Our strategy for health and safety at the Highways Agency | aiming for zero
Our vision for health and safety at the Highways Agency

“Our aim is that as an employer, designer and a leading client, nobody comes to harm as a result of their work for us”
Foreword

We set out a bold vision in our Strategic Plan, to be the world's leading road operator. I believe that a leading operator is a safe operator and with Aiming for Zero we have set out a similarly bold vision for the health and safety of our workforce.

The rationale for this is clear. Every year a small number of people continue to die and suffer serious injury while working on the Strategic Road Network. This is unacceptable and we must do more to protect our workers.

Aiming for Zero is our response. It sets an unambiguous goal for our health and safety performance, confirms the Agency's leadership role in the industry and brings together health and safety work across the whole business.

To deliver the vision we have put in place an overarching strategy for four key areas: road workers, construction and maintenance workers, traffic officers and office-based staff. Aiming for Zero is not about discrete groups, however, and we cannot deliver it alone. We need all of our people, both within the Agency and our supply chain, to work together and take action across the business.

That means taking practical steps to drive forward our Aiming for Zero action plans. It also means showing health and safety leadership in everything we do – challenging unsafe activities, reporting accidents and near misses, and proactively integrating health and safety in our projects. I will be a champion for this vision and I hope that you will join me as we Aim for Zero.

April 2010
Why Aim for Zero?

Our people have delivered great improvements on the road network over the past five years, improving road user safety, journey time reliability and network capacity.

The number of fatalities and serious injuries suffered by our workers has declined in this period, but road works, construction and traffic management remain some of the highest risk professional environments and people continue to die and suffer serious injury as a result of working for us.

Meanwhile in our offices and regional control centres, while the health and safety risks are lower, we also want to work towards no injuries in our workplaces.

As an employer, designer and leading client, we want to improve the health and safety of our workers. We have therefore developed the Aiming for Zero vision and strategy to clearly state what we are aiming for and to provide a framework for driving improvements across our business.
Action in four operational areas

We recognise that our business is complex and that levels of risk are higher in some parts of our work than others. We also recognise that we rely on our supply chain to deliver many of our front line services to our customers. Achieving our vision will require a strong focus across all parts of our business, and this strategy commits us to action in four operational areas.

- Construction and maintenance workers
- Road workers
- Traffic officers and control room staff
- Office and RCC-based staff
Construction and maintenance workers

Our asset management activities are central to the Agency's purpose. We are a major UK client for construction work and a leading government organisation procuring and managing road construction and maintenance across England.

- We will eliminate all fatalities, serious injuries and long-term ill health to construction workers maintaining our network.

- The Highways Agency will be recognised as world class in health and safety in relation to our asset management and network operator roles.

- We will be considered as an exemplar client in terms of our client and designer activities under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations.
Road workers

This group of workers* is acknowledged in our industry as being at high risk of fatal and serious injury, especially during the placing and removal of temporary traffic management. Our Aiming for Zero Road Worker Safety Strategy, launched in November 2009, sets the goals for the next two years and beyond.

- We will eliminate all fatalities, serious injuries and long-term ill health to road workers maintaining our network, with a significant reduction in carriageway crossings over the next two years, and a goal of eliminating the need for workers to be on the live carriageway by 2016

- We will highlight the importance of road workers and the job they do, by raising the awareness of road users and influencing their behaviour at road works

- We will actively work with our supply chain and stakeholders to enhance our safety performance by sharing best practice and improving communication

*Road workers include all operatives working on the Agency’s network who are directly exposed to risk from network users. These include all workers contracted to work for the Agency in traffic management activities and incident support services, maintenance and renewal schemes, vehicle recovery operators and any other activities where live traffic is present.
On-road traffic officers and control room staff

Our Traffic Officer Service is now well established. It is evolving over time with new and complex challenges in service delivery. Our front line staff work in a high risk on-road environment and our control centre operatives make critical decisions which directly affect road users.

- We will ensure that our systems, procedures and capability fully reflect the nature of the work environment of our Traffic Officer Service

- We will integrate health and safety risk management systems across the service

- We will ensure that traffic officers continue to exhibit safe behaviours in delivering their duties
Our staff based in main offices, regional control centres and other locations

We recognise that to achieve significant improvement in our health and safety performance, all of our staff need to understand our commitment, feel part of the process of change and have an opportunity to contribute personally to the journey.

- All our people will understand the risks involved in their working environment and behave appropriately at all times.

- Anyone that visits our offices will be aware that health and safety performance is very important to us, through the active provision of information and instructions to them and by the use of performance information displayed at entry points and other key locations.

- We will simplify our management arrangements for health and safety to aid understanding and compliance.

- We will develop and implement workshops and road-shows to engage our people and increase compliance with internal controls.
Organisation-wide actions to enhance performance

In addition to action in the four operational areas, we have committed to a series of activities designed to improve health and safety across the business.

- We will provide user friendly and co-ordinated advice and guidance, to enable our business to effectively manage health and safety

- Our decisions will be informed by an up-to-date health and safety risk register

- We will enhance our risk-based assurance programme to ensure that our procedures are adhered to and they are in line with current best practice

- We will deliver effective and timely communication of lessons learnt

- Our Senior Management Team will show leadership on health and safety, by active involvement in a programme of safety tours and inspections, and by effective use of our Health and Safety Group to drive progress

- We will investigate the benefits of seeking accreditation to a recognised health and safety standard by the end of 2012
Putting Aiming for Zero into action

Aiming for Zero is an overarching strategy and vision. Each of the commitments set out in this strategy will be driven forward by supporting strategies and action plans for each operational area.

Our board directors are responsible for delivering Aiming for Zero strategies.

- **Road workers:** Ginny Clarke, Director of Network Services (coordination role as chair of Road Worker Safety Forum, in partnership with Network Delivery and Development and Major Projects directorates)
- **Construction and maintenance:** Derek Turner, Director of Network Delivery and Development, Nirmal Kotecha, Director of Major Projects
- **Traffic officers:** Simon Sheldon-Wilson, Director of Traffic Management
- **Office-based staff:**
  Steve Williams, Director of Business Services.

The following members of the National Health and Safety team are responsible for supporting directors and their teams in delivering the Aiming for Zero vision:

- **Construction and maintenance:**
  Stephen Williams, Health and Safety Team Leader
- **Road workers:** Paul Mitchell, Head of Health and Safety
- **Traffic officers:**
  Andy Stocks, Health and Safety Team Leader
- **Office-based staff:**
  John Hadley, Senior Safety Advisor

To contact the National Health and Safety team, please email NH&ST@highways.gsi.gov.uk or call 0117 372 8696.
Breakthrough ceremony at the A3 Hindhead Tunnel, Surrey.