



3M Minimises Motor Accidents - And Injuries!

Risk management has become a leading issue in both the fleet and insurance markets since the advent of the Government's Corporate Manslaughter Bill. Firms are now bound to prove that they have adequate duty of care provisions for their company car drivers.

In this respect, few firms can boast a record to rival that of diversified technology company 3M, recently voted third most innovative company in the world in a poll of more than 1,000 senior executives.

The worldwide US corporation, which counts Post-it Notes and Scotch tape among its 55,000 different products, has a UK fleet of 800 cars for management, sales and technical staff and an annual average road traffic accident rate of just 26% over the last seven years - 10% down on previous years and delivering savings of around £55,000 per annum in the process.

3M insurance premiums have also remained static since the turn of the millennium, as have accident repair costs. Crash rates, premiums and repair costs, however, hardly compare with a personal injury record of just three per annum on average over recent years.



As 3M insurance executive Martin Dobson puts it: "You can always repair a piece of metal."

3M's insurance is 3rd party only, with 3M funding the cost of all its own motor accident repairs. This provides the company with extra incentive to take risk management seriously.

Its programme in this respect revolves around outsourcing its entire accident management since 2000 to WNS Assistance, which currently handles 350,000 claims a year on behalf of fleets, insurers and brokers.

"The first benefit of using a specialist service is that it saves an enormous amount of driver and administrative time as, following an accident, one call is all it takes to offload the entire responsibility for any repairs," explains Mr Dobson.

What's more, WNS's real-time online motor claims monitoring facility, Motorguard, has enabled 3M to identify high-risk drivers, together with the causes of their accidents.

In turn, this has facilitated targeted driver training, which Mr Dobson believes is essential to reducing accident rates and personal injuries, and, in the process provided further downward pressure on repair costs and insurance premiums - the virtuous circle of a successful risk management policy.

"The risk management programme has already reduced the number of accidents from one-in-three to one-in-four per annum and we hope to get it lower still," said Mr Dobson. "This is what accident management really means, after all, not just dealing with those that have already occurred, but doing everything possible to prevent further accidents. Prevention is always better than repair."

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Outsourcing also ensures that downtime is minimised and costs controlled, but not at the expense of the quality of repair.”
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Among its many innovative products, 3M manufactured the materials used to make the space boots Neil Armstrong wore when he became the first man to walk on the moon in 1969. The astronaut famously declared: "One small step for man," as he stepped onto the moon's surface. 3M might similarly be said to have made a significant first step in its risk management strategy.

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