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Risk control
Police Motor Fleets



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Risk Control

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Context

This briefing document is designed to provide a background to changes in police operations that have led to the current status quo regarding training and operational activity principally around driving and its associated risks.

The past 10 years has seen massive changes to the management of police fleets. These changes include:

- Collaboration
- Joint Procurement procedures
- Identification and Use of second hand part

In addition to these changes the landscape regarding how these vehicles operate has also radically changed in line with how criminals and terrorists have used vehicles to achieve their goals. Police fleets have had to revise what are seen as 'acceptable' procedures to deal with the vast rise in street vehicle robberies.

Historically the use of pursuit tactics let alone tactical contact to deal with motorcycle and moped criminality was unacceptable. This approach by law enforcement agencies would appear to have been capitalised upon by criminals of all ages resulting in inner cities being plagued by moped robberies, ride by shootings and other property based criminality.

With the embedding of the College of Policing into the governance landscape for policing we have seen a coming together of best practice and delivery of national 'Approved Professional Practice' for almost all police related activity including driving.

Vehicle Management

Most forces now operate within a group of authorities to obtain best practice, fit for purpose vehicles mapped to their service delivery need. This change has not been pain free and definitely as a need to reduce the purchase price of vehicles. Now vehicles are purchased with ongoing considerations as to power output and the training being delivered and force policy regarding limits on use. With many forces writing off anywhere up to 60 vehicles per year through general road traffic incidents and tactical contact, the cost over the recent years has risen massively.

This resultant increase in vehicle attrition makes leasing unpalatable for most forces due to the ongoing associated costs.

A further change due to this is that fleet sizes are in the main shrinking resulting in a major increase in the hiring of non-operational vehicles for day to day usage. These considerations need to be borne in mind at renewal times as these vehicles are in many cases not accounted for yet hired to the ongoing policy.

Most forces have created relationships with the second hand parts market resulting in 'specialised' police parts suppliers who purchase old and destroyed vehicles and salvage usable parts to be sold back to the police market. A further benefit from the national system is that the high visibility markings now are standard so that purchasing a second hand part allows for it to be 'bolted on' and then immediately rolled out with no need for further painting. This further reduces costs. Some forces even now employ assessors for the purpose of challenging repair estimates focussing on what is actually required.

Training

The latest training guidance delivered by the College of Policing in 2016 set the current training standards and requires all in house driver training centres to be 'approved' by the College. They do this through on line assessment with follow up in house checks at three to four yearly intervals. The Police Service Quality Management System (PSQMS) is used across many disciplines including firearms assessment to ensure training is consistently delivered nationally.

Authorised Professional Practice (APP) is designed to deliver an achievable consistency to the training required to meet function. It is the official guidance to police at all levels. Police Forces and Officers are required to give due diligence to this guidance when discharging their responsibilities. Should a person or force deviate from this guidance then it would be for them to show why such operations were necessary. A full list of APP is available for public consumption at the following College of Policing web address;

<https://www.app.college.police.uk/>

The APP for police driving can be accessed at;

<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/road-policing-2/police-driving/>

Approved Professional Practice is made available to the public so that the public can hold to account its servants. Some additional materials are not available for public scrutiny and these are the 'tactics directories'. These documents are there to provide the police with the necessary guidance on how to deliver certain functions. These documents are marked as 'sensitive' so are not deemed public documents.

APP driver training provides the parameters for forces when delivering this high risk function. It outlines what the trainee is required to meet, how it should be assessed and also how often drivers are required to be 'refreshed' due to skill fade.

It must be noted that APP is a minimum standard and some forces exceed its requirements.

One of the main risks that forces currently hold is that of the non-operational driver which includes all staff. Historically most forces would have assessed each driver before allowing them to drive for police purposes. Due to the constraints of the past 10 years this has been removed by most forces who now accept the delivery of an in date licence as sufficient. There is no management of the driving risk when it is a generic driving duty until it meets the minimum response threshold at which point APP becomes the guide. In the same way drivers accessing police driver training courses have full licence checks in place whereas non-operational drivers are required to reveal issues that affect their licence with little if any testing in place.

Control & Management

Historically there was almost an invisible wall between operational delivery and the management of such functions. Officers were allowed 'discretion' in how they delivered the skills trained. This discretion has over the recent few years been reined in providing more ongoing operational management with high risk situations such as pursuits. Many 'non-operational' managers who historically would have taken a back seat through such events as pursuits are now actively managed and have the authority to require a pursuit to stop. They objectively dynamically risk assess incidents using the 'National Decision Model'. Where the risks increase they have additional responsibility beyond the on sight manager to halt police action.

Part of this control is due to the external scrutiny from organisations such as the Independent Office of Police Conduct (IOPC) formerly the IPCC. This now works with the College of Policing providing feedback where appropriate that informs amendment to the APP.

The Police Federation of England and Wales are currently seeking amendment to Road Traffic legislation to provide police trained drivers with exemptions to sections 2 & 3, Dangerous and Careless driving recognising the 'special' training provided and the nature of the task that the public require them to deliver.

Telematics

It is understood that 18 Forces across England and Wales and additionally Police Scotland are in the process of procuring a UK based telematics solution. This is, apparently, in line with College of Policing approval. This could signal a major change to the use of telematics by blue light services. It is understood that the solution is in the main being appropriated for fleet and non-operational uses such as fuel efficiency, vehicle location measurement and identifying how vehicles are actually used. It is vitally important that this opportunity to influence driver training and remedial driver intervention methodology is not lost. Telematics can be used to radically update traditional blue light driver training approaches whereby all drivers are subject to time based refreshers rather than need identification. This approach is not only more cost effective but is based around driver risk identification and subsequently proper management.

In addition the procurement process was heavily focussed towards a UK based 'cloud' only option as obtaining material from non UK cloud based operations can be hindered due to variants in legislation.

GB Risk Consulting has a telematics solution that supports this initiative yet is flexible enough to support all blue light and other fleet driven needs irrespective of size.

Support & Development

GB Risk Consultancy has vast experience of and a proven track record for supporting Blue Light Services achieving major reductions in collisions and uninsured losses through avoidable driving incidents. Our fleet risk specialists work with the organisation to identify the individual needs of the Force to ensure that any intervention activity is focussed to achieve maximum benefit. All training and techniques are founded in both long term experience and robust research at the highest levels. They work to identify the best, most practical and cost effective support interventions and provide the necessary training to ensure that the Service can make the necessary improvements.

In addition our specialists focus on organisational and individual defensibility providing opportunities for the Force to provide robust defences to future legal actions thus ensuring that wherever possible the current levels of fiscal haemorrhaging are reduced significantly.

Should you require any further information then please make contact with one of our specialists below.

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Further information

For access to further RMP Resources you may find helpful in reducing your organisation's cost of risk, please access the RMP Resources or RMP Articles pages on our website. To join the debate follow us on our LinkedIn page.

Get in touch

For more information, please contact your RMP risk control consultant or account director.

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