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## Health and Safety

### New corporate manslaughter laws from April 2008

Lawyers are warning that firms up and down the country are failing to grasp the implication of a forthcoming new Act of Parliament.

**New laws** will come into force from April next year as part of the Corporate Manslaughter Act which means firms could end up in court facing charges of causing death by negligence.

**There are no new duties** or obligations under the Act, but it does require companies and organisations to comply with existing health and safety law or be exposed to liability to prosecution under the new offence of corporate manslaughter.

**Firms which fail** to ensure staff drive safely in their company car are likely to be a prime target for new Corporate Manslaughter legislation. Police will check that staff are properly insured, have an MoT test for their vehicles and have a valid driving license. They will also check that managers are not making excessive demands on employees by forcing them to drive when tired.

The Metropolitan Police is one of several forces who are seriously investigating the safety of driving in company cars. Superintendent Mark Bird, from the Metropolitan Police, said: "It is vital that firms ensure their employees are properly trained and supervised when driving company cars. We will be targeting firms that are not doing this."



**Health & Safety Executive Infoline**  
0845 345 0055

**Check your policy to cover your employees:**

- valid driving licenses,
- all vehicles insured for business use with a valid MOT certificate,
- regularly maintain their vehicles;
- and report accidents in non-company vehicles.\*

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