



DRIVER HIRING AND SELECTION IT'S NO ACCIDENT

The number one cause of death from traumatic workplace injuries in the U.S. is as a result of motor vehicle crashes with an almost perfect distribution existing between vehicle collision and non-collision events such as loss of control and rollover incidents. The Bureau of Labor Statistics data indicates that these incidents continue to exact a substantial toll on employees and employers. Crashes accounted for nearly 12,000 deaths between 1992 and 2000 with truck drivers in particular having far higher fatality rates than any other group accounting for 58% of all work related vehicle fatalities. Deaths and injuries from highway accidents result in increased costs to employers and substantial lost productivity. They bring needless pain and suffering to family, friends, and coworkers.

Preventing work-related vehicle incidents pose what is probably the largest challenge you will face as a business owner. The highway is a unique work environment and your ability to control working conditions and to exert direct supervisory controls over your employees is extremely limited.

Employees sometimes feel pressured to drive faster and for longer periods to complete their routes or to earn extra money. Traffic volumes and road construction continue to increase year after year and technologies such as cellular phones, dispatch equipment, GPS and radios could lead to inattention to the task of driving their transport vehicle, delivery van or that new BMW that the outside salesman is driving all over the state.

With all of those considerations in mind, you would think it would be evident that the first line of defense to controlling your corporate auto risk and preventing traumatic events related to your trucking operations should begin with the application process. Unfortunately, too many companies fall into poor company hiring and screening policies through negligent or non-existent planning and bad practice. We've all heard the old adage that practice makes perfect and in this instance poor practice makes a perfect mess!

The typical company would say that they have really stringent hiring guidelines and many of you are thinking to yourself right now "we do a good job of selecting the right drivers". Do you? Do you really do a good job? What are your hiring guidelines? What requirements does a driver have to meet in order to receive an interview with your company? Are your guidelines written down? Are they followed step by step for every hire in your fleet?

Thinking Ahead.



My historical perspective within the industry says that unfortunately most of you do not have a formalized procedure for hiring. As a broad generalization, most companies have informal, non-documented hiring procedures outside of a basic application for employment. Most companies generally know what they would like to have in a driver, but will almost always surrender those guidelines when faced with a driver shortage.

I have seen good company after good company gain a new contract which requires them to add two or three drivers or have a driver or two leave their company and all of a sudden, those guidelines, which were important for all the other drivers that they hired previously is pushed aside in favor of expediency or money. I'm not against you growing your company and earning larger profits. I would caution you, however, and tell you that statistics tell us that when you add improperly screened, under qualified and poor performing drivers to fleets, your costs typically go up as well.

Additional costs are seen on your insurance bill via higher premiums as a result of accidents and claims, which will follow your company and affect your premiums for up to five years after the incident as well as increases to your maintenance budget from the repair of minor damages and increased wear and tear on the vehicle due to poor driving habits. Those costs, although more frequent and extremely high over time, can pale in comparison to the costs associated with the headlines you see on your local news in the evening.

Hearing a teaser line for the evening news that says "local trucking company driver with a history of drug use and suspended license rear-ends school bus, details at seven" is not what you want to hear as you sit down for dinner with your family and you definitely do not want this to be the first time that you heard of the drivers past drug use and suspended license.

These stories of accidents involving unlicensed drivers, drivers with extremely poor records, criminal violations such as DUI and DWI in their recent past are sensationalized on television and in the newspapers somewhere in our country everyday and the legal and civil ramifications that result from hiring these individuals is far greater than anything you could ever want to imagine. Sometimes no driver is truly better than a poor driver!

Thinking Ahead.



In order to prevent a bad hire from adversely affecting your company, you must do several things. The most important of which is to institute a company hiring policy for all employees who will drive on company business. This includes the CDL transport, tank wagon and bobtail driver as well as the outside salesmen, service trucks and even the mailroom worker or gopher that drives only a few miles per week. This company policy must be non-negotiable for the hiring of all new drivers, it should lay out exactly what steps are to be followed in the hiring process and exactly what qualifies and disqualifies and applicant. It should be completed and documented formally for every single person that is hired and will have driving responsibilities with your company.

Items to consider including in your hiring guidelines:

- Minimum of two years verifiable driving experience in "like vehicles" (if you are hiring a liquid transport driver a box truck driver should not be your first choice),
- Current CDL with proper endorsements for the prior two year period,
- Ability to pass a road test in the type of vehicle he will be driving with another licensed CDL driver observing from the passenger seat,
- Minimum of 3 years of verified work experience with references checked and 10 years of documented job history,
- Prior employer check on previous drug and alcohol history for the preceding 3 years including alcohol .04 or greater, positive controlled substance tests, refusals to test etc,
- Prior employer accident information for the preceding 3 years,
- Set a preferred age category (recommend 25 to 70 & check with EEOC for proper guidelines and wording),
- Implement a skills/physical test to ensure the applicant can do the entire job,
- Require proof of medical qualification before hiring (especially important for older drivers and those with prior medical histories),
- Passing of pre-hire substance screening,
- Complete a Motor Vehicle Report for the applicant cover the prior 36 months of driving history,
- No major violations such as DUI, DWI, hit & run, vehicular manslaughter, or use of a vehicle in commission of a felony,
- No reckless driving violations,
- No more then three moving violations in the previous 36 months or more then two in the previous 24 months,
- No more then 1 at fault accident during the previous 36 months,
- No more then 1 at fault accident and one moving violation in the previous 36 months,
- No violation resulting in the suspension or revocation of the license in the previous 24 months and,
- No violation for operating a vehicle on a suspended license.

Thinking Ahead.



This is certainly not an all-encompassing list and can be modified to meet your individual company guidelines. We have developed driver risk worksheets that standardize this process and quantify the approach for our Clients and this is something that we certainly recommend for each company with fleet vehicle risk.

The transportation of product via roadway is definitely your largest exposure to risk and it should be treated in a thoughtful and consistent manner. Remember that each time you hire a new driver and put them in one of your vehicles you are making them the face of your organization. How they drive and conduct themselves with your name emblazon down the side of the truck will not only be how the public perceives you as a company, but it will probably be the wide angle shot on the evening news as well!

Until next time, **STAY SAFE OUT THERE!**

This article is intended to be a guideline and provide informative information related to safety and health topics. It is by no means nor intended to be an all encompassing document, nor warrant your compliance with any local, state or federal regulation.

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