

Fleets urged to demonstrate their commitment to safety

BSI says Mark Group's focus on road safety paves the way for other fleets to follow

NEED TO KNOW

- First fleet achieves safety standard
- BSI appeals for more to follow suit
- Assessment can help drive down costs

By Gareth Roberts

BSI – the British Standards Institution – is calling on more fleets to demonstrate their commitment to road safety after recognising Mark Group's efforts. The company is the first to be independently assessed and certified by BSI for its new standard BS ISO 39001, which rewards best practice for road traffic safety management systems and was launched in December 2012.

Jamie Bogg, environmental and road safety manager at Mark Group, told *Fleet News* he was delighted the company had achieved the standard and believes other fleets should embrace it because of the benefits it can bring.

He said: "You can think you've got the best management system in the world, but until you have it externally audited by an independent assessor you just don't know if your approach can improve."

For a fleet operator, there are clear advantages in operating a robust road traffic safety management system, says BSI.

Such a system, when properly implemented, will provide a fleet operator with a best practice framework for identifying and managing the

risks associated with drivers and vehicles.

BS ISO 39001 helps direct attention to addressing common, system-wide fatal and serious injury risk factors that they can influence. These include addressing areas such as safe speeds, driver impairment by alcohol, drugs and fatigue, use of appropriate safety equipment such as seatbelts and crash helmets, and safe journey planning.

It's too early to say whether achieving the standard will help drive down costs at Mark Group, which operates a fleet of 1,188 vehicles, but Bogg's focus on safety since joining the home energy efficiency company more than four years ago has already reaped rewards.

He said: "We've had four years where we've not been externally audited, but what we've seen in those four years is a reduction from 60% at-fault road traffic accidents down to 40%.

"We now expect that 40% to drop to 20% by 2014."

Working to a common, agreed industry standard can help avoid the devastating effects of death and serious injury as well as reduce costs from accident of all types, says BSI.

It will also help the fleet operator avoid or mitigate the subsequent costs to society and affected families.

"The management system specified in BS ISO 39001 is designed to help organisations focus their

RTS [road traffic safety] objectives and targets, and guides the planning of RTS activities," said Suzanne Fribbins, BSI risk product manager.

"By considering road traffic safety separately from health and safety policies and procedures, organisations can effectively mitigate risk in what is one of the highest risk work activities – driving for work."

A number of other companies are currently going through the process, but Mark Group became the first organisation to achieve the standard after being asked by BSI to help while it was being developed in October 2012.

"We were happy to get involved," said Bogg. "We had an established management system that they were aware of from previous audits and the whole process was very straightforward.

"Any business with a fleet worth its salt will at least have some sort of fleet procedures in place. BSI simply comes in and does the gap analysis and says you're here and you need to get to here, and this is what you need to get there."

Mark Group will now be assessed on an ongoing basis, with each of its 14 sites situated across the country being audited once every three years.

Kevin Cook, health and safety director at Mark Group, concluded: "The management system approach delivers structure, focus involvement, ownership and independent verification, all of which drive continual improvement, reduce costs and demonstrate commitment.

"Any company committed to improving its road safety will benefit from the introduction of BS ISO 39001, but so will every other road user as the approach will make our roads safer for all who use them."

■ Any organisation interested in finding out more about the road safety management standard should call BSI Assurance on 0845 080 9000 or email certification.sales@bsigroup.com

1,188
number of vehicles
in Mark Group's fleet

60%
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at-fault accidents



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