



Fleet Safety Developing an Effective Program

No matter what the size of your fleet there are certain controls you need to have in place to reduce your risk of a motor vehicle accident (MVA). MVA's may result in death or serious injury of your employees and/or the public. MVA's will most certainly raise your automobiles insurance rates and workers compensation rates.

Motor Vehicle Record Reviews

Key points you will want include in your fleet safety program include initial and annual motor vehicle record (MVR) reviews of your drivers. The good news is your automobile insurer may already conduct these. You should contact them to ensure your drivers meet your definition of a safe driver. If, however, your automobile insurer does not conduct MVR reviews you will need to contact the Department of Motor Vehicles to obtain your driver's records. You need to set pre-determined criteria to identify qualified drivers versus high risk drivers.

High-Risk Drivers

The premise behind identifying high risk drivers is the 80/20 rule: 80 percent of crashes are typically caused by 20 percent of drivers. This is true for all organizations. Consider developing a point system to quantify a driver's risk level. For each type driving incident incurred in the past, say 3 years, such as a speeding ticket, running a red light, at-fault crash, the driver accumulates a pre-determined number of points which reflect the severity of the incident. Define what level or number of points for each incident is acceptable for your organization. Also consider weighting each infraction associated with its severity. For example, a speeding violation of 10 miles over the speed limit may equal 2 points. Whereas, in excess of 10 miles over the speed limit but less than 15 miles over may equal 4 points and so on. With the point system in place the high risk drivers are identified and you can apply training as necessary to reduce the risk of a crash or avoid hiring a dangerous driver.

Physical Examinations

Is your driver physically fit enough to safely drive a vehicle? As you may know with Commercial Drivers License (CDL) drivers are subject to physical examinations. Even if your vehicles are non-commercial this is still an important area of concern even if your driver has an excellent driving record. It's a good idea to have all drivers take part in a physical exam program to insure they are medical qualified to operate a vehicle. If passing a Department of Transportation (DOT) physical is mandatory for your organization it should be stated in the job description.

Drug & Alcohol Screening

Another area for consideration is developing a drug & alcohol screening program. This program may include all employees, not just your drivers. There are several times you may consider testing your employees: pre-employment, random, under suspicion of use, and post-accident. At minimum your program should include pre-employment and post-accident testing. Conducting this screening will greatly reduce your risk of an automobile accident resulting from drugs or alcohol. As with DOT physicals, if your organization requires this type of testing as a condition of employment it needs to be stated in the job description.

Employee Training

OK, your driver has an excellent MVR, aced his medical evaluation and has no sign of drugs or alcohol in his system but one thing is still missing...do they know what you expect from them while operating your vehicle? This may seem like overkill in some operations. You may say, "Well if they have a license they know how to drive". Or "it's a state law to obey traffic signs and wear your seat belt." As an employer those state laws are laws you can't enforce. It's important to communicate to your employees that wearing your seat belt and obeying traffic signs are company policy and it will be enforced as would any other company policy. Your training program should also include supervisor ride alongs to see first hand the driver's ability and skill of driving your automobile. Include defensive driving techniques. When do you need to train your drivers? Initial training is an absolute must. You will also want to perform periodic refresher training and remedial training should an employee display signs they are not following your safe driving policies.

Vehicle Maintenance

So, you have a safe driver behind the wheel. Are you confident that your vehicle is safe to operate? Vehicle maintenance means paying attention to the mileage/maintenance checklist in the operator manual.

You know? The list that no one ever seems to use or follow; the one many people don't even know exists. Beyond the scheduled maintenance you may want to include periodic (daily, weekly or before each use/shift) inspections that the driver will conduct. This can be a simple 3 to 5 minute check, including things like: checking for obvious damage, tire wear and pressure, working head and tail lights, working turn signals, etc.



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Defensive Driving

We've all heard the term before but what does it really mean? Driving defensively means not only taking responsibility for yourself and your actions but also keeping an eye on "the other guy." The National Safety Council suggests the following guidelines to help reduce your risks on the road.

- Remember that driving too fast or too slow can increase the likelihood of collisions.
- Be alert! If you notice that a car is straddling the center line, weaving, making wide turns, stopping abruptly or responding slowly to traffic signals, the driver may be impaired.
- Avoid an impaired driver by turning right at the nearest corner or exiting at the nearest exit. If it appears that an oncoming car is crossing into your lane, pull over to the roadside, sound the horn and flash your lights
- Follow the rules of the road. Don't contest the "right of way" or try to race another car during a merge. Be respectful of other motorists.
- Don't follow too closely. Always use a "three-second following distance" or a "three-second plus following distance."
- While driving, be cautious, aware and responsible.

How Do You Manage The Risk?

- Establish written policies and procedures
- Set behavior expectations and consequences
- Define job descriptions and requirements
- Establish appropriate operation procedures and objectives
- Hire good drivers
- Regularly maintain and condition vehicles
- Consistently manage people

Key Points for your Program

- Clear understanding and focus for what is expected
- Clear and consistent communication throughout the management process
- Measurement, documentation and reporting required
- Implementation of improvements is the expected result of the process

**Remember: Traffic accidents
are not part of business.
They are PREVENTABLE!**

Driving Distractions

With the advancements in technology we can now get more done in less time. We can check and send emails and carry on a phone conversation from virtually anywhere, at home, at a ballgame, and while driving. Also, with the advancements in technology we have created and exposed our employees to more hazards and distractions while operating a vehicle. Did you know that talking on a cell phone can impair your ability to drive as much alcohol? Hands free devices are better but still take your mind off the road. You may want to consider prohibiting the use of cell phones, PDAs, navigation systems and other common distractions.

Traffic Crashes

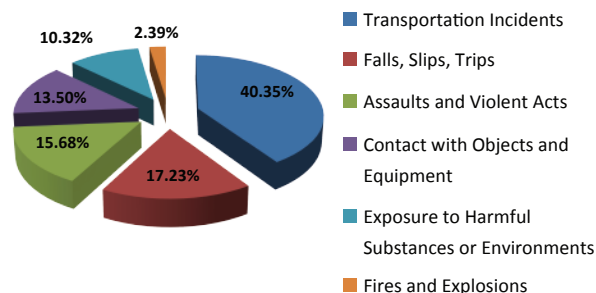
- Top Cause of Lost Productivity and Death for the American Worker
- American Workers have Three-Times Greater Risk of Being Killed in a Traffic Crash vs. Working in a Factory.
- Leading Cause of Death for Every Age from 4 – 33 years.

According to the US Bureau of Labor Stats:

Roadway incidents alone accounted for about one out of every four fatal work injuries.

Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), 2018

Worker Fatalities by Incident Type in 2017



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