

Driving and Avoiding Roadway Crashes

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Now more than ever, a vast majority of Texas employers rely upon some facet of the trucking industry for their supplies/raw materials and/or for the delivery of their products and services. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) preliminary data for 2008, Texas employers reported 200 fatalities resulted from work-related transportation accidents. The BLS nonfatal data shows 4,360 cases in 2008 that required days away from work due to transportation accidents. For the employers and injured employees, a workplace crash can have far-reaching financial, medical, and legal consequences. In order to reduce this trend in workplace fatalities and injuries, the development and implementation of effective transportation safety programs is essential. Let us now examine this situation more closely.

Who is at risk?

Anyone who operates a motor vehicle as part of his or her job is at risk of being involved in a roadway crash. Millions of other employees who are not full-time professional drivers operate company or personal vehicles for deliveries, sales and repair calls, client visits, and many other tasks.

What can an employer do?

Unlike other workplaces, the roadway is not a closed environment. Preventing work-related roadway crashes requires strategies that combine traffic safety principles and sound safety management practices. Although employers cannot control roadway conditions, they can promote safe driving behavior by providing safety information to employees and by setting and enforcing driver safety policies. Roadway crashes are not an unavoidable part of doing business. Employers can take steps to protect their employees and their companies.

Policies

- Assign a key member of the management team the responsibility and authority to set and enforce a comprehensive driver safety policy.
- Enforce mandatory seat belt use.
- Develop work schedules that allow employees to obey speed limits and to follow applicable federal and state hours-of-service and motor carrier safety regulations.



Courtesy of TX DOT - Traffic Operation Traffic Safety Section

- Do not require employees to drive irregular hours or far beyond their normal working hours.
- Adhere to local laws regarding cell phone use when operating motor vehicles.
- Discourage employees from conducting business on cell phones while driving.

Fleet Management

- Adopt a structured vehicle maintenance program.
- Provide company vehicles that offer the highest possible levels of occupant protection.

Safety Programs

- Teach employees strategies for recognizing and managing driver fatigue and in-vehicle distractions.
- Provide training to employees operating specialized motor vehicles or equipment.
- Emphasize to employees the need to follow safe driving practices on and off the job.

Driver Performance

- Ensure that employees assigned to drive on the job have a valid driver's license that is appropriate for the type of vehicle to be driven.
- Check driving records of prospective employees, and perform periodic rechecks after hiring.

Driver Performance (cont)

- Maintain complete and accurate records of employees' driving performance.

This factsheet was published with information from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation (TDI-DWC) and is considered accurate at the time of publication.

The Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation (TDI-DWC) also has the following publications with safety information to help prevent roadway crashes:

- Fleet Motor Safety Program
- Driving at Work
- Driving and Being Prepared
- Highway Safety Program in the Workplace
- Vehicle Safety Checklist
- Driving Distractions
- Road Rage
- Defensive Driving
- Driver Fatigue