

# The truth about business travel in personal vehicles

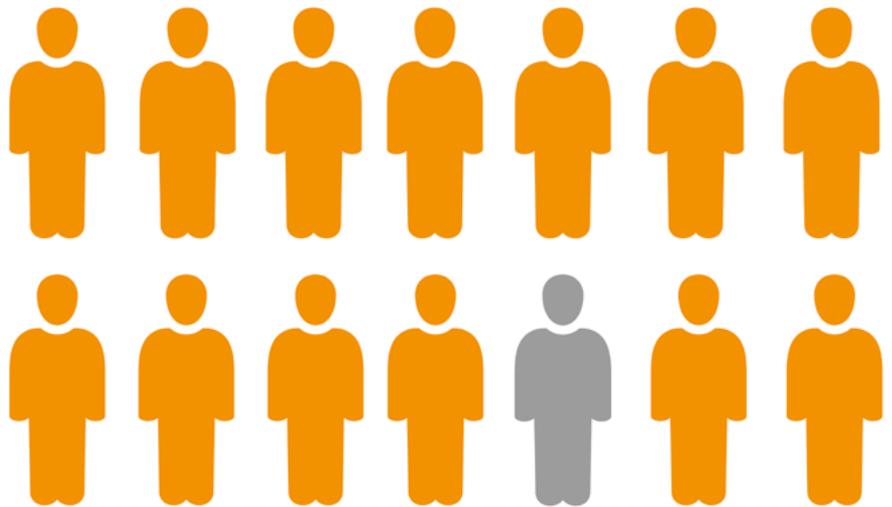
## How you and your staff can avoid the 'grey fleet' pitfalls.

As a business owner or manager, you should already be aware of your obligations and 'duty of care' regarding employees using their own vehicles for business. Unfortunately however, awareness is not enough. Many SMEs are simply not taking adequate steps to protect themselves from prosecution. Find out now what you can do to make sure your business is not caught out.

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Many employees don't travel enough business miles to warrant having a company vehicle. But as an employer, as soon as you ask someone to nip to the post office, pick up supplies, or attend an off-site meeting or training course – if they travel in their own car, you are immediately taking a business risk.

The range of potential issues is vast and, contrary to popular belief, problems can arise even without an accident occurring. If your employee is stopped simply for having unsafe tyres for example, it can quickly escalate into a problem that the business has to deal with. Clearly employees have responsibilities – it is their car after all – however it is vital that the business can actually prove it has taken its duty of care responsibilities seriously. So what exactly can you do?



Firstly, make regular checks, at least annually, to make sure employees have a valid driving licence, are fit to drive, have appropriate insurance cover, the vehicle they use has a current MOT and is road-worthy, and that they are familiar with the company policy on business travel. Most importantly, make sure you have viewed original documents, not photocopies, and are keeping formal records.

Doing everything correctly can become an administrative burden, particularly if you have more than a few employees travelling on business in their own cars. If it is too much to handle, take a look at the third party services that are available for grey fleets from companies such as Lombard Vehicle Solutions. These include everything from checking licences with DVLA to MOT reminders, and can be a real time-saver.

Secondly, make sure every single employee is fully aware of what they need to do. This includes being aware of safe driving practices and taking adequate breaks on longer journeys. It's worth considering having a formal policy that each individual needs to sign. Another useful approach is to put a self-declaration on mileage expense claim forms so that employees have to confirm every time they claim business miles that everything is in order. If you have any

reservations at all, it's far safer to refuse permission altogether than take the risk and get caught out.

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Thirdly, if there are lots of business journeys, consider investing in a pool car for communal use, or investigate short term or daily hire for those ad hoc occasions when a vehicle really is needed. This removes the 'roadworthiness' issues and will also prompt licence checks each time.

Of course the other practical solution is to suggest other forms of transport or car sharing with company car drivers. Thinking creatively about all the potential transport options rather than letting individuals simply jump into their own car at the first opportunity could make a huge difference

If you would like to find out more about what Lombard Vehicle Solutions could do for you, or would like to see our vehicle special offers, please click [here](#).

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