



## **Guidelines for Employers to Reduce Motor Vehicle Crashes**

Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death and injury for all ages. Crashes on and off the job have far reaching financial and psychological effects on employees, their coworkers and families, and their employers.

### **\* Promoting Safe Driving Practices Helps Your Bottom Line**

The average crash costs an employer \$16,500. When a worker has an on-the-job crash that results in an injury, the average cost to their employer is \$74,000. Costs can exceed \$500,000 when a fatality is involved.

- **The real tragedy is that these crashes are largely preventable.**

### **Program to Minimize Crash Risk**

#### **Senior Management Commitment and Employee Involvement**

The safety of an organization's employees as they drive for work and to and from work is so important that it requires the attention of top-level management. Senior management can provide leadership, set policies, and allocate resources (staff and budget) to create a safety culture. Actively encouraging employee participation and involvement at all levels of the organization is a good practice and will help the effort to succeed. Workers and their representatives must be involved in the initial planning phase.

#### **Written Policies and Procedures**

A written statement emphasizing the commitment to reducing traffic-related deaths and injuries is essential to a successful program. Create a clear, comprehensive and enforceable set of traffic safety policies and communicate them to all employees. These are the cornerstones of an effective driver safety program. Post them throughout the workplace, distribute copies periodically, and discuss the policies at company meetings. Offer incentives for sticking to the rules, and point out the consequences of disregarding them. Below are sample policies that can be adapted for use by your company.

#### ***Sample Alcohol and Drug Use Policy***

(Name of Company/Organization) has a vital interest in maintaining safe, healthy, and efficient working conditions for its employees. Therefore, the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs by any employee during "duty hours" is prohibited. Duty hours consist of all working hours, including break periods and on-call periods, whether on or off company premises. The consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs while performing company business or while in a company facility is prohibited.

### ***Sample Seat Belt Use Policy***

(Name of Company/Organization) recognizes that seat belts are extremely effective in preventing injuries and loss of life. It is a simple fact that wearing your seat belt can reduce your risk of dying in a traffic crash by 45 percent in a car and by as much as 60 percent in a truck or SUV.

We care about our employees, and want to make sure that no one is injured or killed in a tragedy that could have been prevented by the use of seat belts. Therefore, all employees of (Name of Company/Organization) must wear seat belts when operating a company-owned vehicle, or any vehicle on company premises or on company business; and all occupants are to wear seat belts or, where appropriate, child restraints when riding in a company-owned vehicle, or in a personal vehicle being used for company business. All employees and their families are strongly encouraged to always use seat belts and the proper child restraints whenever they are driving or riding in any vehicle, in any seating position.

### **Driver Agreements**

Establish a contract with all employees who drive for work purposes, whether they drive assigned company vehicles or drive their personal vehicles. By signing an agreement, the driver acknowledges awareness and understanding of the organization's traffic safety policies, procedures, and expectations regarding driver performance, vehicle maintenance and reporting of moving violations.

### **Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) Checks**

Check the driving records of all employees who drive for work purposes. You must screen out drivers who have poor driving records since they are most likely to cause problems in the future. The MVR should be reviewed periodically to ensure that the driver maintains a good driving record. Clearly define the number of violations an employee/driver can have before losing the privilege of driving for work, and provide training where indicated.

### **Crash Reporting and Investigation**

Establish and enforce a crash reporting and investigation process. All crashes, regardless of severity, should be reported to the employee's supervisor as soon as feasible after the incident. Company traffic safety policies and procedures should clearly guide drivers through their responsibilities in a crash situation. All crashes should be reviewed to determine their cause and whether or not the incidents were preventable. Understanding the root causes of crashes and why they are happening, regardless of fault, forms the basis for eliminating them in the future.

### **Vehicle Selection, Maintenance and Inspection**

Selecting, properly maintaining and routinely inspecting company vehicles is an important part of preventing crashes and related losses.

It is advisable that the organization review and consider the safety features of all vehicles to be considered for use. Those vehicles that demonstrate "best in class" status for crash-worthiness and overall safety should be chosen and made available to drivers.

For the latest information on crash test ratings and other important vehicle safety information, visit [www.safercar.gov](http://www.safercar.gov). To report a concern about a defect or problem with your vehicle, contact the NHTSA Auto Safety Hotline at: 1-888-DASH-2-DOT.

Vehicles should be on a routine preventive maintenance schedule for servicing and checking of safety-related equipment. Regular maintenance should be done at specific mileage intervals consistent with the manufacturer's recommendations. A mechanic should do a thorough inspection of each vehicle at least annually with documented results placed in the vehicle's file.

Personal vehicles used for company business are not necessarily subject to the same criteria and are generally the responsibility of the owner. However, personal vehicles used on company business should be maintained in a manner that provides the employee with maximum safety and reflects positively on the company.

### **Disciplinary Action System**

Develop a strategy to determine the course of action after the occurrence of a moving violation and/or "preventable" crash. There are a variety of corrective action programs available; the majority of these are based on a system that assigns points for moving violations. The system should provide for progressive discipline if a driver begins to develop a pattern of repeated traffic violations and/or preventable crashes. The system should describe what specific action(s) will be taken if a driver accumulates a certain number of violations or preventable crashes in any pre-defined period.

## **Reward/Incentive Program**

Develop and implement a driver reward/incentive program to make safe driving an integral part of your business culture. Safe driving behaviors contribute directly to the bottom line and should be recognized as such. Positive results are realized when driving performance is incorporated into the overall evaluation of job performance. Reward and incentive programs typically involve recognition, monetary rewards, special privileges or the use of incentives to motivate the achievement of a predetermined goal or to increase participation in a program or event.

## **Driver Training/Communication**

Provide continuous driver safety training and communication. Even experienced drivers benefit from periodic training and reminders of safe driving practices and skills. It is easy to become complacent and not think about the consequences of our driving habits.

## **Regulatory Compliance**

Ensure adherence to highway safety regulations. It is important to clearly establish which, if any, local, state, and/or federal regulations govern your vehicles and/or drivers. These regulations may involve, but may not necessarily be limited to the:

- Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)
- U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT)
- National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA)
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Employment Standards Administration (ESA)

## **Promote Safe Driving Practices to Protect Your Most Valuable Investment - Your Employees**

The increasing traffic congestion on our nation's roadways wastes significant time and money, reduces productivity and promotes risky driving behavior. Employees may feel pressured to drive faster and for longer periods of time and to engage in potentially distracting in-vehicle activities to meet their job responsibilities. Engaging in unsafe driving practices affects those who occasionally drive their personal vehicles for work purposes as well as those who spend their workday driving a company vehicle.

As an employer, do your part by keeping your parking lot well lighted and well maintained. Keep roadway and parking spaces properly striped, and clear of debris and snow. Install signs at parking lot exits reminding employees to buckle their seat belts and drive safely. Let your concern for

their safety be their final thought as they leave your parking lot.

### **Secure Materials for Transport**

Tools or equipment should be secured while being transported to prevent unsafe movement of materials. During a crash or when making sudden maneuvers, loose objects can slide around or become airborne, injuring the driver and any passengers. Objects that could become a hazard should be secured or stored outside the passenger compartment.

### **Seat Belt Use**

Seat belts are the single most effective means of reducing deaths and serious injuries in traffic crashes. As the most effective safety device in vehicles, they save nearly 12,000 lives and prevent 325,000 serious injuries in America each year. During a crash, anyone not wearing a seat belt will slam into the steering wheel, windshield, or other parts of the interior, or be ejected from the vehicle.

### **Distracted Driving**

Distracted driving is a factor in 25 to 30 percent of all traffic crashes. With hectic schedules and roadway delays, many employees feel pressured to multi-task just to keep up with their personal and work-related responsibilities. More time on the road means less time at home or at work but "drive time" can never mean "down time." Since drivers make more than 200 decisions during every mile traveled, it's critical for employers to stress that when driving for work, safe driving is their primary responsibility.

### **Alcohol and Drug Impaired Driving**

Alcohol use is involved in 40 percent of all fatal motor vehicle crashes, representing an average of one alcohol-related fatality every 30 minutes. It is estimated that three in every 10 Americans will be involved in an impaired driving-related crash some time in their life. Alcohol, certain prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, and illegal drugs can all affect a person's ability to drive safely due to decreased alertness, concentration, coordination and reaction time. Businesses pay a high price for alcohol and drug abuse; alcohol is a contributing factor in 39 percent of all work-related traffic crashes.

### **Fatigued Driving**

Fatigued or drowsy driving may be involved in more than 100,000 crashes each year, resulting in 40,000 injuries and 1,550 deaths. Sadly, these numbers represent only the tip of the iceberg since these crashes are seriously under-reported. These days, it's more important than ever for employees to be well rested, alert and sober on the road so that they are in a

position to defend themselves from drivers who do not make the same choice. Train employees to make smart decisions when they're behind the wheel, on and off the job.

## **Aggressive Driving**

Employees commuting to and from work and traveling for work purposes often find themselves caught up in bottlenecks and traffic delays, wasting their time and reducing their productivity. These situations create a high level of frustration that can spark aggressive driving behavior. The roadway is one place that being aggressive never pays.

Aggressive driving acts include excessive speed, tailgating, failure to signal a lane change, running a red light and passing on the right. The best advice is to avoid engaging in conflict with other drivers and to allow others to merge.

## **Young Drivers**

The 16-20-year-old population represents a significant high-way safety problem. Traffic crashes are the leading cause of fatalities for teens. Historically, this group is the age group that has the lowest seat belt use rate and is the most likely to engage in risky driving behaviors that include: speeding, driving while alcohol or drug impaired and when drowsy. It is important for employers with young workers to actively promote safe driving practices.

Under Federal law, 16-year-old workers are prohibited from driving as part of their job, and 17-year-olds may drive for work only under strictly limited circumstances. Some state laws may be more restrictive than Federal laws. For more information on child labor laws visit, [www.youthrules.dol.gov](http://www.youthrules.dol.gov) or [www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/youth/](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/youth/).

## **Drive Focused. Stay Safe. Avoid Aggressive Driving.**

- Correct your own unsafe driving habits that are likely to endanger, antagonize or provoke other drivers.
- Keep your cool in traffic; be patient and courteous to other drivers and don't take their actions personally.
- If you think you have a problem, seek help. Look for anger or stress management classes or self-help books.
- Reduce your stress on the road by allowing plenty of time to reach your destination, plan your route in advance and alter your schedule or route to avoid busy roads.
- If despite all your planning, you're going to arrive late, accept it and avoid aggressive driving.

- Make every attempt to safely move out of an aggressive driver's way. If a hostile motorist tries to pick a fight, do not make eye contact and do not respond. Ignore gestures and refuse to return them.

### **Safety Facts for the Road**

- Distracted driving is estimated to be a factor in between 25 to 30% of all traffic crashes—that's 4,000 or more crashes a day.
- Events inside and outside the vehicle can distract a driver. Adverse roadway and weather conditions require a driver's full attention.
- While taking one's eyes off the road presents obvious risks, activities that take a driver's mind away from driving are just as risky.
- A driver's ability to manage distractions varies widely and can change from day-to-day depending on their level of stress and fatigue.
- Distracted drivers fail to recognize potential hazards in the road and react more slowly to traffic conditions, decreasing their "margin of safety."
- Research suggests that distracted driving increases the risk of rear-end and single-vehicle crashes.

### **Drive Focused. Stay Safe. Avoid Aggressive Driving.**

- Be aware of your behavior and the behavior of others on the road during the late night, early morning and mid-afternoon hours when drowsy driving crashes are most likely to occur. Plan a rest stop during these hours.
- Get a full night of rest before driving. If you become tired while driving, stop. A short nap (15 to 45 minutes) and consuming caffeine can help temporarily.
- Stop at regular intervals when driving long distances. Get out of the car every 2 hours to stretch and walk briskly.
- Set a realistic goal for the number of miles you can safely drive each day.
- Avoid taking medications that cause drowsiness.

### **Impaired Driving**

On our congested roadways, it's more important than ever to drive with a clear head and a sharp focus. Make it a life-governing rule not to drive when you've had too much to drink. On average, a driver makes over 200 decisions per mile, so it's critical that a driver make the decision to drive alert before getting behind the wheel. Not only will you be a safer driver but you will be in a much better position to defend yourself from the driver who doesn't make that choice. Drive focused. Stay safe.

### **Safety Facts for the Road**

- Alcohol impaired driving accounts for about 40% of fatal crashes.

- About three in every 10 Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some time in their lives.
- Research shows that alcohol is a contributing factor in 39% of all work-related traffic crashes.
- Nearly 1.5 million people are arrested each year for driving while intoxicated (DWI). Two-thirds of all drivers arrested for DWI are first time offenders.
- A DWI/DUI conviction on a person's driving record may prevent them from getting a job, receiving a promotion or even result in a job loss.
- Many companies have corrective action programs that suspend company driving privileges for a DWI/DUI violation.
- Nine out of 10 insurance companies automatically cancel the policy of a driver convicted of a DWI/DUI violation. Consequently, the driver must find a high-risk insurance company and face substantial rate increases.

### **Drive Focused. Stay Safe. Avoid Aggressive Driving.**

- Alcohol involvement is highest at night (9 p.m. to 6 a.m.), on weekends and on holidays.
- Driving skills, especially judgment, are impaired in most people long before they exhibit visible signs of drunkenness.
- Celebrations are a part of our lives and sometimes they include alcohol. They should not, however, involve impaired driving:
  - Decide who is the designated driver before the party starts.
  - Be the kind of co-worker who will take the keys if someone has had too much to drink.
  - If you're impaired, make the safe choice – ride with a designated driver, call a taxi, stay where you are, or call a sober friend or family member. Making the safe choice could save your life.



THE CHOICE FOR WORKERS' COMPENSATION

### Costs of Motor Vehicle Crashes to Employers

#### Direct Costs to the Organization

Workers' compensation benefits	\$ _____
Healthcare costs	\$ _____
Increases in medical insurance premiums	\$ _____
Auto insurance and liability claims and settlements	\$ _____
Physical and vocational rehabilitation costs	\$ _____
Life insurance and survivor benefits	\$ _____
Group health insurance dependent coverage	\$ _____
Property damage (equipment, products, etc.)	\$ _____
Motor vehicle repair and replacement	\$ _____
EMS costs (ambulance or medivac helicopter)	\$ _____
Vehicle towing, impoundment and inspection fees	\$ _____
Municipality or utility fees for damage to roads, signs or poles	\$ _____
Direct Total	\$ _____

#### Indirect Costs

Supervisor's time (rescheduling, making special arrangements)	\$ _____
Fleet manager's time to coordinate vehicle repair, replacement, etc.	\$ _____
Reassignment of personnel to cover for missing employees (less efficient)	\$ _____
Overtime pay (to cover work of missing employees)	\$ _____
Employee replacement	\$ _____
Re-entry and retraining of injured employees	\$ _____
Administrative costs (documentation of injuries, treatment, absences, crash investigation)	\$ _____
Inspection costs	\$ _____
Failure to meet customer requirements resulting in loss of business	\$ _____
Bad publicity, loss of business	\$ _____

Indirect Total           \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL**                   \$ \_\_\_\_\_