



# Stimulating traffic safety of (lorry-) vans by enhancing the company's safety culture

In the last years social conscience has grown that road safety of (lorry-) vans knows its own specific problems. Statistics in the Netherlands show that vans are more often involved in road accidents with severe consequences. The assumption is that this is due to a combination of factors related to the drivers, the van itself, and involved companies.

## SAFETY OF (LORRY-) VANS

Companies, e.g. service companies, carpenters, couriers should be aware that by enhancing their safety culture, they can influence the driver's safety behaviour and so injuries and damage related to (traffic-) safety. Earlier study into road safety culture in freight has shown already that the motivation for road safety goes further than the motivation of the driver(s) himself: aspects of the company or the role of supervisors and management are of vital importance for the degree in which road safety gets attention.

In this study we have looked at the characteristics of companies using lorry vans that are determinative for the degree in which a company is prepared to invest in road safety, especially with regard to those with hardly any intrinsic motivation for safety. Also we looked for measures that connect with the primary process (the corebusiness). In general, safety measures are more accepted, more effective and even more efficient as they connect to the company's corebusiness (Gort & Starren, 2006).

## METHODS

Ten companies have been recruited for company visits. Interviews were kept with a (general) manager, a safety officer or fleet manager, and with representative from the workforce. Based on the interviews a difference was made between companies with little or no attention to safety on the one hand (reactive safety culture) and companies that already pay attention to safety (proactive safety culture).

Also, the linking factors between safety and the corebusiness have been listed according to the Safety@corebusiness® model. This has led to a list of potential favorable measures per safety culture phase that fit with the primary processes. This list has been reviewed with representatives from the sector, based on their acceptance and effectiveness in the sector, particularly for the reactive companies.



## KEY ASPECTS OF THE SAFETY@COREBUSINESS® MODEL (GORT & STARREN, 2006).

### 1. The corebusiness, described in terms of:

- Activities (core activities the company performs in its work processes);
- Values (core values shared among management and all employees);
- Competencies (core competencies necessary for the work processes incl. individual and collective learning).

### 2. Safety characteristics, described in terms of:

- Safety structure (all structures, systems and processes, relations between departments and employees and pattern of interactions, installed to ensure production in a safe manner);
- Safety culture (all shared values, norms, perceptions and assumptions about safety and risks);
- Learning in Safety (how the organization and individual employees learn from earlier experiences).

## RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Companies with a different phase of safety culture also differ in their general business structures, cultural values and learning processes. Therefore different safety measures are suggested per safety culture phase.

- Companies that already invest in (road safety (proactive culture): the incorporation of road safety in existing internal quality, safety and environment management systems, in HRM systems, and in integrated concepts such as CSR and monitoring of best practices.

- Companies that lack the intrinsic motivation to invest in road safety

(pathological/ reactive safety culture): implementation of a boardcomputer/ blackbox for registration, analyses and feedback. This provides insight in the negative (or better positive) consequences of unsafe (safe) behavior on which feedback can be returned. It also improves a culture of learning/ continuous improvement, efficiency (less incidents and related recovery time, a smooth process) and the development of employees competencies.

The challenge for the future will be to measure the effects of implemented safety programs and measures as mentioned above.

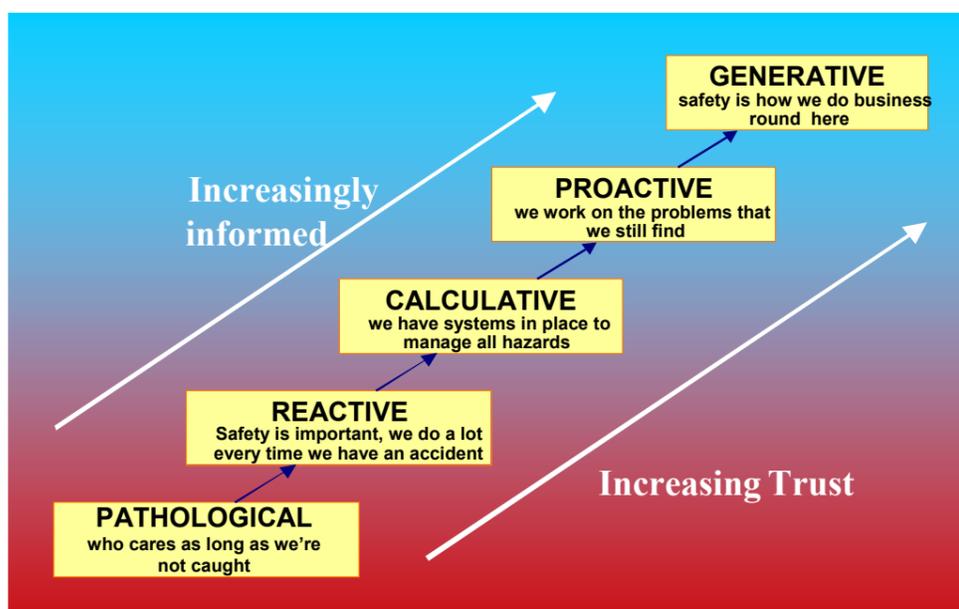


Figure 1 shows the passage of a pathological safety culture to a generative safety culture. As the figure shows, an increasing faith and so-called 'informedness' (= openness to information) are the necessary conditions for a development of safety culture through the phases.

Source: **Hearts and Minds Safety Culture Step Ladder**, <http://www.energyinst.org.uk/heartsandminds>