



## Fleet Safety: Motor Vehicle Crash Prevention

Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death and injury for all ages. The real tragedy is that these crashes are essentially preventable.

### Fleet/Motor Vehicle Operations Workplace Exposures

- Catastrophic Injuries (Spinal, Neck, Head, Body)
- Death
- Injuries to more than one Passenger/Employee
- Liability
- Other less serious Injuries
- Paralysis

### Basic Fleet Safety Components

- Accident Investigation
- Driver Motivation
- Driver Selection & Qualification
- Driver Training
- Regulatory Compliance
- Safety Goals
- Vehicle Inspection, Maintenance & Repair
- Vehicle Selection
- Written Programs

### Safety Goals

A written statement emphasizing the commitment to reducing traffic-related deaths and injuries is essential to a successful program. Establish a contract (Driver Agreement) 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.

- Top management communicates goals in a written Policy Statement

### Written Safety Programs (Policies and Procedures)

- Create a clear, comprehensive, and enforceable set of traffic safety policies and communicate them to all employees.
- Provides consistent information over time
- Is an effective training tool
- Establishes certain legal defenses
- Establishes regulatory compliance
- Forces management to continuously assess/evaluate the program
- Should be updated as necessary
- Should be available to all affected employees
- Should prohibit cell phone use while driving
- Should include a written seat belt policy

### Vehicle Selection

- Determine your needs:
  - Who will drive?
  - What will be transported?
  - When will vehicles be on the road?
  - Where will the vehicles go?
  - How will vehicles be maintained?
  - Why do selected vehicles meet your needs?
  - Select vehicles based on your needs and safety features

### Driver Selection and Qualification

- Check background & work references
- Develop written job descriptions
- Evaluate experience from application/resume
- Interview driver
- Objectively document all testing/evaluation
- Obtain Motor Vehicle Records (MVRs)
  - Initially at time of hire
  - Annually after hire
  - Pre-employment physicals
  - Drug test applicants
- Predetermine what is acceptable on an MVR
- Road tests
  - Ride with driver evaluation
  - Driver observation (follow driver)

### Driver Training

- Drive-along training with driver
- Observe driver's vehicle inspection
- Periodic refresher driver training
- Provide continuous driver safety training and communication.
- Require defensive driver course
  - Prior to driving
  - After each preventable accident
  - Periodically
- Review job description with driver

### Driver Motivation

#### *Reward/Incentive*

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.

#### *Disciplinary Action System*

Develop a strategy to determine the course of action after the occurrence of a moving violation and/or "preventable" crash. 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) that will be taken if a driver accumulates a certain number of violations or preventable crashes in any pre-defined period.

- Assign vehicles to employees
- Driver pays portion of deductible for causing preventable accidents
- Establish a fair disciplinary policy
- Provide praise/recognition for good driving habits
- Safety incentive

### **Vehicle Inspection, Maintenance and Repair**

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).

- Develop tire replacement program
- Document pre-use inspections
- Have driver record air brake test pressures
- Ongoing Maintenance Program
- Repair problems immediately
- Take vehicles out of service with serious defects or problems
- Utilize team inspections (driver & helper)

### **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:

- Commercial Driver's License (CDL)
- Driver's License Endorsements
- Employment Standards Administration (ESA)
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)
- Hazardous Materials Transportation
- National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA)
- State Insurance Regulations
- US Department of Transportation (DOT)

### **Accident Investigations**

Establish and enforce an accident/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.

- Consider utilizing National Safety Council's Guidelines on Determining the Preventability of Accidents.
- Develop immediate corrective action
- Document investigations in writing

- Investigate all accidents and near miss incidents
- Look for subrogation potential (third party responsibility)
- Maintain emergency responds/signaling equipment
- Take photos and draw a map if needed

### General Safety Tips to Reduce Motor Vehicle Crashes

#### 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. Phone calls, texting, e-mailing and working on other electronic devices while driving should be discouraged. 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 is 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

These days, it is 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 are 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 and to allow others to merge.

**Young Drivers**

The 16 to 20-year-old population represents a significant highway 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/).

**More Tips...**

- Avoid taking medications that cause drowsiness.
- 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.
- Correct your own unsafe driving habits that are likely to endanger, antagonize or provoke other drivers.
- 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.
- If despite all your planning, you are going to arrive late, accept it, and avoid aggressive driving.
- If you think you have a problem, seek help. Look for anger or stress management classes or self-help books.
- Keep your cool in traffic; be patient and courteous to other drivers and do not take their actions personally.
- 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.
- 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.
- Set a realistic goal for the number of miles you can safely drive each day.
- Stop at regular intervals when driving long distances. Get out of the car every 2 hours to stretch and walk briskly.

**Motor Vehicle Safety Program Evaluation**

ELEMENT	UNSATISFACTORY	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT
<b>Written Driver Safety Policy</b>	No written nor verbal Driver Safety Policy supported by Upper Management	Verbal policy from upper management	Written & enforced Driver Safety policy with specific rules & regulations.	In addition to GOOD – the Driver Safety policy is reviewed periodically.
<b>Motor Vehicle Record Check (MVR)</b>	MVR are not currently completed	MVR are checked initially only. No consistency.	MVR are completed on all new drivers & all existing drivers periodically (every 1 or 2 years)	In addition to GOOD – MVR are completed more than once per year. A formal policy addressing moving violations is in place.
<b>Employee Selection &amp;</b>	No effort made to screen employees	Informal effort made to hire the best	Management has approved specific	In addition to GOOD – minimum skills and

<b>Placement</b>		qualified employee, but no specific written policy enforced by upper management.	written guidelines for hiring. Required skills & limitations are considered. New employee safety orientation program.	physical requirements are developed. Conduct background screening for all new drivers.
<b>Road Test</b>	Road Tests are not completed.	Road Test to include a written driver performance evaluation, are completed on an inconsistent basis.	Managers consistently conduct road tests on all new drivers, and complete a driver performance evaluation.	In addition to GOOD – all road tests are completed by the Safety person and a passing score is required. Random ride-along by Supervisors.
<b>Seat Belts</b>	No written policy.	Seat belt usage is verbally discussed, but not enforced.	A written and well enforced seat belt policy exists.	In addition to GOOD – immediate action is taken when a driver is observed not wearing seatbelts. Formal inspections are made on a consistent basis.
<b>Preventive Maintenance</b>	No set scheduled maintenance program in place.	Some preventive maintenance completed, but records are not adequately maintained.	Preventive maintenance completed on a routine basis and maintenance records are kept up-to-date.	In addition to GOOD – Prompt action is taken and vehicles are pulled out of service until repairs are completed.
<b>Cell Phones</b>	Management issues or allows cell phones. No guidance/policy.	Management outlines verbal guidance regarding cell phones. Accountability is not established.	Formal written and well enforced cell phone policy.	In addition to GOOD – immediate action is taken when the cell phone policy is violated. Alternate communications devices and/or hand-free aids.
<b>Pre/Post Trip Inspections</b>	No inspection guidelines in place.	Some inspection guidelines in place, but not monitored or enforced.	Daily inspection guidelines in place. Completing a pre/post trip inspection form is required.	In addition to GOOD – inspection forms are reviewed by management & immediate action is taken. Periodic inspection of vehicles by top management, to include taking photos of each vehicle.
<b>Driver Safety Talks and</b>	No written policy. No meetings or formal	Meetings are conducted on an	Safety meetings or talks are conducted	In addition to GOOD – Safety talk subjects are

<b>Training</b>	training conducted.	inconsistent basis. No documentation kept on record.	regularly. Formal training is provided to new drivers. Records are on file.	based on risk, trends and needs. All drivers are provided with periodic driver training, to include a 4 hour Defensive Driving Course.
<b>Accident Reporting &amp; Investigation</b>	No written policy. Inadequate corrective action taken.	Inconsistency in management investigation of accidents and review of completed reports.	Consistency in management training, loss investigation and record keeping.	In addition to GOOD – all investigative reports are reviewed by a safety committee and firm corrective action measures are taken. Trends are monitored. Employees involved in accidents are required to attend an outside Defensive Driving Class.
<b>Disciplinary Policy</b>	No written disciplinary policy related to Vehicle Safety is in place.	Some efforts made. Verbal warnings to drivers.	Disciplinary policy in place. Meetings are held to discuss violations. Events documented in employee file.	In addition to GOOD – management has a specific 2 to 3 step rule which can result in employee termination. Each driver issued a citation is required to attend a Defensive Driving Class.

- Circle the rating which most accurately reflects the present status of your safety program and transfer the results to the summary sheet.
- These eleven activities will help evaluate the effectiveness of a Motor Vehicle Safety Program.

**MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY PROGRAM SUMMARY SHEET**

Element	Present Status (Unsatisfactory, Fair, Good, Excellent)	Goal	Target Date
1. Written Driver Safety Policy			
2. Motor Vehicle Record Check (MVR)			
3. Employee Selection & Placement			
4. Road Test			
5. Seat Belts			
6. Preventive Maintenance			
7. Cell Phones			
8. Pre/Post Trip Inspections			
9. Driver Safety Talks			
10. Accident Reporting & Investigation			
11. Disciplinary Policy			

**COMMENTS:**

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Date Completed: \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_