



A FLEET GUIDE TO DRIVERS' MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

FLEET&LEASING.COM

THE past year of COVID-19 and national lockdowns has had a devastating impact on the mental health of our nation. At the forefront of this have been professional drivers who, along with other essential workers, have been putting in the hours at times under extremely stressful circumstances.



- **Nearly 1 in 3 drivers have been working longer hours throughout the pandemic, with 25% covering other job roles and experiencing increased workloads.**
- **Tiredness and stress caused the biggest impact on their mindsets.**
- **35% of fleet drivers have seen their stress levels increase, correlating with a reported rise in working hours and workloads.**

Many people feel ashamed to admit they are suffering from poor mental health so it is important that employers and colleagues look out for the warning signs.

Recognising the warning signs

- ✘ **Aggression:** Negative appraisal of other drivers that tend to generate feelings of anger. Unreasonable response to stress situations by escalating the situation such as tailgating, road rage and cutting up other vehicles
- ✘ **Negativity:** Regular negative self-appraisal that generates worry and anxiety
- ✘ **Hazard Monitoring:** reflects the active monitoring for hazards to pre-empt threat by constantly being on the look-out and anticipating danger
- ✘ **Thrill-Seeking:** Enjoyment of danger and increased risk taking
- ✘ **Fatigue and apathy:** Vulnerability to suffer with driver fatigue and general lack of energy and alertness

HOW FLEET MANAGERS CAN HELP THEIR DRIVERS



SYMPTOM: Quieter, more distant or unreasonably irritable.

ACTION: Have a conversation. A 10 min chat can make all the difference.

Try to listen and help them to be open about their problems

SYMPTOM: Stress from overwork or struggling to complete schedules

ACTION: Get drivers involved in setting work schedules. Check in regularly and be prepared to make changes. Try to be adaptable as possible and work around other priorities such as their family commitments

SYMPTOM: Stress from external pressures such as home life, money issues

ACTION: Take an active interest in aspects outside of work and give drivers space to sort out problems

SYMPTOM: Fatigue, apathy and general poor health

ACTION: Encourage them to look after their own mental health by recognising symptoms. Encourage rest, exercise, hydration and healthy eating and developing a positive mental attitude such as practicing self-compassion and mindfulness

HOW FLEET MANAGERS CAN HELP THEIR DRIVERS



SUPPORT IN THE WORKPLACE

Ensure your drivers know you have their back. Simply recognising that drivers are under huge pressure and having some support systems in place will make a huge difference. Ultimately your employees have to trust that if they come to you with their problems this will not be held against them and they will be fully supported.

- ✓ Create a 'safe zone' mental health hub of people employees can turn to if they need help
- ✓ Ensure key personnel get mental health training as you would with First Aiders
- ✓ Be open and speak about mental health at work so you remove the stigma. Group discussions can be helpful as people will open up if they feel they are in a safe place
- ✓ Get and give feedback on a regular basis as this demonstrates a positive attitude to mental health issues
- ✓ Remind employees they are not alone Be compassionate and understanding during any discussions
- ✓ If people continue to struggle, encourage and support them to work with a mental health professional