

Shared Learning

The Thameslink Programme

Issue Date: Oct 2016 - For further info contact: dominic.thompson@networkrail.co.uk

Issue Number: TLP 063

Title: Fatigued driver in motorway near miss

Overview of Event:

Following a night shift at Blackfriars station, a contractor took the decision to drive home. During the journey home, he momentarily fell asleep and veered across two lanes narrowly missing a lorry that was travelling in the nearside lane. A number of contributing factors led to this potentially fatal incident.

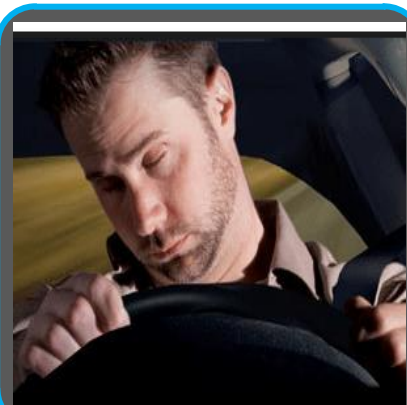
General Key Messages:

Do you know:

- What the fatigue control measures are for your current job?
- That the work-safe policy allows you to stop and refuse to work if you consider something to be unsafe?
- Your company's out-of-hours procedure for arranging accommodation if circumstances change and you find you'll need digs? *(A system was available, but not used in this case).*
- How to contact your 24/7 duty manager? *(One was available, but not used in this case).*
- If something changes, you need to assess the situation and any foreseeable consequences (in this case, the arrival of an unexpected worker)?
- Fatigue is often a root cause of major accidents and has been a contributory factor in 20% of accidents on major roads? *(Source ROSPA)*
- There is no reason for anyone to be in this situation or to take such risk. Out of hours arrangements are available for booking accommodation and must be used.

Causes:

- A contractor attended a site without being authorised, planned or contracted to do so.
- The supervisor accepted the unplanned attendance (change) without thoroughly assessing subsequent risks or consequences.
- Accommodation had not been booked as the operative had not been expected on site.
- The supervisor attempted to arrange accommodation, but also entered a discussion which left the contractor with the choice of either waiting for accommodation to be arranged or to drive home ("provided he didn't feel tired or won't go over his hours").
- Having driven from Rotherham to London and completing a night shift, the operative chose to drive home. The operative failed to take rest breaks – his first stop was after he fell asleep at the wheel and followed 2 hours of driving. By this point, he wasn't far from home and was close to the maximum permitted door to door time of 14 hours.
- (During this time, he had travelled approx. 240 miles, driven for 6hrs 50mins. and completed a shift of 6hrs 35mins).



Actions Taken As a Result of the Investigations:

- The company's out of hours contact number and procedure are to be added to all task briefs and work package plans.
- A briefing was distributed summarising the incident.
- To support the company's fatigue policies, a guiding methodology is to provide recommended solutions to fatigue challenges faced by those planning work.
- The incident was discussed with supervisors during their weekly conference call with management & the HSEQ team.