

Members' Briefing

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Advice for drivers encountering protesters on the public highway

Background

There is a continuing trend of environmental activists protesting on the public highway, with the intention of causing disruption to traffic flows around major traffic interchanges such as motorway junctions and in the process generating media coverage. Protests to date have typically involved groups of individuals positioning themselves across the lanes whilst traffic lights are on red, with some individuals using superglue to attach their hands to the road surface. More extreme examples include protesters suspending themselves at height over road bridges to cause more significant disruption.

The protests continue to be widely reported in the press and the police respond to such protests as quickly as possible. However, there continue to be some instances of drivers or members of the general public intervening directly by attempting to drag protesters off the road or driving their vehicles up towards them in what could be seen as an intimidatory or threatening manner.

There is an ongoing risk that employees either travelling to work or involved in work activities off-site (such as delivering materials) may encounter such protesters. This briefing provides advice on how member companies and their employees can handle these encounters in a safe and courteous manner.



Dealing with Protesters

Employees should be briefed to ensure that they do not provide protesters or the press covering such incidents with social media footage, photo opportunities or sound bites with negative propaganda potential. This is especially the case when employees are in branded PPE, clothing or vehicles. Everyone with a mobile phone is a potential cameraman/woman, who will be tweeting/blogging to a potential online audience of thousands or millions.

To this end, when dealing protesters all staff should be reminded:

- Always be polite and respectful
- Never be drawn or provoked into confrontational situations
- Never become involved in situations that would put health, safety or lives at risk
- Adopt a slow, deliberate, calm but firm approach to all eventualities
- Display the highest standards of behaviour when dealing with protesters
- Do not attempt to physically remove protesters
- Do not attempt to by-pass the protesters or drive your vehicle towards them

Further information relating to dealing with protests is available in the [MPA Members Briefing: Protester Advice](#).

MPA members are encouraged to share relevant information with security@mineralproducts.org to facilitate engagement and coordination with the national police service and other member companies.

For further information, please contact:

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