

# Guidelines for establishing an effective driver safety program.



Give a copy of your driver's handbook to every individual who operates a vehicle while in the course and scope of employment.

As an employer, you may be responsible for the driving skills of any employee who operates a vehicle while “in the course and scope of employment.” You could be held accountable if one of your employees causes an accident while working for you, even if they are driving their own vehicle. To assist your drivers and protect your business, you should implement a basic driver safety program. While this brochure provides a set of guidelines to help you get started, you may want to obtain additional help from the resources listed on Page 4.

There are five essential components to any driver safety program:

- 1. A comprehensive driver's handbook** — A written document, or collection of documents, that summarizes policies, procedures and the company's intentions to consistently enforce safe driving practices.
  - Provide a copy to all new hires and existing employees for whom driving cars or trucks on behalf of your business is included in their job description
  - Promptly share any updates to your handbook with all drivers
  - Require all drivers to sign an acknowledgement form indicating they've received and reviewed a copy of your driver's handbook and have been given an opportunity to ask clarifying questions, and/or hold a brief training session during which you describe each section of the handbook and address any questions immediately
  - Review and revise your driver handbook every 24 months to make sure it remains current and to address any exceptions made during the past 24-month cycle
- 2. A healthy, supportive business environment** — A clear understanding among managers and employees that your commitment to driving safety is consistent with other policies that establish your company as a responsible employer.
  - Instruct managers that they should never place drivers in unsafe situations or direct them to break traffic laws to make deliveries on time, but instead should ensure that proper planning is used to avoid the need to rush or violate laws
  - Have managers monitor employees' compliance with safe driving policies to ensure consistent application across your business
  - Ask all employees who drive for your business, regardless of frequency, to sign a safe driving commitment, such as the form available to you from Nationwide® (see Page 4)

## Commercial Fleet Safety : Driver Safety Programs



Tailor driver training to fit the needs and exposures presented in your operations.

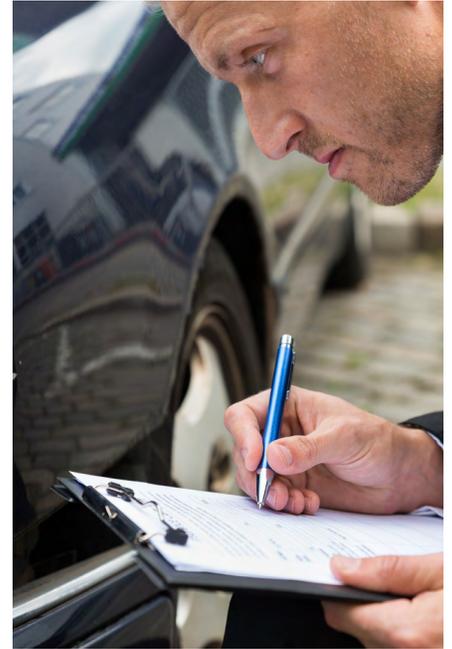
**3. Sound driver management practices** — A carefully developed and consistently applied set of procedures for selecting, screening, monitoring and training drivers. Because drivers are the foundation of any fleet safety program, how your employees handle their vehicles, check their emotions during frustrating traffic conditions and nurture safe driving habits are critical to obtaining good results.

- **Validate each individual's skills** by sharing with them a clear, detailed job description that defines driving duties and requirements, conducting a personal interview and requesting that they complete a written application to verify basic qualifications
- **Investigate each employee's driving history**, including tickets and past collisions as reported on state-issued motor vehicle reports (MVRs) and measure that history against a company-derived benchmark of performance; excessive tickets or crashes lead to probation, retraining and possible suspension of driving duties; make time to define a set threshold which defines the maximum number of tickets and/or crashes a driver may accumulate over a three-year period, then consistently hold drivers accountable to that threshold; to see a typical threshold chart, refer to the Nationwide brochure, *The MVR: An essential tool for qualifying fleet drivers* (CMO-0372AO)
- **Design initial and ongoing driver training** to fit the needs and exposures presented in your operations; for example, if relevant to your region, instruction on driving in snow and ice may be appropriate, and if your teams drive off-road in rough terrain, you may want to focus on navigating obstacles; also, each year the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS) sponsors a Drive Safely Work Week (visit [trafficsafety.org/drivesafelyworkweek](http://trafficsafety.org/drivesafelyworkweek)), giving you access to quality materials to facilitate an annual emphasis on driver safety
- **Monitor the ongoing activity of your drivers** to verify compliance with published policies and confirm they are not taking excessive risks behind the wheel; you can use a variety of programs to help managers gather these insights and provide corrective coaching when needed; these include How's My Driving? report hotlines, GPS or telematics systems, video recording devices that show crash footage or other events, and passive black box recorders that enable a download of information at the end of the business day or week
- **Hold coaching sessions or refresher training** whenever drivers are found to be violating policies or taking risks through aggressive driving habits; it is critical that your managers engage the offending employee with courses designed to force a change to behaviors and habits so they comply with stated policies



## Commercial Fleet Safety : Driver Safety Programs

- **Establish driver incentive, reward or recognition programs** that recognize drivers who consistently perform their daily tasks accident-free and inspire others to pay attention to their own performance; such programs range from simple to complex, and there are third-party vendors who can administer an incentive program for you
- 4. Job-appropriate vehicle management** — Practices that enhance fleet safety by emphasizing the selection and management of vehicles appropriate for the types of business transportation they'll be called upon to provide.
- Order vehicles with appropriate safety devices (e.g., extended mirrors, traction control, stability systems) matched to the jobs they must perform
  - Choose a vehicle based on its maximum expected load, instead of one with a lower load rating assuming it will rarely be overloaded; going the latter route could lead to disaster if the vehicle breaks an axle or rolls over
  - Because failure to properly maintain a vehicle can lead to even more costly repairs and delays, approach inspection and maintenance practices in an organized manner, taking care to:
    - Encourage drivers to immediately report defects that could lead to a breakdown or accident
    - Follow manufacturer's specifications found in the owner's manual
    - Check with your equipment dealer, leasing company or local mechanic about setting up a diary system to get all vehicles rotated into and out of the shop on a reasonable schedule
- 5. Prompt incident reporting and analysis.** — Effective management of collision information that helps you diagnose needed enhancements to your safety program. Drivers should receive training on what to do if they're involved in a collision and on how to properly use incident-reporting kits to make sure all critical information is collected so data can be used to:
- Gain insights into how to prevent future collisions
  - Spot patterns in activity or specific operators who may need additional coaching, training or revalidation of basic qualifications before full driving privileges are reinstated
  - Issue recommendations for program enhancements that may save other drivers' lives
  - Determine fleet safety incident rates based on miles driven
  - Benchmark results with companies similar to your own



Encourage drivers to promptly report defects that could lead to a breakdown or accident.

Questions? Contact  
 Nationwide Loss Control  
 Services: 1-866-808-2101  
 or [LCS@nationwide.com](mailto:LCS@nationwide.com).

## Topics to consider when developing your safety policy.

You should insist that all company vehicle operators follow basic safe driving practices, and communicate your expectations through clear policy statements on each of the following topics:

- Distracted driving
- Business vs. personal use of vehicles
- Authorized drivers and passengers
- Employee-driver personal insurance requirements
- Mandatory seat belt use
- Prohibition of drug and alcohol use
- Security measures to protect parked/unoccupied vehicles
- Adherence to traffic laws and consequences for violations

## Additional resources for employers.

You can obtain additional suggestions, templates and ideas from a range of sources:

- **Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS)** — [trafficsafety.org/safety](http://trafficsafety.org/safety)
- **Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS)** — [iihs.org](http://iihs.org)
- **Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)** — [osha.gov/SLTC/motorvehiclesafety](http://osha.gov/SLTC/motorvehiclesafety)
- **Centers for Disease Control (CDC)** — [cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/index.html](http://cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/index.html)

Also, we encourage you to incorporate the use of the following forms into your company's driver safety program:

- **Safe Driving Commitment Form for Company Vehicle Operators**
- **Vehicle Inspection Report Form**

To obtain copies of these documents, contact your Nationwide agent or your Loss Control Services representative.



Your safety policy should provide clear guidance on topics such as distracted driving and adherence to all traffic laws.

Providing solutions to help our members manage risk.<sup>SM</sup>

For your risk management and safety needs, contact Nationwide Loss Control Services: 1-866-808-2101 or [LCS@nationwide.com](mailto:LCS@nationwide.com).