

Safe Driving Practices

Perhaps some or all of your workers' duties involve driving vehicles on or off your premises. Some may have been licensed drivers for decades, with flawless driving records. Regardless of experience, periodic refreshers in safe driving practices may help keep their records flawless and your insurance rates low. Maintaining a good driving history can reduce your chance of incurring expenses, downtime costs, missed deadlines, & dissatisfied customers caused by worker injuries or deaths from traffic accidents.

This sheet lists a few safe driving practices, but is not all encompassing. Contact your local chapter of the National Safety Council, school Driver Education department, Department of Transportation office, or highway patrol office if you wish to arrange comprehensive defensive driving courses.

Examples of safe driving practices:

- Verify driver's Motor Vehicle Report (MVR) records yearly to ensure licenses are valid & to discover any violations (*e.g. speeding tickets*); consider assigning those with unacceptable MVR's to other duties
- Verify that all drivers have the proper driving permit, e.g., CDL – class A, B or C
- Permit only trained & properly licensed people to drive specialized vehicles
- Check tires, lights, horn, & brakes of company vehicles before driving; repair or replace as needed
- Check tires, lights, horn, & brakes of employees' vehicles; require repair or replacement as needed or forbid their driving unsafe vehicles for work duties
- Wear safety belts to prevent being ejected in event of accident (*safety belts nearly double the chance of survival*)
- Drive sober (*many states consider driving while using legal drugs which cause drowsiness, such as sinus pills, to be "driving under the influence"*)
- Rest as needed (*a drowsy driver can be as dangerous as a drunk one*)
- Be aware of the distribution of the cargo weight (shifting loads may cause loss of control)
- Follow vehicle owner's manual for braking techniques (e.g. many manufacturers advise against pumping anti-lock brakes)
- Do not exceed maximum speed limit or drive under posted minimum speed limit
- Count the number of seconds it takes to reach a fixed object (*e.g. speed limit sign*) which the vehicle in front passed & then keep at least 2-seconds of distance behind that vehicle if the road & weather are good; maintain more time if they are not
- Check blind spots before changing lanes; (*look over your shoulder or use mirrors if you do not have a rear window or if the load blocks the view from a rear window*)
- Stay out of other vehicles' blind spots (*e.g. semis, buses*)
- Pull over to side of road when making or receiving a cellular phone call
- Use defensive driving skills
- Verify the route prior to leaving for the job