

THE FATE OF FATAL FRIDAY PHENOMENON

Submitted by: Chelgate

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More people working and commuting smarter will lead to the demise of Fatal Friday Phenomenon, according to Work Wise UK on the last day of Commute Smart Week.

The Annual Road Casualties report covering 2007 show a drop in deaths and serious injuries at peak times on a Friday. Past statistics have shown that more accidents happen on a Friday, and particularly between the hours of 4pm and 6pm, than at any other time.

Phil Flaxton, chief executive of Work Wise UK, said: "The benefits of smarter working and commuting have been demonstrated throughout Commute Smart Week, now in its third year, and the messages are obviously getting through.

"More and more people are working flexibly and from home. That is why road traffic and congestion patterns are changing, especially on Fridays, a favourite day to work from home or to go home early. The fall in road accidents and deaths is a welcomed benefit of this success."

Analysis by AA road safety experts has found that last year there were fewer people killed or seriously injured on Fridays from 8am – 9am and from 5pm- 6pm compared to the average rates for the same hours between Monday and Thursday.

The AA and Work Wise UK believe that this may be due to a change in working patterns over the last eight years. The AA analysed peak period figures for accidents over the last eight years and found that the "Fatal Friday" phenomenon is on the decline in peak periods. In the past the higher accident rates in the Friday evening rush hour was put down to more traffic, tired drivers at the end of the week and the "Thank God its Friday" effect leading to lack of concentration.

Traffic is still higher on Fridays and the highest evening peak delays were experienced on Fridays. Average delay patterns for Fridays were distinctly different from the other days of the week. The morning peak was lower than other weekdays and evening peak had a much earlier build up, starting from mid-day. By 2pm on Fridays congestion was same as morning delays mid-week.

Edmund King, AA president, said: "Changes in our working patterns appear to be having an effect on the roads. In the past the Friday rush hour resulted in far more accidents but more flexible working seems to have diminished the fatal Friday phenomenon. Changing the way we work can change our lives in more ways than one. However, in overall terms Fridays on the road still experience the most delays and most deaths. Further increases in flexible working would result in fewer delays and fewer deaths."

Commute Smart Week has run during this week and covered different aspects of smarter commuting such as Work Travel Plans, cycling, walking, health and road congestion/road safety. It is organised by Work Wise

UK, a the Government-backed not-for-profit campaigning body with members that include the TUC, CBI, British Chambers of Commerce, BT, Transport for London and the ACT TavelWise.

Ends

Notes to Editors

The AA analysis shows:

In 2007 the average number killed or seriously injured between 8 – 9am on Mondays to Thursdays was 287 compared to 251 on Friday. 36 less on Friday.

In 2000 the average number killed or seriously injured between 8 – 9am on Mondays to Thursdays was 370 compared to 408 on Friday. 38 more on Friday.

In 2007 the average number killed or seriously injured between 5 –6pm on Mondays to Thursdays was 377 compared to 356 on Friday. 21 less on Friday.

In 2000 the average number killed or seriously injured between 5-6pm on Mondays to Thursdays was 516 compared to 590 on Friday. 75 more on Friday.

Despite improvements in peak periods Friday still holds the “Fatal Friday” label in terms of total numbers killed or seriously injured on Fridays compared to other days of the week. This is down to more traffic, people getting away for the weekend and the drink drive effect on Friday evenings.

In 2007 the average number killed or seriously injured Mondays to Thursdays was 4,202 compared to 4,877 on Fridays.

In 2000 the average number killed or seriously injured Mondays to Thursdays was 5,531 compared to 6,929.

- Work Wise UK is organised by the IT Forum Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation.
- Supporters of the Work Wise UK campaign include the CBI, TUC, the British Chambers of Commerce, BT, Transport for London, Equal Opportunities Commission, Scope, the RAC Foundation, Institution of Occupational Safety and Health, Technology Means Business, Henley Management College and the Association for Commuter Transport.
- A dedicated electronic media centre has been established for journalists to obtain further information, to download print-quality materials, and to register for media updates about Work Wise UK. This can be accessed either through the main website or directly at www.workwiseuk.pressrooms.net.
- Further information about Work Wise UK can be found on the website www.workwiseuk.org.

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