

Shellharbour City Council

Embedding road safety in the workplace

Introduction

Since 2006, Shellharbour City Council has incorporated road safety into how its staff go about their day-to-day work.

Led by an internal Road Safety Officer (RSO), Shellharbour City Council developed and implemented various strategies and tools to firmly embed road safety within Council's Work Health and Safety (WHS) framework to meet its legal and social obligations as an employer.

Initiatives such as the **Vehicle Access and Carpooling Program** and **Designated Driver Program** have not only supported the safety of the workers, but they have also helped improve workplace relationships among Council workers.

Safe Driving Policy

The Safe Driving Policy is linked to the Council's WHS Policy, Risk Management Policy and Fleet Management Policy and applies to all Council workers.

The policy covers Council's duty of care for its workers, which includes mitigating risks while using Council vehicles. The policy is regularly updated to align with legislative changes and any relevant information about improving road safety. Initiatives that have been implemented in association with this policy include:

Road safety on the intranet

The intranet is regularly updated to inform workers of the RSO's role, outline details of the Safe Driving Policy, and to promote

community road safety events and initiatives which are open to Council workers to attend. Initiatives included:

- ▶ How to correctly fit child restraints
- ▶ Workshops for older road users

Snapshot

- ▶ The City of Shellharbour is in the Illawarra region, about 100 kilometres south of Sydney and covers the southern suburbs of the Wollongong urban area centred on Shellharbour. It has an estimated population of 78,000.
- ▶ Shellharbour City Council employs up to 590 permanent and temporary employees over a wide variety of services for its local community.
- ▶ Between 2015 and 2019 there were eight fatalities and 141 serious injuries on Shellharbour roads.

New worker induction

New workers must observe a six-step process before they are able to access a Council vehicle:

1. Attend an induction workshop and meet with the RSO
2. Become familiar with relevant road safety information on the intranet
3. Review the Safe Driving Policy
4. Read the Glovebox Book and learn how the Council fleet vehicle system works
5. Refresh their knowledge of road rules
6. Complete an online Safe Driver Quiz

The quiz consists of 50 behavioural questions from the Road User Handbook. Workers must pass the test to drive a Council vehicle. Refresher courses on safe driving behaviour are delivered from time to time.

Vehicle Access and Carpooling Program

The Vehicle Access and Carpooling (VAC) Program allows Council workers to access fleet vehicles once they have successfully completed induction.

Council workers need to log their name, licence details and note any damage to a vehicle prior to taking it on the road. Further damage and infringements are recorded against the driver.

The VAC program has reduced the number of workers using their own vehicle for work purposes. Council now

has better oversight of who is driving vehicles and can maintain higher and more consistent safety standards.

As a result of the fleet vehicles being leased, Council has noted a considerable decrease in operational costs such as insurance, fuel and servicing and improved care for vehicles by drivers. At the end of each lease, vehicles enter the used-car market with relatively low mileage and in safe condition for the community.

Designated Driver Program

The Designated Driver Program fosters comradery among colleagues and assists Council workers to get home safe from work functions, including their annual end of year party.

Workers who are willing to commit to not drinking alcohol can register as a 'designated driver' prior to a work function. Drivers provide information on how many people their vehicle can carry, their destination, route, and departure times. The list of drivers is promoted on the intranet. Party attendees are encouraged to plan ahead and book a seat with a driver.

Road safety engagement

Shellharbour City Council dedicates one month each year to road safety engagement initiatives, which incorporates Safe Driver Policy, new worker induction program and internal engagement activities. Road safety videos, 'how to' guides, and workshops are promoted through the intranet.

Workshops have included:

- ▶ How to effectively use the Glovebox Guide
- ▶ How to safely reverse park and reverse drive
- ▶ Mobile phone use and distraction
- ▶ Driving in and around road works areas

Data and notable improvements

Upon review of insurance claims and crash statistics, reversing was identified as the most common cause of crashes by Council's fleet vehicles. Council addressed this by:

- ▶ Providing workers with information about avoiding common crashes when reversing, including reverse and parallel parking techniques.
- ▶ Introducing safer vehicles with reversing cameras and parking sensors.

These initiatives have resulted in fewer reversing crashes, reduced insurance premiums and vehicle repair expenses.

Previously, a high number of Council vehicles were being issued with infringement notices from a traffic camera at a local intersection. The RSO ran a campaign to raise awareness of a safety camera at that location. This helped reduce infringements and encouraged positive road safety behaviour.

Tips for success

- ▶ Engage with workers regularly and use different engagement channels to reach different audiences.
- ▶ Create opportunities to interact with workers on road safety through quizzes, games, workshops and events.
- ▶ Encourage executive and management to promote initiatives through leadership toolbox talks and internal communications.
- ▶ Use data such as local crash statistics to highlight impacts to the community. Information about the financial cost of crashes and infringements indicate where savings can be made.
- ▶ Report on improvements and be enthusiastic and persistent. Road safety is everyone's responsibility.

Project outcomes

The implementation of the Safe Driving Policy and supporting initiatives has resulted in:

- ▶ A reduction in the number of crashes.
- ▶ Improved care for Council vehicles, including their cleanliness.
- ▶ Positive feedback from both management and workers.
- ▶ Greater awareness of road safety risks.

Summary

Issues

- ▶ Negative attitudes towards road safety by workers
- ▶ Lack of internal road safety structures and protocols
- ▶ Limited awareness of the role of a RSO
- ▶ Some workers wouldn't share their council vehicles, often resulting in workers using their own vehicles for work purposes
- ▶ Considerable infringements and high insurance premiums

Solutions

- ▶ Development of a Safe Driving Policy
- ▶ Introduction of mandatory road safety training as part of new start inductions
- ▶ Accessible information on the intranet about road safety
- ▶ Improved care, maintenance and sharing of fleet vehicles
- ▶ Improved communication about the role of RSO and council-led road safety programs