Officers should look for

- Unrealistic schedules or incentives
- Lack of risk assessment
- Poor vehicle condition
- Inadequate training or supervision
- App-driven distraction
- No accident investigation process



# The Purple Guide

- UK guidance for health and safety at music and entertainment events
- Applies to anyone working at an event, regardless of employment status, length of contract or whether they are paid per shift or per task
- All workers must be included in risk assessments
- Competence, training and supervision must be appropriate to the task
- Clear lines of responsibility must be established
- Safe systems of work must cover temporary and short-term staff
- Communication and briefings must reach everyone on site



# Key takeaways

- Gig economy driving is high risk
- Legal duties still apply
- Risk must be managed like any other workplace hazard
- Pressure, fatigue and distraction are central issues
- Enforcement plays a key role in prevention
- You can read more about responsibilities in the gig economy here: [Driving and Riding for Work in the Gig Economy](#)



# Thank you for watching

Any questions?

