

SMEs 'failing to recognise corporate manslaughter rules'

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Despite the noisy introduction of the Corporate Manslaughter Act in 2008, SMEs are apparently still failing to address safety issues especially the safety of their employees on the road.

Research shows that almost 35% of employees use their car for work purposes but employers are not yet enforcing effective Work Related Road Safety policies (WRRS).

Under new rules, companies and senior management are accountable in the case of fatal work collisions. If they have failed to implement proper safety measures, and any shortcomings can be proven, then they could be implicated and open to substantial fines.

Employers have been urged to follow simple procedures to ensure the safety of their staff, these include:

- Checking fluid levels and the car battery
- Ensuring lights and windscreen wipers work properly
- Keeping tyre pressures to government standards
- Ensuring that drivers have full insurance coverage and a valid driving licence

"The revisions of the Corporate Manslaughter Act provide stronger power for the police and Health and Safety Executive to conduct investigations following an incident into a company's provision of adequate health and safety policies," warned Nick Mills, Managing Director of road safety experts, InStar UK.

"This is understandable when it is suggested that at least 30% of road collisions involve people who are at work."

Pictons has a specialist team advising on corporate manslaughter and legal aspects of risk management.