

Young Drivers at Work Workshop

Activity Five: The Causes of At-work Road Crashes

Crash Scenario 2: Sales Rep

Natalie, 23, works in sales for a large national company. Her job didn't involve much driving for work, but occasionally Nat drove to one of the company's other offices or to visit a client. Mostly clients' offices were in city centres or suburbs and could involve several hours' driving, mainly on motorways or larger A roads.

Nat passed her test on the first attempt when she was 17 although didn't have a car when she went to university in Newcastle.* Having said that, she'd made up for that lack of experience recently driving around 30,000 miles a year, mainly for her job but also going up the A1 back to Newcastle on occasional weekends to see friends. The weekend before the accident she had done just that, and got back at 3am on Monday.

On Tuesday morning, Nat was up early to make the trip from York to Coventry to see a client. Her work had lent her one of the pool cars the day before to make the trip. The meeting was at 10:30 am just outside of Coventry city centre; planning for traffic, Nat left the house at 7am. It was good she planned for a bit of traffic too, as an overturned lorry on the opposite side of the M1 had meant a lane was shut. Frustratingly, this meant that she couldn't make her usual stop at Woolley Edge services if she was going to get there on time.

Getting into Coventry was easy, finding the client's building was not, and at 10:20 Nat was still trying to find their offices. Pulling up at a set of lights at a crossroads, she decided to have a look at her map on the Satnav to find out where she'd been going wrong.

The Satnav said she should go right, luckily the lane Nat was in allowed her to go straight on or turn right, so Nat waited for the lights to change, checked her mirrors, and then moved into the junction to turn right when there was a gap in the oncoming traffic. There was a car ahead of her waiting to turn right which Nat nudged up right behind. When the oncoming traffic stopped, the car ahead turned right. Nat followed it round only for it to hit the back of a taxi that had pulled over at the side of the road to drop off a passenger. Nat slammed on her brakes too, but it was too late to stop, and she hit the back of the car in front.

All three cars were damaged and the one in front of Nat had damage to its front and rear. The driver of the car in front wasn't wearing his seat belt and had hit his knees under the steering wheel. He had trouble standing up after the crash and so an ambulance was called to take him to hospital and the police attended the scene to fill out an accident report. Nat did not need hospital attention but did develop an uncomfortable pain in her neck for a few days after the collision.

Questions

What factors led to Nat crashing?

What could Nat have done to prevent the crash?

If Nat had been driving at night, what difference would that have made to the risk and what could she have done to cope with the extra risk?

* change the names of the towns or cities if desired

