

# The work health and safety of food delivery workers in the gig economy

Food delivery workers in the platform-based gig economy are at significant risk of psychological and physical harms while working.

Our research explored their work health and safety knowledge, behaviours, risk factors, and concerns.

## What we did

- National online survey of food delivery workers
- Semi-structured interviews
- Observations in restaurant hotspots
- Analysis of food delivery workers' social media posts
- Service safari, in which researchers signed up, went through onboarding, and worked a shift for a platform



## Who are they?

- Primarily male and under 30
- Typically student visa holders
- Less than 1 year of experience
- Mainly car drivers or e-bike riders
- Looking for flexible work or supplemental income



## How do they learn about WHS?



- Limited (and often optional) training offered by the platforms
- Experience on the job
- Advice from peers

## How do they stay safe?



- Ride or drive more cautiously during inclement weather
- Wear brightly coloured or reflective clothing in the rain
- Wear helmets
- Have their vehicles serviced regularly

## What risks do they take?

- Use mobile phones while riding or driving
- Speed or rush to make deliveries quickly
- Work when ill or fatigued
- Ride on footpaths and through red lights
- Wear dark clothing at night



## Why do they take risks?

- Achieve and maintain high in-app ratings
- Maximise income
- Satisfy customers
- Many believe that delivery times are deadlines, with penalties if missed



## What can be done?

- Improve safety training
- Alter the order acceptance process
- Alter how delivery times are communicated
- Humanise food delivery workers to potential abusers
- Enable workers to rate the pick-up experience at restaurants
- Facilitate peer mentoring schemes
- Send safety prompts and reminders at critical moments
- Prompt food delivery workers to report unsafe hotspots



## What are their top WHS concerns?

- Traffic accidents
- Verbal abuse from customers and restaurant workers
- Robbery or vandalism of delivery equipment

