

## **‘Meeting without Moving’ saves lives**

Every year over 800 people die in work related road accidents. Following work in partnership with key organisations to initiate a national debate to promote greater use of video conferencing (VC) to address this issue, RoSPA has agreed to be a supporter of the ‘Meeting without Moving Foundation’ ([www.meetingwithoutmoving.com](http://www.meetingwithoutmoving.com)). MWMF is a new campaigning and awareness raising body, which has been set up with initial funding support from Noel Edmonds (of the Video Meeting Company and Face2face (F2F) Meetings) and with the endorsement of other key stakeholders.

The aim is to get more people at work to use high quality VC as a way of eliminating unnecessary business travel by road, thus reducing occupational road risk. VC does not substitute for every business meeting but, besides improving safety, there are many other advantages to using this communications medium wherever it is appropriate. For example:

- as an alternative to travelling to regular meetings it can significantly reduce associated financial and, perhaps more importantly, time costs (improving efficiency and life/work balance);
- it can be used to enhance existing communication by telephone or Email; and
- it can also help to reduce environmental impacts and cut congestion.

As a first step in managing occupational road safety, employers should insist that, wherever possible and appropriate, their staff should use the VC or other forms of remote communication as an alternative to travelling to meetings whether by road, rail, sea or air.

When deciding whether VC is a better option than travelling, employees should be required to consider:

1. Is your journey likely to be more than 200 miles there and back?
2. Have you already met the people involved?
3. Can you undertake your business without being there physically?
4. Could you cover the issues you want to discuss in say, one hour?
5. Do you have other urgent work which you could do in the time saved through not travelling?

If the answer to these questions is largely ‘yes’, staff should be required to opt for VC or telephone or Internet conferencing.

Unfortunately there still those that feel that VC is too modern for their clients, too expensive, too complicated and thus of limited application. Many people have also had unsatisfactory experiences using poor quality, low resolution, slow response video communication via the Internet. Modern, high quality VC, particularly on a large screen in good surroundings using three ISDN lines, is quite different. It provides high resolution imagery and virtually instantaneous response. This gives

access to all those subtle, non-verbal elements of communication which are so important to effective discussion. MWM can be used to::

- enhance pre-booked telephone conferences, for example, to undertake interviews, to confirm proposals or to present advice and findings;
- make presentations to larger meetings and conferences and participate in question and answer sessions, for example at remote, harder-to-reach events.;
- meet more regularly with funders, sponsors etc;
- agree contract details with clients;
- make initial presentations of and follow up on certain consultancy reports;
- include 'far away' clients in training courses and events;
- meet with field staff or include off-site staff in internal meetings;
- meet with overseas contacts/experts; and
- undertake working group meetings.

ORSA urges everyone to consider VC and other forms of remote communication wherever it can help them save time and money, improve safety and improve their effectiveness. As a first step RoSPA urges all organisations to appoint a 'video champion' who can act as a focal point to answer queries about MWM, gather feedback from colleagues and lead cultural change on this vital issue. MWM saves time, stress and money and lives and protects the environment. Unless your journey is really necessary, MWM must be your first option!

**Roger Bibbings**  
**RoSPA Occupational Safety Adviser**

**1<sup>st</sup> October 2004**