



PR LB 0112
14 May 2012

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Risky business: thousands of illegal company drivers in the UK

- **Over a thousand fatalities a year on British roads involve someone at work***
- **British company directors risk corporate manslaughter and Health and Safety charges, with unlimited fines and publicity orders , every time an illegal driver gets behind the wheel**

UK drivers are facing increasing danger on the roads as thousands of workers are driving illegally.

Based on the thousands of checks that it carries out every week, Licence Bureau, the UK's leading authority on driver qualifications, estimates that there are 24,000** people driving illegally for companies in Britain today. During 2011 Licence Bureau found that on average 1 in every 300 licences were invalid.

These statistics are shocking as it has been estimated that up to a third of all road traffic incidents involve somebody who is at work at the time. This may account for more than 20 fatalities and 250 serious injuries every week.

Licence Bureau, which verifies driving licences on behalf of businesses, discovered that of the non-compliant drivers that they checked: 43% were driving on a provisional licence, 31% were on a revoked licence and 9% were disqualified.

In addition a freedom of information request submitted by Licence Bureau to the DVLA also revealed that there were a total of 652,380 drivers in the UK with either disqualified or revoked licences. This substantial figure represents nearly 2% of the driver records held at DVLA.

Malcolm Maycock, chief executive of Licence Bureau, said: "Driving is the most dangerous activity that most employees undertake as part of their working day. Time and time again we



see drivers that have made false statements to their employers about their licences. When you consider the number of hours and number of miles a person does when driving for business you can understand why we say that the 'road risk' is magnified by 5 fold."

"We want all companies based in the UK to help play a part in making the nation's roads a safer place by checking the validity of their drivers' documents. In the long run they will be protecting their business interest as well as protecting the safety of others."

Martin Howard, spokesperson at Brake, said: "Checking driver licences is the most basic step in ensuring that drivers are safe on the road, and an absolutely fundamental part of being an ethically responsible business. By ignoring this responsibility, organisations place themselves at risk under the corporate manslaughter act, with huge financial and legal ramifications. Brake urges all organisations to embed a comprehensive policy to ensure that all drivers have valid licences, in order to ensure the safety of their staff, and the safety of other road users."

The Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007, which came into force from 6 April 2008 means that the employer is responsible for ensuring safety on the road and this includes checking all drivers are licenced to drive. Companies must ensure they have a robust process, procedure and audit related to work related road safety. The new law allows prosecution for gross failures in the management of health and safety within a company as a whole when it results in a death.

-ENDS-

* HSE - <http://www.healthyworkinglives.com/advice/workplace-hazards/driving-work.aspx>

**The Centre for Automotive Management at the University of Buckingham estimate 7.5 - 8.0 million people are entitled to drive for work each day (Professor Peter Cooke). On average Licence Bureau finds that 3 company motorists in every 1,000 are illegal.

***Of the remaining: 8% were foreign drivers, 8% were classified as other (including licences of the deceased, voluntary surrendered, does not hold a licence, motorbike only, not renewed, probationary driver (6 points in 2 years),surrendered) and 1% were on an expired licence.



About Licence Bureau

Licence Bureau currently checks licences for companies across a broad spectrum of sectors including clients who form over 20% of the FTSE 100. www.licencebureau.co.uk

About Brake

Brake is an independent road safety charity. Brake exists to stop the five deaths and 65 serious injuries that happen on UK roads every day and to care for families bereaved and seriously injured in road crashes. Brake runs awareness-raising campaigns, community education programmes, events such as Road Safety Week (19-25 November 2012), and a Fleet Safety Forum scheme, providing advice to companies. Brake's support division cares for road crash victims through a helpline and other services.