

Loss Control Program - Fleets

The cost of motor vehicle accidents, including human life and corporate bottom lines, is astounding. The cost is not only reflected in higher automobile liability and workers' compensation insurance premiums, but also in business disruptions and employee injuries. Today, automobile accidents account for 10 percent of all job-related disabling injuries and 30 percent of all job-related deaths.

The magnitude of the problem demands a sound loss control effort to minimize its impact whenever vehicle operations are part of a business. The guidelines below may be applied to develop a program that best meets your particular needs.

Driver Selection

- A. Hiring Criteria** – A written plan providing hiring criteria should exist. It should address acceptable driving experience, motor vehicle records, and the physical condition of the prospective driver.
- B. Employment Application** – All new drivers should be required to complete an application that provides employment history, driving experience, necessary personal information, medical history, etc.
- C. Reference Checks** – Documented reference checks must be made with previous employers to verify past driving experience.
- D. Motor Vehicle Records** – Motor vehicle records should be ordered on all driver applicants. MVRs should be followed up at least annually and after a driving incident. Uniform criteria should be established to determine the acceptability of driving records.
- E. Road Tests** – Drivers should be tested in a vehicle of the type they'll be required to operate to determine familiarity with equipment, ability to operate it under the various conditions that will be encountered, driving attitude, and awareness of motor vehicle laws.
- F. Introduction Period** – Drivers should be advised that they are on a probationary status until motor vehicle records and reference checks are accepted and until their driving abilities are considered adequate.

Preventive Maintenance

- A. Assigned Vehicles** – Drivers should be assigned to specific vehicles to establish accountability for all losses and to instill a sense of pride and care for the assigned vehicle.
- B. Driver Inspection** – Prior to a vehicle leaving the terminal, it should be inspected by the driver to ensure that it is in safe operating condition. Any deficiencies found should be reported to the maintenance department for correction before the vehicle leaves the terminal. Upon returning to the terminal, the driver should sign-off, indicating any changes in the condition of the vehicle.
- C. Vehicle Replacement** – Criteria should be established and strictly followed for replacement of vehicles due to mileage, maintenance cost, age, or other valid criteria.
- D. Scheduled Maintenance** – A systematic inspection and maintenance schedule should be established based on mileage, hours of operation, or some other designated time. Individual vehicle records should be kept and should readily indicate when the next scheduled inspection and/or service is due.

Accident Review

- A. Reporting** – An accident report form must be completed by the driver immediately after an accident.

- B. Investigation** – All accidents should be investigated by a fleet safety person to determine the cause of the accident and to:
1. Retrain the driver to prevent recurrence.
 2. Identify poor maintenance procedures.
 3. Identify extra-hazard routes and consider alternate routing.
 4. Identify accident trends.
 5. Serve as a basis for a driver disciplinary action program.

Driver Supervision

- A. Disciplinary Action Program** – A program should be established providing criteria for unacceptable driving activity and appropriate disciplinary action. The program could include:
1. Number and type of violations and accidents in a given period.
 2. Types of disciplinary action such as restriction of driving privileges, docking of pay for physical damage deductibles, termination of employment, etc.
- B. Monitoring Driving Activities** – A method to monitor the driving activities of the operation should be developed. Based upon the operation, one or more of the following may be appropriate:
1. Check in-check out
 2. Call in
 3. Checkpoints
 4. Vehicle operation recording devices
 5. Road patrols
 6. GPS
- C. Incentive Program** – Some type of recognition for driving safely should be an integral part of the loss control effort. This can range from personal recognition within the organization, to special privileges, merchandise or cash awards.
- D. Promotion Program** – The organization should attempt to stress the importance of driving safety through:
1. Safety meetings
 2. Supervisory contacts
 3. Posters
 4. Driver handout material