

In-the-Field Safety Training for City Truck Drivers in London, England

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Overview

Transport for London (TfL) is Greater London's local government body responsible for regional transportation. In 2011, TfL implemented a seven-hour Safe Urban Driving (SUD) course for truck drivers to improve truck operation safety in urban areas within the region. This training is comprised of a classroom module and a practical, on-bicycle module. To create demand for this training, TfL incorporated driver training requirements into two national voluntary certification programs for fleet safety. TfL and major infrastructure projects also require drivers of contracted fleets and drivers servicing city-permitted construction projects to complete SUD training.

TfL considers SUD training one of its most successful freight safety initiatives, with about 50,000 truck drivers (nearly 20 percent of all truck drivers in the United Kingdom [UK]) trained as of September 2017. More information is available at

<https://www.fors-online.org.uk/cms/safe-urban-driving/>.

Process

Between 2001 and 2010, there were 161 bicyclist fatalities in London; the majority of them involved crashes with large trucks. TfL calculated that a bicyclist was 78 times more likely to be killed in a collision involving a truck than a collision that involved a car. These statistics led TfL to recognize that urban truck driving is very different from open-road driving, and that truck drivers needed to have greater awareness of the hazards posed by trucks to bicyclists. This led to the development of SUD training to ensure the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians riding or walking in urban environments, in close vicinity to truck movements.

In 2012, TfL began to require SUD training for drivers of city-contracted companies as part of its Work-Related Road Risk (WRRR) requirements, which are a set of enhanced road safety standards applied to city-contracted fleets. Since then, TfL has included WRRR clauses in all new contracts with city suppliers using commercial vehicles. TfL also amended over 600 existing contracts to include WRRR clauses. Recognizing the steady but slow pace of SUD training adoption, TfL advocated strongly for this training by presenting powerful evidence to real estate developers that encouraged them to require WRRR requirements specific to their supply chain (these requirements became known as the Construction Logistics and Community

Key Accomplishments

- Trained approximately 50,000 UK truck drivers on safe urban driving as of September 2017.
- Significant reduction in injury crashes involving trained operators.
- New forms of collaboration among city departments, truck operators, and freight receivers.

Safety [CLOCS] standards). After several large developers adopted CLOCS standards, others followed until a critical mass demonstrated that it was possible to require SUD training across the industry. Following the success of this voluntary effort, it became politically feasible to introduce the first regulatory requirement in March 2016, when City of London construction permits began requiring developers to mandate SUD training for their supply chains.

Having SUD training is also a prerequisite for fleets seeking accreditation through the Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme (FORS), a national voluntary certification program for fleet safety.

Outcomes and Evaluation

TfL licensed its SUD training at no cost to 19 commercial driver training providers, which offer courses around the UK. TfL estimates that 500-600 truck drivers are trained each month through these providers. TfL has also developed a data-sharing protocol with commercial training providers to maintain a registry of trained drivers and logistics companies.

To measure results, TfL investigates crashes between a truck and a bicyclist or pedestrian that led to a fatality or serious injury, to determine whether the involved truck driver had completed SUD training. TfL reports that the crash rates of trained drivers are significantly lower than those of untrained drivers, showing that the SUD program is achieving its goals.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

TfL's greatest challenge in implementing SUD training was the time and effort expended on re-negotiating existing city contracts. For cities seeking to replicate the SUD program, TfL recommends incorporating training requirements only into new contracts.

SUD Training Overview



Figure 1. On-bicycle practical module for truck driver SUD training (Source: Fleet Source).

The SUD training consists of:

- **Half-day classroom session** focused on identifying and driving safely in the presence of bicyclists and pedestrians.
- **Half-day, hands-on module**, in which drivers ride on bikes to areas of potential conflict including intersections, traffic lights, and advanced stop lines on urban roads. This aims to provide practical, on-road experience so that truck drivers understand how and why collisions with bicyclists occur and what they as drivers can do to prevent them.

Another challenge was ensuring effective marketing and clear messaging of the program to ensure broad adoption by the trucking industry. TfL found that creating consistent branding for the program, including spending extra effort to develop a crisp logo and website, was essential. Additionally, it was important to remove government logos to make the SUD program “look and feel” like an industry-led program.

TfL’s procurement-based, “lead by example” model has U.S. parallels in the City of Boston’s (Massachusetts) truck side guard ordinance and the San Francisco (California) Municipal Transportation Agency’s (SFMTA) Large Vehicle Urban Driving Safety Program. Both initiatives establish safety requirements for city contractors. For the SUD training model to succeed in the U.S. however, TfL believes that private sector businesses need to require their contractors to use truck drivers trained in safe urban driving. In turn, this requires logistics companies to acknowledge the importance of safe urban driving.

To replicate the SUD program in U.S. cities, TfL specifically recommends the following:

- **Repurpose existing training programs.** Consider how SUD training can be incorporated into existing resources, such as the SFMTA Large Vehicle Urban Driving Safety Program or Safe Routes to School program bicycle training.

- **Align with existing requirements.** TfL designed the SUD training to count as one of the five days of training required for UK commercial drivers every five years, providing truck drivers a new option for compliance.
- **Follow a three-step rollout process:** 1) “Lead by example” by adding requirements for SUD training to public-sector procurements; 2) Educate and encourage private receivers to voluntarily require their contractors to take SUD training; and 3) Mandate that private receivers require SUD training in their contracts with suppliers as part of existing permitting mechanisms.

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