



The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents

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COMPANY CARS NEXT FOR "BIG BROTHER" BLACK BOXES?

Company car drivers should be the next in line for black boxes like those being fitted in London police cars, The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents said today.

Over the next three years the Metropolitan Police will fit black boxes in 2,900 patrol cars in a bid to reduce police collisions. The recorders will register speed and acceleration information, whether the siren and warning lights were on and other details which will help accident investigators. They will check how the car is being driven 30 seconds before and 15 seconds after an accident.

Dave Rogers, RoSPA Road Safety Adviser, said: "Black box recorders can be an invaluable tool for accident investigators. We welcome the police trial and believe that eventually the idea will be taken up by other forces and company fleet managers.

"Some drivers may see black boxes as 'big brother' devices used to apportion blame, but we believe that used properly, they will help prevent accidents.

"More sophisticated devices will allow fleet managers to assess employees' driving skills throughout a complete journey, taking into account matters like speed, braking and cornering. Any problems with driving style can be spotted on the black box read-out and measures taken to correct them. Appropriate training can be given to help overcome faults.

"Fleet managers will be able to put things right before they go wrong. RoSPA strongly believes employers have a duty to protect their staff at work, including while driving. Every journey should be managed, and black boxes will assist in achieving that goal."

Dave Rogers said black boxes would help companies manage occupational road risk, particularly those who found it difficult to monitor employees driving at present.

Company car drivers had a poor accident record and the problem was being looked at by the inter-agency task force investigating work-related road accidents.

"I believe that fleet managers should seriously consider fitting black boxes to their cars," he said.

RoSPA believes that people driving as part of their job are likely to be linked with nearly a quarter of Britain's road fatalities and runs Managing Occupational Road Risk courses in a bid to cut accidents.

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