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Did Your Fleet Safety Program Stall Out?

Vehicle accidents cost employers twice as much as the average workplace injury and are the leading cause of workplace death. Not only is property damage and employee injury a concern, lost productivity, lost revenue, and third party liability claims drive the direct costs up as well.

Following are some ideas that will help employers equip their drivers to make better decisions and reduce the potential for fleet related accidents.

Technology

It's no surprise that distracted driving tops the chart of leading causes of accidents, with cell phone use and texting involved in 26% of all car crashes. Handheld and vehicle electronics are a primary reason for driver distraction. Employers must establish stern policies to manage use that may go beyond state traffic laws.

Identify and control data that is available to the driver while driving. This may include:

- Policies eliminating, managing and/or limiting personal electronic device use (PED) while driving
- Invest in equipment that limits cell phone capabilities while the vehicle is turned on, such as Cellcontrol
- Require all devices to have apps that restrict use while vehicle is in motion, such as LifeSaver – Most cell phones have built-in features to accomplish this
- Install telematics on fleet vehicles to monitor driver behavior (hard braking, cornering, speeding, backup on leave, etc.)

Training

Providing a standard 60 minute defensive driving video may be well intended but likely won't significantly change driver behavior. Employers should include frequent training intervals. This can be accomplished without increasing aggregate time to train and reinforce safe driving principles and can include some or all of the following:

- Take 15 minutes each month to engage your drivers and encourage input/feedback.
- Implement a safety slogan and change it annually.
- Require new hires to complete the National Safety Council defensive driving course.
- Provide refresher training on areas of the most common crash types.
- Make it fun rather than punitive. Engage your workforce in promoting safety.

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- Customize the presentation to your organization to help drivers identify with the program.
- Consider enhancing new hire orientation training to include National Safety Council's Defensive Driving Course or the Smith System.

Improve Fleet Program

Companies that have been successful in lowering crashes employ a comprehensive approach. Develop a performance program that ties driving to a metrics system. Speeding, collisions, maintenance interval compliance, unreported vehicle damage, observed driver behavior, and telematics reports, may influence the score. As points accumulate, the driver's risk profile increases. Implement measures to address various levels of risk. Here are some other areas that can improve your program:

- Clearly define what you are trying to accomplish. Let employees know that safety is a core company value and that no job is so important that it should be at personal risk.
- Buy-in starts at the leadership level. Managers and employees need to know there are rules and if not followed, there will be consequences.
- Key elements should be in place: written fleet safety policy, support from senior management, and a knowledgeable and dedicated person to implement and enforce the policy.
- A company fleet policy should be a consensus of several departments: HR, legal, fleet, risk and user groups. Some elements, involving impaired driving (drug/alcohol) require careful review.
- Don't overlook the importance of annual (at a minimum), motor vehicle record (MVR) administration.
- Implement a recognition program that rewards drivers for safety meeting attendance, safety training compliance, and being crash and citation free.
- Create an annual safety competition for 90 days that tests care/maintenance, driving skills behind the wheel, written test measuring safety knowledge. Award the driver with the highest score.
- A fleet safety program is a living document and should be continually updated.

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For more resources on this topic, please visit the links below:

- [Reducing Fleet Related Property Loss](#) (archived webinar)
- [Motor Vehicle Record Report Policy](#) (link to sample document)
- National Safety Council, Defensive Driving Course—contact us at riskcontrol@alliant.com for information on how to receive training

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For additional information contact:

Alliant Risk Control Solution Center Toll Free Help Line: 888 737 4752.