

Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards 2023–2025

CASE STUDY



Reducing courier risks in digital platform work



ORGANISATION/COMPANY

Thuisbezorgd.nl

COUNTRY

The Netherlands

SECTOR

**Food delivery platform
(courier service)**

TASKS

**Picking up food orders and
delivering them to
customers**

Introduction to the case study

Bicycle couriers working for Thuisbezorgd.nl, a digital food delivery platform in the Netherlands are at risk of traffic accidents and exposure to extreme weather conditions. Committed to the safety and health of its staff, the company has introduced mandatory helmet use, safety training via an online facility, a tool for pre-shift bike inspections, live emergency response support and an accident detection app.

Background

Thuisbezorgd.nl, a subsidiary of Just Eat Takeaway.com, is a major online food delivery platform in the Netherlands that works with over 5,000 couriers. Couriers are responsible for picking up orders from partners and delivering them to customers using an eco-friendly fleet. Couriers use an online application on their mobile phones to receive instructions and navigation for their deliveries.

The couriers are hired as employees of the company, which consequently offers a range of benefits, including job security, stable income, fixed or flexible shifts, paid sick leave and insurance coverage. In addition, couriers receive personal protective equipment (PPE) and comprehensive training to ensure their safety and performance. Thuisbezorgd.nl takes pride in fostering a safe and healthy work environment, supported by robust safety procedures aligned with the ISO requirements for an OSH management system.

However, couriers are exposed to traffic accidents and severe weather conditions. To tackle these challenges, Thuisbezorgd.nl has invested significantly in risk mitigation measures. In the event of an accident, the company's emergency response processes and accident support systems are ready to assist. These initiatives are guided by risk assessments, courier feedback, surveys and other input channels to ensure ongoing improvement.

Aims

The goal is to create a safer work environment, minimise safety incidents, and prevent or reduce the severity of head injuries by introducing a number of control measures identified in the risk assessments that were conducted.

What was done and how?

Thuisbezorgd.nl's occupational safety and health (OSH) policy has frameworks for risk assessment, regulatory compliance, auditing, severe weather management, incident management and more. The most impactful risk mitigation measures include mandating helmet use for all couriers and implementing controls for training, emergency response and vehicle inspections.

- **Emergency response** – Couriers work alone and are exposed to risks that could result in injuries, requiring timely emergency response. They receive live support from agents via chat or calls during shifts to handle incidents, damage or other needs, ensuring prompt response in an emergency. The company also plans to integrate Flare, a mobile application with automated accident detection and SOS alerting, into the courier application.
- **Vehicle inspection** – Bike couriers must perform pre-shift inspections to ensure their

bikes are in optimal working condition, which helps prevent accidents and breakdowns during delivery. To streamline this process, the company is implementing the Chevin tool to facilitate systematic bike inspections. The tool allows couriers to complete and document inspections digitally, ensuring that any issues are promptly identified and addressed before starting their shifts. This implementation improves safety and reliability for both couriers and customers.

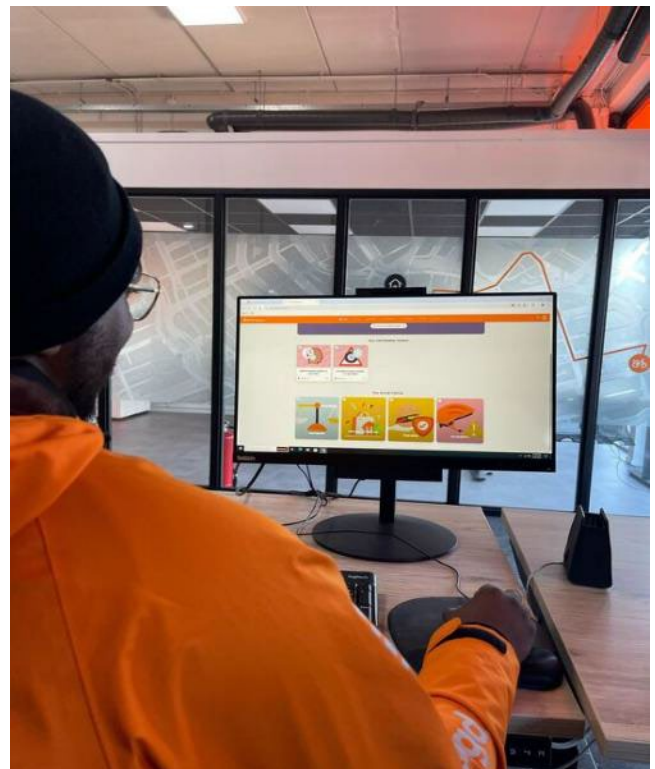
- **Training** – The mobile-friendly CLX training platform was launched to boost courier safety. Featuring interactive and gamified elements, CLX offers convenient, tailor-made and engaging training on safe driving practices, severe weather navigation, PPE use and other safety requirements. The training is mandatory, and couriers receive compensation for the time they use to complete it. This approach ensures couriers can easily access and benefit from essential safety training on their phones.
- **Awareness and recognition** – The company raises safety awareness through various initiatives, such as celebrating World Safety Day, promoting the '5 life-saving rules' and championing the slogan 'Driven by safety'. It also uses the Tradler reward and recognition tool to acknowledge and incentivise safety achievements among couriers, reinforcing a strong safety culture and encouraging adherence to safety practices.
- **Personal protective equipment** – While the company has consistently encouraged the use of helmets and provided them to couriers, operating in an environment where helmet-wearing was neither legally mandated nor culturally prevalent presented challenges. The company has made helmet use mandatory to prevent head injuries or reduce their severity.

What was achieved?

- Couriers are better informed to perform their duties safely.
- Couriers are more satisfied, engaged and motivated, according to perception survey results.
- Mandating helmets has significantly reduced the severity of head injuries, with many couriers reporting that their company-required protection helmets saved them from serious harm during accidents. Although the full benefits of implementing these controls will take time, 2024 already saw a notable improvement in OSH performance.
- Safety performance started to show tangible improvement in 2024, with a notable 34% reduction in lost time due to injury.

Success factors

- The company demonstrates leadership and commitment to prevent accidents. It also actively lobbies local government to introduce helmet laws.
- Necessary financial resources are made available to purchase digital tools and ensure the courier protective equipment is in place.
- Operations and courier representatives are consulted before implementing new initiatives, significantly increasing buy-in and engagement.
- The company demonstrates effective project management by carefully handling resistance to change and fostering the desired cultural shift.
- The company actively promotes learning from and sharing incident experiences by disseminating success stories through inspirational video clips.



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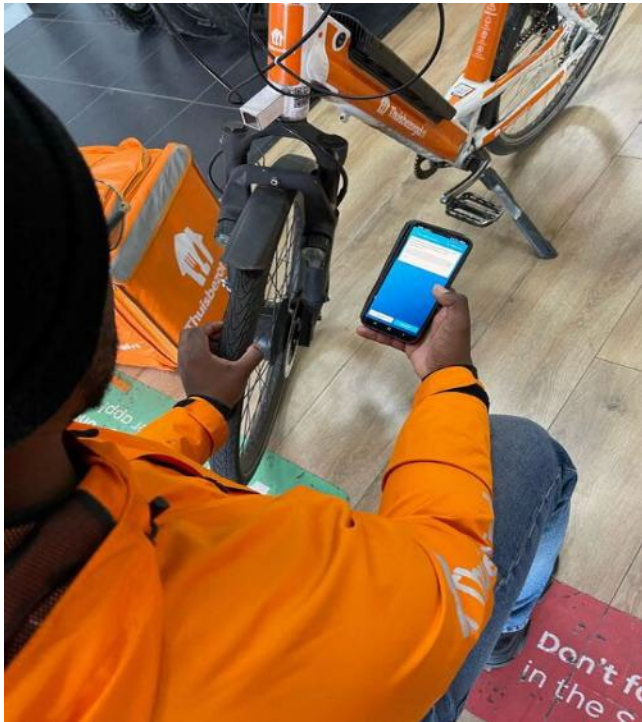
Transferability

The entire approach could be easily transferred to other digital delivery platforms employing bicycle couriers. Individual initiatives, such as a digital vehicle inspection tool or a mobile-friendly training platform, could also be adopted in a wide range of sectors.

Costs and benefits

Resources consisted of the time allocated by workers and managers to organise and participate in workshops during the consultation process. Costs included acquiring digital tools to improve safety, such as the learning platform, automated accident detection system, vehicle pre-inspection tool, and rewards and recognition systems. Additionally, investments were made in PPE to meet the increased demand for helmets.

Long-term benefits include more sustainable employment opportunities for couriers by preventing injuries and illnesses, as well as reduced costs associated with inefficiencies due to accidents.



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Key features of good practice example

- The company demonstrates strong leadership commitment through consulting with courier representatives and ensuring effective project management.
- Key performance indicators track safety performance, measure effectiveness and drive continuous improvement in OSH practices.
- The implemented safety measures, such as mandating the use of helmets, address the most critical aspects of courier safety.
- Extensive consultation with management, operations and couriers ensures alignment on safety practices and measures.
- Couriers are provided with opportunities to raise safety concerns through feedback surveys and direct communication with their line management.

Further information

Further information can be found at:

<https://www.thuisbezorgd.nl/>

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