TDI | Safety @ Work
Division of Workers' Compensation

# Occupational Driving Safety

Workplace Program

Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation
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# INTRODUCTION

Workplace Program

Transportation crashes are the leading cause of death and injury in Texas and throughout the United States.[1] Every 12 minutes, someone dies in a motor vehicle crash in the United States, and every 10 seconds, an injury occurs.[2] Many of these crashes occur during the workday or during the commute to and from work.

Employers bear the cost of work-related driving injuries. Motor vehicle crashes cost U.S. employers over $60 billion annually in medical care, legal expenses, property damage, and lost productivity. The average cost to employers for an on-the-job-driving accident averages $16,500. When a worker is injured, the average employer cost is $74,000. If a death is involved, costs can exceed $500,000.[3]

These costs for work-related crashes drive up the price of benefits such as workers' compensation, Social Security, and private health and disability insurance. They also increase company expenses to administer these programs.

Whether managing a fleet of vehicles, overseeing a mobile sales force, or simply employing commuters, an Occupational Driving Safety Workplace Program can greatly reduce the risks faced by employees and their families. It also protects a company's bottom line.

1 Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2018. Occupational Injuries/Illnesses and Fatal Injuries Profiles. Webpage. https://data.bls.gov/gqt/InitialPage. Accessed January 29, 2020.

2 NETS, NHTSA, and OSHA. Guidelines for Employers to Reduce Motor Vehicle Crashes. Website. https://www.osha.gov/Publications/motor_vehicle_guide.html. Accessed January 29, 2020.

3 Occupational Safety and Health Administration, We Can Help, Guidelines for Employer to Reduce Motor Vehicle Crashes. Website. https://www.osha.gov/Publications/motor_vehicle_guide.pdf. Accessed January 29, 2020.

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# Where to Start

Starting an Occupational Driving Safety Workplace Program is one of the simplest and most cost-effective ways of reducing job-related driving injuries, fatalities, and associated costs. Creating a driving safety program:

- saves lives;
- reduces the risk of life-altering injuries;
- protects an organization's human and financial resources;
- guards against potential company and personal liabilities; and
- makes a positive impact on employee behavior and company profits.

A safety driving program also shows employees that management is concerned with their health and welfare. Additionally, it demonstrates to the community that the company is a good corporate citizen. Even the smallest efforts in training can bring significant health and cost savings.

## Calculate the Costs for Motor Vehicle Crashes

To calculate the costs of motor vehicle crashes, start by collecting data on both the direct and indirect company costs of all employee-involved motor vehicle crashes. To understand the cost motor vehicle crashes have on an organization's bottom line, use the "Costs of Traffic Crashes to Employer Worksheet " on the following page. Initially, select one recent crash to show how large and complex these losses often are. Depending on an organization's size, some data may need to come from the human resources manager, the safety manager, a workers' compensation representative, accountants, or motor vehicle insurance representatives. After learning to complete the worksheet for one crash, apply all the organization's crashes in a chosen timeframe, usually by year. This will show the organization's crash loss profile.

***Using the Worksheet***

Show each itemized expense that applies to the company, collect the needed data, and total the company's costs. If the company has incurred expenses that are not on this list, add them to the worksheet. Once the costs of motor vehicle crashes are added together, it is easy to justify the expense of starting a driver safety program.

# Costs of Motor Vehicle Crashes to Employers Worksheet

## Direct Costs to the Organization

| | |
|---|---|
| Workers' compensation benefits | $ _____ |
| Health care costs | $ _____ |
| Increases in medical insurance premiums | $ _____ |
| Auto insurance, liability claims, and settlements | $ _____ |
| Physical and vocational rehabilitation costs | $ _____ |
| Life insurance and survivor benefits | $ _____ |
| Group health insurance dependent coverage | $ _____ |
| Property damage (equipment, products, etc.) | $ _____ |
| Motor vehicle repair and replacement | $ _____ |
| EMS cost (ambulance or medivac helicopter) | $ _____ |
| Vehicle towing, impoundment, and inspection fees | $ _____ |
| Municipality or utility fees for damage to roads, signs, or poles | $ _____ |

**Direct Total** **$** _____

## Indirect Costs

| | |
|---|---|
| Supervisor's time (rescheduling, making special arrangements) | $ _____ |
| Fleet manager's time to coordinate vehicle repair, replacement, etc. | $ _____ |
| Reassignment of personnel to cover for missing employees (less efficient) | $ _____ |
| Overtime pay (to cover work of missing employees) | $ _____ |
| Employee replacement | $ _____ |
| Re-entry and retraining of injured employees | $ _____ |
| Administrative costs (documentation of injuries, treatment, absences, crash investigation) | $ _____ |
| Inspection costs | $ _____ |
| Failure to meet customer requirements resulting in loss of business | $ _____ |
| Bad publicity, loss of business | $ _____ |

**Indirect Total** **$** _____

**TOTAL** **$** _____

# Success Stories: The Results

There are many examples of the positive return-on-investment (ROI) that small, medium, and large companies gained after starting a driving safety program. Liberty Mutual Insurance Company reported in its Executive Survey of Workplace Safety that 61% of surveyed business owners received an ROI of $3.00 on every $1.00 they spent improving workplace driving safety.[4] Other success stories reported by the National Safety Council,[5] and reprinted with permission, include:

**2019 CITY OF AUSTIN**
The City of Austin Public Works Department trained 100% of its drivers through defensive driving instruction and saw a **50% reduction in preventable collisions**.

**2019 ENLINK**
EnLink installed flashing lights at entrances and changed start times of construction work teams to prevent them from driving during high traffic times, resulting in a **22% decrease in overall vehicle incidents in 2018** compared to 2016 and 2017.

**2019 DOLESE**
Driving cameras have captured the story of Dolese's safety success after mandating seat belt use and banning cell phone use while driving. Since 2016, Dolese has **decreased coachable events by 54%**, and continues to see reductions year to year.

**2018 TEXAS MUTUAL**
As part of its comprehensive employee traffic safety program, Texas Mutual committed to a stricter phone-free driving policy, shifting the culture from one of constant connectivity to one that allows employees to safely disconnect if they are behind the wheel. Since implementing a driving safety program, Texas Mutual has seen a **61% decrease in preventable crashes**.

**2018 STAR SHUTTLE**
Star Shuttle's safety training and ongoing safety challenges were reflected in their crash frequency statistics when they recorded an **80% reduction in preventable crashes** during the first quarter of 2018 compared to the same time in 2017.

**2017 CITY OF ARLINGTON**
Through its efforts to make driving safer, the City of Arlington **reduced the number of auto liability incidents by 13%**.

**2017 FROZEN FOOD EXPRESS**
**Liability payouts have decreased by 76% since 2014.**

**2015 CITY OF SUGAR LAND**
As a result of their efforts and training, the City of Sugar Land experienced an **83% decrease in crash-related costs and 31% decrease in crash-related claims** in the fiscal year 2014.

**2015 SPECTRA ENERGY**
Spectra Energy experienced a **50% reduction in preventable vehicle incidents** since program implementation.

# Success Stories: The Results

Infographic reprinted by permission from the National Safety Council.

[4] Liberty Mutual Insurance Company [2001]. Liberty Mutual Executive Survey of Workplace Safety.
[5] National Safety Council. Employer Transportation Safety: One the Road to Zero, 2019 Report. Website. https://txdrivingconcern.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Our-Driving-Concern-White-Paper.pdf. Accessed January 28, 2020.

# Get Management's Commitment and Employees' Involvement

Using the information from the  worksheet helps management know the exact company payout for job-related motor vehicle crashes. This data helps show that a driving safety program makes good business and financial sense.

Senior management can provide leadership, set policies, and assign resources, such as staff and budget, to help create a strong safety culture. Actively encouraging employee participation and involvement at all levels of the organization will help the effort succeed. Involve workers and their representatives in all phases of planning and development. Build the company's plan around the four elements of a driving safety workplace program.

## The Four Elements in a Driving Safety Workplace Program

**1**

### The Roadway Workplace

If employees are in a motorized vehicle as part of their job, consider the vehicle and roadway as an extension of the workplace.

**2**

### The Driver

If employees operate a motorized vehicle as part of their job, be aware of the common causes of roadway crashes and related injuries.

**3**

### The Vehicle

If the company has a fleet, or if employees drive personal or leased vehicles as part of their job, ensure that the vehicles are mechanically sound and operating propely.

**4**

### The Environment

If employees are in a motorized vehicle as part of their job, they should be prepared for conditions outside of the vehicle that might affect their trip.

# THE ROADWAY WORKPLACE

Roadways are an extension of the workplace for employees who use motorized vehicle as part of their jobs. When developing a safety plan, write programs and policies that address occupational roadway situations.

***Develop an Action Plan***
Consider the qualifications for commercial and non-commercial drivers when developing an action plan. Design policies with defined objectives and expectations.

***Set concrete objectives***
Write company objectives in terms of measurable behaviors.

***Set a realistic date for meeting each objective***
Develop a realistic timeline for meeting objectives. Example:

> "Raise employee use of safety belts on the job from 62% to 90% in the next 60 days."

Each month, plan activities that support the company's objectives. When designing these activities, make sure they relate directly to the attitudes and behaviors the company wants to change or create. Assign responsibilities clearly. Example:

> "Personnel will distribute a fact sheet on the importance of safety belt use to every employee this week."

***Design a plan for documenting company results***
Assign specific personnel and recordkeeping systems to document each activity designed to reach company objectives. Mention any problems in carrying out these steps.

***Create an evaluation plan***
Create a method to evaluate the success of the company's program. Collect baseline data on key factors such as seat belt use before carrying out the driving safety program. Decide how to measure changes in behaviors and attitudes, who will oversee evaluations, and how often evaluations will be conducted.

At regular intervals, evaluate the employees' progress toward reaching the company's program objectives. Consider each objective carefully when deciding what evaluation method to use.

If the management or safety officers are having trouble evaluating a certain objective, maybe the objective is too vague. Consider revising it so that it describes a measurable or observable behavior, as in the following example:

**Difficult to measure:** "Employees understand the concept behind the distracted driver program."

**Easier to measure:** "One hundred percent of employees are able when asked to define a 'distracted driver' as someone who does any activity that takes the driver's attention away from driving."

Samples of other well-written, easy-to-measure objectives include:

1. Dollars spent on workers' compensation will drop by at least 10% between the first and second quarters of this year.

2. The number of employees observed wearing seat belts or helmets when entering the parking lot on annual check day will increase from 83% to 100%.

3. The number of work-related preventable crashes will decrease by 25% by the end of the first year after starting the Occupational Driving Safety Workplace Program.

Evaluation of the program is ongoing. If employees' job-related driving habits are improving, great! Share the information with management and the workforce to justify the program and reinforce training. However, if the evaluation shows that success is not yet achieved, don't be discouraged. Continue to refocus the company's driving safety program efforts in more productive ways to protect employees from injury and the company from lost productivity and costly expenses.

# Write Policies and Procedures

Write a clear and complete set of occupational driving safety policies. Include a written statement about the company's pledge to reduce driving-related workplace vehicle crashes. These policies create the cornerstone of an effective driver safety program.

Once written and approved, share these policies with all employees. Post the policies in the workplace, hand out copies often, and talk about the policies at company meetings. Offer rewards for sticking to the rules and point to the outcome of ignoring them.

Below are sample policies that can be customized for use. More samples of driver policies and safety programs, along with roadway crash prevention information is available at DWC's Occupational Driving Safety Resources webpage.

***Sample Alcohol/Drug Use Policy***

"[Name of company/organization] has a vital interest in keeping safe, healthy working conditions for its employees. Therefore, the use of alcohol or illegal drugs by any employee during duty hours is not allowed. Duty hours are all working hours, including breaks and on-call periods, whether on or off company grounds. The use of alcohol or illegal drugs while performing company business or while in a company facility is not allowed. The use of alcohol or illegal drugs during non-working hours under conditions that this company determines may hurt the company's reputation in the community is also not allowed."

***Sample Seat Belt Use Policy***

"[Name of Company/Organization] is aware that seat belt use is an important way to protect employees. Wearing seat belts can reduce the risk of dying in a traffic crash by 45% in a car and up to 60% in a truck or SUV.

We care about our employees and want to make sure that no one is injured or killed in a tragedy that could have been prevented by using seat belts. Therefore, all employees of [Name of Company/Organization] must wear seat belts when operating a company-owned vehicle, any vehicle on company grounds, or any vehicle used for company business. Additionally, all people inside

company vehicles must wear seat belts or, where appropriate, child restraints when riding in a company-owned vehicle or a personal vehicle used for company business. All employees and their families are strongly encouraged always to use seat belts and proper child restraints whenever driving or riding in any vehicle. Seat belt use is now a policy of the highest priority."

***Check Motor Vehicle Records (MVR)***

Check the driving records of all employees who drive for work purposes. Screen out drivers who have poor driving records. Review the MVR periodically to ensure that the driver keeps a good driving record. Clearly define the number of violations an employee driver can have before losing their work driving privileges. Provide more training as needed. Information on requesting a Texas Motor Vehicle Record is available at DWC's Roadway Workplace Safety webpage.

***Include Driver Assessments and Agreements***

Driver qualifications may include a valid Texas driver's license, a minimum number of moving violation convictions, and a completed driving skills assessments. Additionally, consider these options for assessing driving skills:

- conduct pre-hire driver screening tests;
- install in-vehicle monitoring systems;
- observe driver performance;
- test driving skills with a third-party vendor; and
- use employees experienced in specialized motor vehicle operations, such as hauling equipment or large vehicles, to shadow drivers.

Make a contract with all employees who drive for work purposes, whether in company vehicles or in their personal vehicles. By signing contracts, driver admit that they understand and are aware of the organization's driving safety policies, procedures, and expectations about driver performance, vehicle maintenance, and reporting of moving violations.

Additional information on driver assessments and agreements is available at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Model Driver Screening and Evaluation Program.

***Manage Travel***

Employees and employers should assess the need for and risks of each work-related trip. Less travel means less risk. If an employee must drive, choose the safest route, time of day, vehicle, and best weather conditions for each trip. Employees and supervisors should make sure each trip meets business needs in the safest way possible. Additional resources on Texas travel information and highway conditions are available at DWC's Journey Management for Occupational Driving Safety webpage.

***Review Applicable Laws***

It is important to know which local, state, and federal regulations govern the company's vehicles and drivers. Information on applicable laws is available at DWC's Occupational Driving Safety Resources website.

# THE DRIVER

To help prevent roadway crashes, provide driving training regularly and make employees who drive on the job aware of the common causes of vehicle accidents and injuries.

## Driving Training

Train employees who operate motorized vehicles on the job in all aspects of the company's occupational driving safety program. Explain the risks of driving and the need to treat the vehicle and the roadway as part of the workplace. Training should include:

- employer occupational driving policies;
- the importance of focused driving;
- how to operate and maneuver the types of vehicles employees will drive;
- sharing the road with other vehicles and those vehicles' limitations;
- defensive driving skills;
- avoiding rear-ending, backing into, and sideswiping other vehicles;
- driving in poor weather and checking road conditions; and
- policies related to vehicle maintenance.

Training should also cover the common causes of vehicle accidents.

***Distracted Driving***

Address how to avoid distractions and the importance of staying alert and focused on driving. Any activity other than driving is a distraction. A moment of inattention is all that is needed for a crash to occur. The following behaviors are some common driving distractions:

- talking, texting, or using the internet on the phone;
- using a Global Positioning System (GPS);
- eating, drinking, or smoking;
- applying makeup or conducting other personal grooming;
- reading or watching videos;
- focusing on passengers or pets;
- reaching for items; or
- focusing on distractions outside the vehicle.

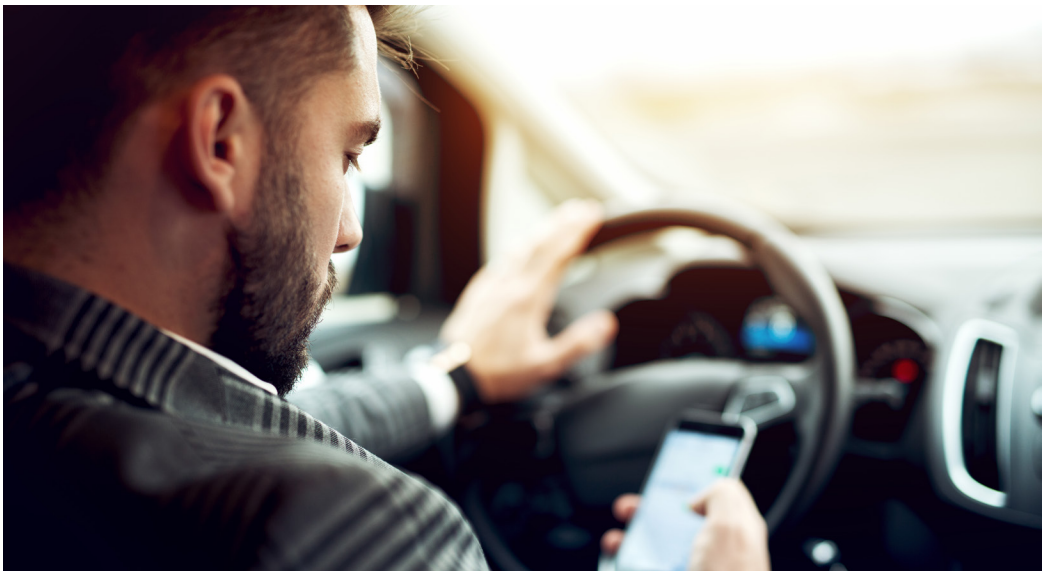
Each day in the United States distracted driving accounts for about nine highway deaths and more than 1,000 serious crash injuries.[6] With hectic schedules and road delays, many employees feel pressured to multi-task to meet personal and work-related duties. More time on the road means less time at home and at work. However, "drive time" can never mean "downtime." Drivers make an estimated 200 decisions each mile they travel.[7] It is critical for employers to stress that when driving for work, safe driving is everyone's primary job.

Tips on managing driver distractions are available at DWC's Distracted Driving webpage.

***Seat Belt Use***

Every employee in a motorized vehicle should wear the proper safety restraints. Wearing a seat belt helps keep occupants from being ejected in a crash and increases the chances of surviving by 45%. In pickup trucks and SUVs, that number jumps to 60%.

[6] Centers of Disease Control and Prevention. Motor Vehicle Safety. Distracted Driving. Website. https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/distracted_driving/index.html. Accessed January 31, 2020.
[7] United State Department of Labor. Occupational Safety & Health Administration. We Can Help. Website. https://www.osha.gov/Publications/motor_vehicle_guide.html. Accessed January 31, 2020.



Seat belts are the best way to reduce deaths and serious injuries in traffic crashes. Seat belts save nearly 12,000 lives and prevent an estimated 325,000 serious injuries in America each year.[8] During a crash, anyone not wearing a seat belt can slam into the steering wheel, windshield, or other parts of the interior. They can also be ejected from the vehicle.

Resources to promote the importance of seat belt use is available at DWC's Occupational Driving Safety webpage.

### *Impaired Driving*

Alcohol use is involved in 40% of all fatal motor vehicle crashes and 39% of all work-related crashes.[9] It is estimated that three in every 10 Americans will be involved in an impaired driving-related crash sometime in their life.[10] Alcohol, certain prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, and illegal drugs can all affect a person's alertness, concentration, coordination, and reaction time while driving. Businesses pay a high price for alcohol and drug abuse.

Any employee who operates a motor vehicle at work should understand the dangers of driving while impaired. While drug and alcohol testing is required for some driver's licenses, employers should consider testing all employees who drive or are involved in motor vehicle accidents to prevent this behavior. Employers should review the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) guidance on employee drug testing and DWC's Impaired Driving resources.

### *Fatigued Driving*

Tired drivers are often as dangerous as impaired drivers. They have slower reaction times and can fall asleep quickly. Fatigued or drowsy driving results in about 100,000 crashes each year, resulting in approximately 40,000 injuries and 1,550 deaths.[11]

Consider the effects of long, evening, or nighttime shifts when making driving assignments. Avoid unnecessary travel and make policies that offer driving alternatives for employees too tired to drive. Engage in training that educates employees on the importance of getting enough sleep before driving. It's important that employees remain well-rested and alert on the road so that they can defend themselves from drivers who do not make the same choices. Tips to train employees to make smart decisions when they're behind the wheel, on and off the job, are available at DWC's Fatigued Driving webpage.

### *Aggressive Driving*

Employees commuting to and from work and traveling for work purposes often find themselves

[8] EHS Today. Economic Impact of Vehicle Crashes Reaches $230.6 Billion. Website. https://www.ehstoday.com/archive/article/21913309/economic-impact-of-vehicle-crashes-reaches-2306-billion. Accessed January 31, 2020.

[9] National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration. Traffic Safety Facts: Alcohol. Website. file:///C:/Users/ndixon/Downloads/2003%20Alcohol%20TSF%20Sheet.pdf. Accessed January 31, 2020.

[10] Implementation of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century: Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the committee on Environment and Public Works, United States Senate. Website. https://books.google.com/books?id=mOCZX-7TR5ygC&dq=three+in+10+americans+will+be+involved+in+an+impaired+driving-related+crash+sometime+in+their+life&source=gbs_navlinks_s. Accessed January 31, 2020.

[11] National Safety Council. Drivers are Falling Asleep Behind the Wheel. Website. https://www.nsc.org/road-safety/safety-topics/fatigued-driving. Accessed February 25, 2020.

caught in traffic delays, which waste time and productivity. This may create a high level of frustration that can spark aggressive driving behavior. The road is a place where aggression never pays. Aggressive driving behaviors can include excessive speed, tailgating, failure to signal a lane change, running a red light, passing on the right, and more. The best advice is to avoid engaging with aggressive drivers and allow others to merge. For more information on avoiding aggressive driving, review OSHA's Guidelines for Employers to Reduce Motor Vehicle Crashes and DWC's Aggressive Driving Fact Sheet.

***Wellness/Fitness to Drive***

Consider the health and fitness of employees who drive. While some driver's licenses require medical assessments, ensure all employees who operate motorized vehicles are healthy enough to drive effectively. Develop job descriptions that accurately reflect the skills and abilities needed, such as reaction time and maneuvering. Employees should understand that food choices and the use of prescription and over-the-counter medications can make them less alert when they drive. For more information on workplace wellness and medical applications for commercial motor vehicle drivers, review DWC's Wellness/Fitness to Drive resources.

***Young Drivers***

The 16-to-20-year-old population represents a big highway safety concern. Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death in teens. This age group has the lowest rate of seat belt use and is the most likely to engage in risky driving behaviors, such as speeding and driving while impaired or drowsy. It is important for employers with young workers to promote safe driving practices actively. Graduated driver's licensing (GDL) for teen drivers has resulted in a large decrease in crashes, injuries, and fatalities for young drivers. Under federal law, 16-year-old workers cannot drive as part of their job and 17-year-olds may drive for work only under limited cases. For more information on occupational driving safety tips for young workers, review the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health's (NIOSH) Motor Vehicle Safety at Work: Young Drivers at Work resources.

It is important to have continuous driver safety training and communication with employees about the common causes of accidents. Even experienced drivers benefit from periodic training and safe driving reminders.

For help in creating a customized driving training program, review OSHA's Motor Vehicle Safety Standards and DWC's Driver Training resources. DWC's Workplace Safety Training Specialists are also available to provide Occupational Driving Safety training. These three-hour courses provide employers with the framework to set up, improve on, and evaluate an effective workplace driving program. To learn more about DWC's Occupational Driving Safety training, call 800-687-7080, email safetytraining@tdi.texas.gov, visit www.safetyatwork.com, or download DWC's Safety and Health Training Program Descriptions publication.

# Incentive Programs

***Disciplinary Action System***

Develop a strategy to determine the course of action following an employee's moving violation or preventable crash. A variety of corrective action programs are available. Most are based on a system that gives increasing levels of discipline if a driver gets repeated traffic violations or preventable crashes. The system should document what specific action(s) will be taken if a driver gets a certain number of violations or preventable accidents in a pre-defined period.

***Reward Programs***

Create and carry out a driver reward or incentive program that makes safe driving a part of the business culture. Positive results occur when driving performance is included in an employee's overall job evaluation. Reward or incentive programs often involve recognition, monetary rewards, or special privileges. The use of incentives often helps motivate employees to achieve goals or increase their participation in a program or event.

# THE VEHICLE

Companies with a vehicle fleet or employees who drive personal or leased vehicles as part of their jobs, must ensure their vehicles are mechanically sound and operating properly.

***Operating Different Types of Motor Vehicles***
Employees who drive for work should have the skills needed to train on and operate the types of vehicles they are expected to use. They should understand how to maneuver among other vehicles on the road and in a construction zones. They should also know the capabilities of other vehicles. For information on operating commercial motor vehicles, including utility vehicles, passenger vehicles, construction equipment, heavy trucks, buses, fork lifts, golf carts, and motorcycles review DWC's Operating Different Types of Motor Vehicles resources.

***Vehicle Selection, Maintenance, and Inspection***
Establish a vehicle maintenance program that includes inspections, repairs, and preventive maintenance. If employees use personal vehicles at work, consider the condition of those vehicles and their maintenance. Place all company vehicles on a routine preventive maintenance schedule. Service and check all safety-related equipment. Conduct regular maintenance at all manufacturer-recommended mileage intervals. Schedule a mechanic to do a thorough inspection of each vehicle at least once a year. Document the results and place them in the vehicle's file.

Selecting, maintaining, and inspecting company vehicles is an important part of preventing crashes and related losses. Review the safety features of all company vehicles in use. Choose vehicles with "best in class" status for crashworthiness and overall safety for company drivers. The latest information on crash test ratings and other important vehicle safety information is available at www.SaferCar.gov.

Personal vehicles used for company business are not subject to the same criteria and are generally the responsibility of the owner. However, personal vehicles used for company business should be maintained in a manner that provides the employee with maximum safety. For more information on fleet vehicle maintenance, Texas vehicle inspections, and other motor vehicle standards and regulations, review DWC's Vehicle Maintenance resources.

***Accident Reporting and Investigation***
Start and enforce an accident reporting and investigation process. All crashes should be reported to the employee's supervisor soon after the incident. The company driving safety policies and procedures should clearly guide drivers through their responsibilities in a crash situation. Review each incident to determine the cause and whether it was preventable. Understanding the root causes of crashes, regardless of fault, helps prevent future driving incidents.

# THE ENVIRONMENT

Prepare employees for conditions outside the vehicles they use for work.

***Promote Safe Driving Practices***
The increase in traffic on Texas roads wastes time, money, and productivity. It can also lead to risky driving behavior. Employees may feel pressured to drive faster for longer periods of time. Using unsafe driving practices affects all drivers, including those who drive company or personal vehicles for work. Employers have a duty to protect their workers and their businesses by educating employees about safe driving practices for conditions outside their vehicles. The safety topics described below encourage employee awareness of the environment around them as part of an effective driving training program.

***Safety Starts in the Parking Lot***
As an employer, keeping a well-lit and well-maintained parking lot is where safety begins. Keep company-owned roads and parking spaces properly striped and clear of debris, including ice and snow. Install signs at parking lot exits reminding employees to use seat belts and drive safely. Let the company's concern for their safety be employees' final thought as they leave the parking lot.

***Secure Materials for Transport***
Secure tools or equipment before driving to prevent unsafe movement of materials. During a crash or when making sudden turns, loose objects can slide and become airborne, injuring the driver or passengers. Store and secure potentially hazardous objects outside the passenger compartment.

***Poor Weather Conditions***
Driving in rain, wind, and other poor weather conditions can affect a driver's reaction time and vehicle performance. Flooding, icing, or other severe weather can also damage road surfaces, leaving them unstable and dangerous. Before a trip, drivers should check weather forecasts and avoid poor weather if possible. For more information about current road conditions or driving in fog, rain, snow, heat, floods, and other poor weather conditions review DWC's Driving in Adverse Weather Conditions resources.

***Work Zone Safety***
Employees in work zones are exposed to the hazards of moving vehicles. These employees should wear highly visible personal protective equipment (PPE) and post highly visible signs to inform those traveling near work zones. Vehicles used in and around work zones should also have markings and lights to make them more visible to other employees and passing motorists.

Employees traveling through work zones should remain alert to roadway changes and follow all speed limit signs and directions. Road construction projects can change road surfacing, speed limits, and lane placement. Road changes, such as uneven lanes, potholes, closed shoulders, and road grading, can be dangerous, so plan to handle unfavorable road conditions when you can't avoid them. Work zone safety tips and additional information on construction equipment safety is available for download at DWC's Work Zone Safety webpage.

***Other Drivers***
An effective occupational driving safety program should set employer expectations for safe driving habits. It should also prepare employees for encountering the bad driving habits of others. Train employees to anticipate other motorists' actions, to avoid aggressive drivers, and to drive defensively. For more information on defensive driving and aggressive drivers review DWC's Other Drivers resources.

***Move Over. It's the Law***
As part of an occupational driving safety program, train employees to move to another lane if a vehicle is parked or stranded on the side of the road. Leaving a broken-down car or a vehicle with a flat tire on the side of the road is dangerous and unnerving. Cars and trucks speeding inches away leaves little room for error and can result in a disastrous crash.

America's emergency responders and other drivers face this peril every day. Also, at risk are tow truck drivers, highway workers, utility workers, and other public safety personnel whose jobs sometimes require them to park their vehicles on or to the side of the road.

All fifty states now have mandatory "Move-Over" laws to reduce injuries and fatalities in these situations. Details vary by state, but the Texas "Move-Over" law requires vehicles to move over a lane or slow down to 20 mph below the posted speed limit if they see an emergency vehicle with activated emergency lights or flashers.

More than 150 law enforcement officers have lost their lives since 1997 after being struck by vehicles on America's highways. Traffic-related incidents, including vehicle crashes, remain one of the leading causes of death for law enforcement officers. In 2017, 47 officers lost their lives in traffic-related incidents. Nine of the officers were struck and killed outside their vehicles. Thirty-nine percent of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty from 2007 to 2017, lost their lives in traffic-related accidents. Many more were seriously injured. These deaths and injuries are preventable tragedies.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration continues to raise awareness of this critical issue through its ongoing safety campaign: Move Over. It's the Law. Employers are encouraged to make this campaign part of their ongoing driving safety training program.

Every driver has a part to play in keeping first responders safe. When drivers move over, it signals to the drivers behind that they should also move over. "Move Over" is not only the courteous thing to do. It's the law.

# Other Resources

### *General*

- Center for Motor Vehicle Safety (NIOSH)
- Distraction.gov (NHTSA/USDOT)
- Driver Information (TxDOT)
- Driving Safety (NHTSA)
- Governors Highway Safety Association
- Guidelines for Employers to Reduce Motor Vehicle Crashes (OSHA)
- National Center for Rural Road Safety
- Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS)
- Safety on the Road (NSC)
- Stranded Motorist Hotline (800-525-5555; TXDPS)
- Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI)
- Travel Tips (TxDPS)
- Work-Related Roadway Crashes: Challenges and Opportunities for Prevention (NIOSH)

### *Construction*

- Construction Equipment Visibility Diagram Lookup (NIOSH)
- Highway Work Zones and Signs, Signals, and Barricades (OSHA)
- Highway Work Zone Safety (NIOSH)
- Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (FHWA)
- Motor Vehicle Safety in Construction (OSHA)
- Work Zone Safety (OSHA)

### *Truck Transportation*

- A Texas Motor Carrier's Guide to Improving Highway Safety (TxDPS)
- A Texas Motor Carrier's Guide to Highway Safety (TxDPS)
- Trucking Safety (NIOSH)
- Trucking Industry (OSHA)

### *Oil & Gas*

- Injuries in Oil and Gas Extraction and NIOSH Safety Initiatives (NIOSH)
- OSHA Oil and Gas Well Drilling and Services eTool (OSHA)

### *Training*

- Our Driving Concern – Texas Employer Traffic Safety Program (ODC)
- State Office of Risk Management (SORM)
- Transportation & Public Works Courses (UTA)
- Transportation & Highway Safety Course for Municipalities (TEEX)
- Transportation Safety Institute (TSI)
- Drug Impairment Training for Texas Employers (ODC)

### *Emergency Response*

- Automatic External Defibrillators - Fact Sheet English/Spanish (DWC)
- Emergency Response Planning for Hazardous Materials (DWC)
- Emergency Action Plan Sample OSHA Written Program English/Spanish (DWC)