

A Strategic Partnership to Increase Programme Reach of a Driver Fatigue Programme

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ABSTRACT

In 2003 the Land Transport Safety Authority reported 'driver tired' or 'fell asleep' being responsible for 6% of injury crashes. This correlates to Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) costs of approximately \$12,500,000 (6% of claims paid out of the Motor Vehicle Account). This is likely to be a low estimate as 'failed to keep left' and 'inattention' or 'attention diverted' may also be a result of the driver being tired; both feature as high contributors to injury and fatal crashes.

ACC therefore developed an education based Driver Fatigue programme targeting non-commercial drivers, where legislation and enforcement are not currently possible. A partnership has been developed between IAG New Zealand, a private insurance company, and ACC to increase the reach of ACC's Driver Fatigue programme. By reducing fatigue related crashes IAG recognises it could possibly reduce their claim liability.

This partnership includes ACC providing resources and technical knowledge in the area of driver fatigue. There are benefits for both companies and for the reach of injury prevention messages with this type of partnership. This has been a unique opportunity that could pave the way for future partnerships of this type beyond the issue of driver fatigue.

BACKGROUND

In 2003 the Land Transport Safety Authority¹ reported 'driver tired' or 'fell asleep' being responsible for 6% of injury crashes. This correlates to Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) costs of approximately \$12,500,000 (6% of claims paid out of the Motor Vehicle Account). This is likely to be a low estimate as 'failed to keep left' and 'inattention' or 'attention diverted' may also be a result of the driver being tired; both feature as high contributors to injury and fatal crashes.

There are a number of studies that estimate the true level of fatigue related crashes to be anywhere from 7%- 35%.² There are difficulties in determining the level of sleep related accidents because there is no simple, reliable way for an investigating police officer to determine whether fatigue was a factor in an accident, and if it was, what level of fatigue the driver was suffering.³ ACC therefore believes that the problem of driver fatigue is much more widespread than the Land Transport NZ crash data reports suggest and therefore needs to be addressed.

To date the focus of driver fatigue education in New Zealand has been on heavy vehicle drivers, with the addition of enforcement measures to reduce the risk of fatigue in these drivers. Very little widespread education targeting non-commercial drivers has occurred in the past in relation to this issue. There are currently no proven initiatives in the area of driver fatigue, ACC is therefore implementing a number of initiatives aligned with best road safety education practice.

The initiatives chosen have been based on American studies that identified three key groups at-risk of driver fatigue, which were; male drivers aged 16-29; shift workers; and people with sleep problems.⁴

There are three main areas that ACC has focused on for the Driver Fatigue programme:

1) High School Education

An educational resource, 'Wake Up' for year 11-13 students on sleep and fatigue and was distributed to all schools in NZ. This resource covered 65% of the Health and Physical Education curriculum. The resource is placed to provide education on the issue of fatigue at the same time students are learning to drive. This resource has been expanded to provide an NCEA qualification in sleep.

2) Community Education

Community based educational tools were developed, such as poster, brochure, wallet card and radio ads. Best practice guidelines for managing Driver Reviver Stops were also developed to provide some guidance for ACC's Injury Prevention Consultants to run these nationally.

3) Age Concern

An educational seminar on stress and fatigue will be run through Age Concern. Many people over the age of 65 years have difficulty sleeping or poor sleep patterns for a variety of reasons, these are explored and solutions discussed within this seminar.

This paper focuses on the Community Education component of ACC's driver fatigue programme and how this was expanded through a strategic partnership with IAG New Zealand, trading under the brand name State Insurance.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

In early 2005 IAG New Zealand approached ACC to discuss the possibility of ACC becoming a partner for their 'Driver Reviver' campaigns that they were running over the Easter break. IAG were looking for a partner who shares similar business and societal values, and who has synergies with the State brand. They believed that their 'Driver Reviver' programme, and subsequent partnership with ACC, aligned with one of their core company objectives, to proactively reduce risk in the local community. ACC was therefore invited to provide strategic, educational, personnel, and financial input into the proposed events.

Prior to this ACC was already involved in a number of community based education campaigns around the country, mainly in conjunction with local road safety coalitions, focussing on the issue of fatigue, which included Driver Reviver Stops, and appropriate resources had already been developed for use in these events. ACC saw the potential to reach more of the general driving population via the partnership with State thereby increasing the reach of our community Driver Fatigue programme.

Additionally the benefit of supporting a private insurance company in injury prevention work is invaluable for increasing the capacity (injury prevention skills and knowledge) within the community.

OUTCOMES

While the Driver Reviver Stops specifically run as a joint venture with ACC and IAG have not been evaluated ACC has evaluated other Driver Reviver Stops which use the same educational resources and were jointly run with community coalitions. The following are the high level results from BRC Marketing & Social Research evaluation.

Driver Reviver Stops are in fact reaching significant proportions of male motorists (52%) and are also relatively successful in targeting shift-workers (14%).

The general age profile of motorists stopping at a Driver Reviver Stops are somewhat older than the at-risk 16-29 year olds with only one quarter (14%) falling within that particular age range.

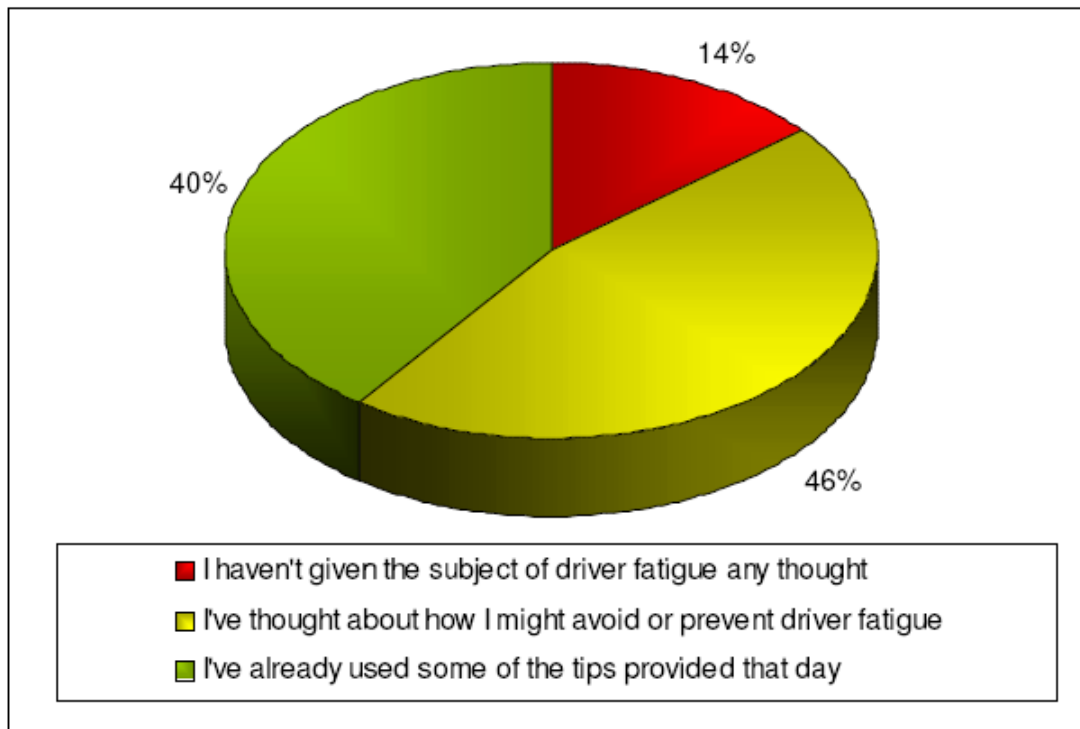
Approximately one third of respondents claimed to have stopped at the Driver Reviver Stop either for a break from driving (25%), or because they were feeling tired (17%).

Of the respondents who were able to recall receiving information on driver fatigue, at least half (51%) identified the key message of that information as being “stop and rest if you feel tired”. Other messages commonly recalled were:

- Don't drive when you're tired (22%).
- Stop and rest every 2 hours (22%)
- Driving while you're tired is dangerous (18%)

Since stopping at the Driver Reviver Stops, the majority of respondents reported that they have either used the tips provided or had at least thought about the ways in which they might avoid/prevent driver fatigue. Although 14% claimed to have not given the subject of driver fatigue any thought since the event, the overall level of reported action is a positive one.

Graph 5: Whether respondents had given driver fatigue any more thought (Phase 2, n=72)



CONCLUSIONS

Driver Reviver Stop experience appears to have made quite an impact on the motorists involved. Not only did a significant proportion of motorists report that the experience had made them more aware of driver fatigue, but 40% claimed to have already used the information/tips they picked up that day to help prevent driver fatigue.

ACC therefore believes that the use of Driver Reviver Stops is an effective delivery mechanism for education regarding driver fatigue.

An important outcome of ACC's involvement in State's 'Driver Reviver' initiative is the working relationship that has developed between the two companies. This relationship has the potential to increase reach of the driver fatigue programme via State's communications with their clients. Additional to this is the benefits of co-funding projects which improves both ACC's and IAG's return on investment.

It can also be seen that public perception of messages may be improved by the joint approach. For ACC having a private company support injury prevention messages adds weight to the message as the company is not mandated to provide these messages. For IAG having ACC as a partner adds credibility to the importance of the message they are delivering.

THE FUTURE

IAG have indicated a commitment to future Driver Reviver Stops. ACC has also committed to supporting their projects. Six further joint Driver Reviver Stops are

being planned for this financial year. These will continue to be evaluated so that improvements can be made.

ACC plans to work to expand the relationships between injury prevention programmes and the private insurance sector through direct marketing and networking.

REFERENCES

¹ Land Transport NZ (2003) Motor Vehicle Crashes in New Zealand.

²The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (2001) Driver Fatigue and Road Accidents - a literature review and position paper.

³ The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (2001) Driver Fatigue and Road Accidents - a literature review and position paper.

⁴NCSDR/NHTSA Expert Panel on Driver Fatigue & Sleepiness (1998) Drowsy Driving and Automobile Crashes, Report HS 808 707.