

# “PRAISE”: Preventing Road Accidents and Injuries for the Safety of Employees

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FACT SHEET

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PRAISE Factsheet 6  
Safety at Road Work zones

## ETSC Interview Damien Tillet of ASF (Autoroutes du Sud de la France)

ETSC’s PRAISE project, “Preventing Road Accidents and Injuries for the Safety of Employees”, aims at mobilising knowledge needed to create work-related road safety leadership. This Fact Sheet complements the PRAISE Report “Road Safety at Work Zones” published in May 2011 and looks specifically at the approach of Motorways of the South of France to ensuring safety of their employees and other road users during works on their network.

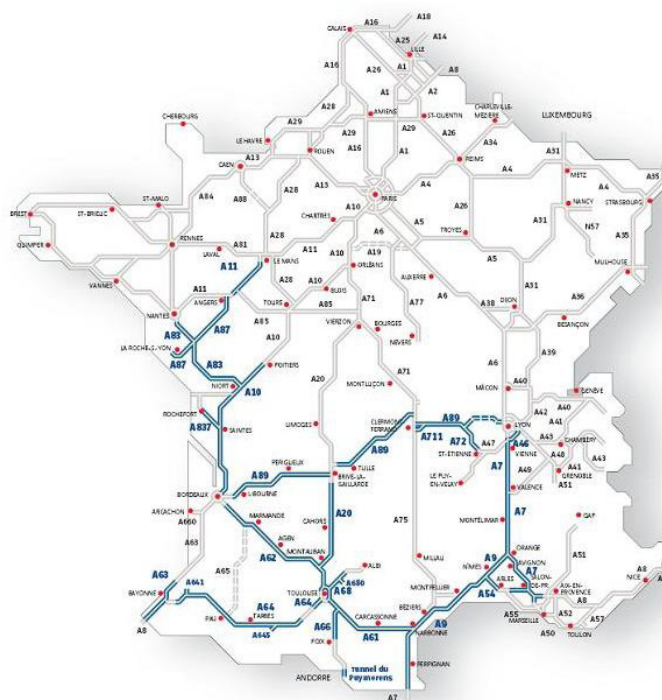
<b>Introduction to ASF</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Other Road Users</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>General Road Safety at ASF</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Lessons</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Safety and Work zones</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Short Bio of Damien Tillet</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Employee Safety</b>	<b>4</b>		

## Introduction to ASF

### What is the history of the company, its functions and its current role?

ASF was founded in 1957 and now operates 2700 km of motorways on behalf of the State. ASF has become the leading motorway network in France and the second largest in Europe. Occupying a strategic position in mainland France along the Le Mans – Lyon – Aix en Provence corridor, it benefits from the momentum of the economically vibrant urban areas of southern France. It connects the Iberian Peninsula with Northern Europe and carries major European business and tourism flows as well as a large amount of regional traffic.

The company aims to offer expertise in operating motorways across a variety of environments. ASF's first priority is to do its utmost to ensure smooth and safe traffic flow under all circumstances. It has a variety of missions: to facilitate the safe movement of people and goods, to build safe and durable infrastructure that respects the environment and the surrounding communities and to take part in regional planning and in the development of regional economies and tourism.



## General Road Safety at ASF

### 1. How are safety decisions taken at ASF?

Decisions are often taken by three people: two operating system directors (Southeast and Southwest networks) and a Prevention/Safety Director. The Prevention/Safety Director proposes a general policy and a methodology to the other directors who need to approve the approach.

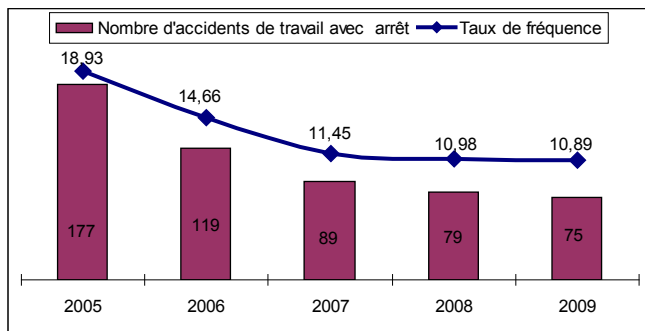
### 2. Can you provide any figures tracking the improvements in your safety performance over the years? What are the trends or changes you can identify?

Safety has been improved primarily through the establishment of procedures and rules and the extended use of safety training. This has significantly reduced the number of occupational incidents and collisions.

For ASF, the number of work-related collisions involving lost time has been falling during the last 5 years from 177 in 2005 to 75 in 2009.

Our approach includes the definition of a safety policy with an annual action plan aimed at delivering actions in different areas including safety management, communication and road risk.

Currently, it is more difficult to modify the safety policy as it relates to behaviours: We need to change people's behaviour and habits in order to make further progress. This is what we aim to do but it takes time.



### 3. Do you consider that there is a solid Business Case to invest in road safety? Why?

Safety is always a good investment, including safety on the road. This helps prevent occupational incidents - incidents that can be serious or even fatal.

### 4. Do you think that companies who have employees on the roads have a duty to go beyond the legislation regarding traffic safety of the country in which they operate?

The physical safety of employees is a concern that is central to the culture of any motorway operator. Employee safety is a constant priority for ASF, and our objective is nothing short of zero collisions. Indeed we must go beyond the regulatory requirements and do everything possible to avoid collisions. This applies in particular to the following areas:

- Providing strict procedures and internal rules in relation to safety in a manner that is precise and as exhaustive as possible.
- Adapted training that is well scheduled and programmed.
- Implementing an internal working group to ensure monitoring and management of feedback.
- Exchanging and sharing of best practices between companies.

## Safety and Work zones

### 1. In the experience of ASF, are road work zones regarded as problematic in terms of safety?

Construction zones are heightened danger areas on our roads for both our employees and road users working and travelling in the vicinity. As a result, exposure to risk is an important consideration when installing road works, markings or construction areas. The responsibility of other road users is also highly important - a distracted or drowsy customer could hit a worker.

Our employees carry out works aimed at making our network a safer place. We advise those using our roads to avoid putting them in danger by driving safely: lowering their speed as soon as they see workers in yellow and not driving too close to them.

ASF has organised a variety of workshops to raise road users safety awareness including introduction to first aid, reflex testing and tyre pressure checking. "Roll-over" simulators enabled drivers and passengers to appreciate the importance of fastening front and rear seat belts. The overall aim was to encourage drivers to change their driving habits, ease off the accelerator and adapt their driving to the road conditions.

### 2. Do you collect data tracking road maintenance related collisions and, if so, what does this involve?

All accidents involving staff in highway traffic are identified and analysed. A survey is also carried out for all companies using the highway through the ASFA network (Association of French Motorway Companies)

To ensure that its customers can travel safely, ASF's surveillance and response system is operated 365 days a year. Regional control centres and the national ASF traffic control centre, analogous to the control tower at an airport, track all ASF motorway corridors minute by minute. Every event, however minor, is reported. The control centres can sound the alarm at any time to assist a customer or dispatch an ASF team or an emergency service response team to the site. Thanks to this ongoing vigilance, the motorway

is now four times safer than other highway networks. In addition, the vast majority of ASF's response vans have been equipped with an innovative road sign system for use in case of accident or incident. It is in full compliance with the recommended road safety rules.

### 3. What do you see as the main safety issues around road work zones?

Failure of road users to respect speed limits at construction zones, distracted drivers, inattention and drowsiness are the main risks at road works.

### 4. Do you have specific procedures relating to safety and road maintenance? If so, what do these entail?

There are specific rules for the installation and removal of work zones. In addition all staff authorised to intervene are specifically trained in this area of expertise for several weeks.



## Employee Safety

### 1. Approximately how many road workers do you employ and how many road works operations do they carry out annually?

Approximately 1000 employees are in charge of managing such works, highway patrol and accident management. This represents more than 5,000 work sites annually.

### 2. What type of road works are involved (mobile, short-term, long-term)?

These three types of construction are represented:

- sites called "day-to-day" which are from 1 to 5 days
- sites known as "major repair" which are 1 to 2 weeks
- specific sites such as for "horizontal markings" which are undertaken by mobile teams

### 3. Is the safety of maintenance workers considered at the road design or planning stage? If so, how is this done?

For the important larger projects, the safety of workers is taken into account upstream in the process when the site design and planning work is taking place. For the 'current/basic' sites there is no reflection upstream, however, the physical safety of employees is a concern at all times.

### 4. How is the safety of employees considered in ASF's approach to worksite management?

Employee safety is taken into account when defining the phases of work. A specific working group also improves practice by sharing and evolving procedures whenever necessary. In addition to measures taken as regards equipment (deployment of automatic signs on central reservations) or raising awareness (an accident prevention portal on the company intranet), we are also continuing our collision prevention and safety training campaign

### 5. Do you provide specific training for employees in relation to how to carry out roads works safely? If so, what does training involve?

There is specific training including frameworks related to the different types of interventions required (emergency response and intervention on the ground), the different types of material used and the use of specific devices such as FLR. FLR, or 'Flèche Lumineuse de Rabattement' in French, is a signaling device in the form of illuminated arrows, mounted on a vehicle for informing road users of carriageway closures. The device can be set up in 15 seconds and avoids the need to put in place a wedge of cones that

would expose workers to risk for several minutes.

These training courses include theoretical and practical simulation exercises and a period of training with tutorials.



**6. Are employees certified? If so, what type of certification is used?**

There are three different types of certification according to the required task and its location on the road: one who enters the road way to stop traffic will have more training than a person brought to intervene only on the emergency lane.

For example, our “route safety” certification for motorway workers and patrol officers is very much like an in-house driving licence. The course is a combination of theory and practice, which trains and tests employees in their grasp of safety recommendations and practices when using the motorway on professional journeys.

**7. What has been the opinion of employees on your approach to safety at work zones? Are they supportive? Did you consult with them?**

Employees are very sensitive to safety on construction sites. They find that ASF is investing in both human and financial resources to improve safety in relation to construction sites. Employees are regularly consulted through feedback

groups (Prevention Intervention Safety Track) and social dialogue is at the heart of our agreements.

**8. How do you feel that you perform compared to competitors in terms of the safety of your on road employees?**

ASF is one of the motorway companies that are proactive in the area of road safety and that always cares for the safety of its employees. The creation of the foundation ‘Vinci Highways for responsible driving’ (ASF is a subsidiary of VINCI Auto routes) highlights the energy deployed by ASF to continually improve the safety of its personnel and its customers.

**9. Is there any specific equipment that you feel makes a significant contribution to safety at work zones?**

ASF has established more than 700 pre-sequenced static signs on the ground, which means more than 700 areas where signs remain in place permanently but can be rotated to the left or right. Thus, where motorised pre-sequenced static signs are present, there is no more need to manually carry signs and, in particular, no need for employees to cross the lanes of traffic.



## Other Road Users

### 1. Speeding is recognised as a critical issue both on roads generally and at around work zone areas. Do you take specific measures to deal with this?

With regard to speeding around work zones, police conduct regular speed checks in these areas. The Association of French Motorway Companies also conducts information/awareness campaigns on the issue. We also have specific messages for VMS (Variable Messaging Signs) on the topic.

Since 2004, ASF has been experimenting with dynamic speed regulation on the A7 motorway in order to optimise traffic flow during peak periods. The innovative system has produced good safety, traffic flow and comfort results, reducing the number of accidents by 20 to 30% and achieving a 20% gain in travel time during periods of traffic congestion.

Information is provided to customers via variable message boards, which are located above traffic lanes and keep motorists abreast of traffic conditions and travel times in real time. Additional information is provided on Radio Traffic FM 107.7. Message boards are also installed at slip-roads to give motorists traffic information and safety advice before they enter the motorway.

### 2. How do you communicate with road users about road maintenance?

Specifically in work zones there are information panels indicating:



- the nature of the site
- the expected duration

There is also regular information made available on flyers and in local newspapers for larger works projects. As stated above, we also have specific Variable Message Signs.

### 3. Do you think road users are aware of the added risks at locations with road works? Do you have ways of trying to improve awareness?

VINCI is developing synergies between its different motorway networks with the aim of offering customers new services and making motorways safer and more environmentally friendly. As a way of encouraging its customers to adopt safer and stress-free driving habits by taking regular breaks, every year at peak holiday times ASF organises events at its service and rest areas. In 2008, we expanded our summer programme of events to include more emphasis on safety and environmentally responsible behaviour.

## Lessons

### 1. What have been the lessons learnt and what would you advise to other companies to do in terms of improving safety at road work zones?

It is very important to listen to the staff as the company can benefit from the experiences of its employees. In addition we must look for areas of action to mitigate the maximum risk exposure on the ground. The establishment of procedures aimed at reducing exposure to risks is critical.

### 2. Have you calculated or do you have an idea of the financial costs/benefits that have or will result from your approach to safety at work zones?

I have no clear idea but I know that several deaths have been avoided through our preventive approach.

**3. Would you like to see further steps from the government in terms of ensuring the safety of road workers and road users at road work zones?**

Yes, I would like the regulations to evolve as our practices evolve as a result of increased traffic and improved equipment.

**4. Will you consider getting the upcoming ISO 39001 certificate on road safety management?**

For me, certification in itself is not that important - management tools are important in terms of safety but certifying them is not necessarily useful.

**5. Are there any other areas that you would like to mention?**

It is important that the regulations change to keep pace with current practices and improve safety on construction sites.

**Short Bio of Damien Tillet, Head of Safety at ASF**



Damien works within ASF as Head of Safety. In this role he is responsible for developing and ensuring the occupational safety of the staff by promoting a comprehensive policy in this area through seven regional offices (each of which is in charge of 350 to 500 km of motorways). His role also includes the formalisation of procedures, notes and instructions in relation to staff safety. This includes the “mark-up manual” which is the guiding document on motorway markings (procedures and diagrams). Damien is a civil engineer with previous, extensive experience in the areas of operations and maintenance management for motorway companies and safety.



ETSC would like to thank Damien Tillet for his precious contribution.

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