

# Risk Management Bulletin

## DEVELOPING A FLEET SAFETY PROGRAM

Fleet safety controls, when properly established and maintained, are the most effective means of protecting a fleet from loss.

The planning and enforcement of such programs must be done by a company's top management. Top management support and leadership is critical to program success. Ideally, support should be shown daily. The need to control human suffering, property damage, and direct and indirect costs of accidents are strong incentives to develop an effective fleet safety program.

### RECOMMENDED ELEMENTS OF A FLEET SAFETY PROGRAM

#### Proper Driver Selection:

Conduct pre-hire Motor Vehicle Record checks on all drivers. Potential drivers should be evaluated compared to the standards set for all drivers within our business. As part of the overall driver selection process, give each qualified driver a road test. A comprehensive road test should include defensive driving techniques and a positive attitude in traffic.

#### Monitoring Existing Drivers:

Motor vehicle records should be reviewed for all existing drivers after an accident occurs, or at least on an annual basis. Keep a file on each driver. The file should include such things as a current copy of the driver's license, road test, accident records, pertinent medical information, warnings or counseling, training given to that driver, and pertinent DOT requirements, if applicable.

#### Establish Fleet Safety Rules:

Company rules regarding vehicle usage should include personal use by employees and their families, procedures for garaging vehicles and preventing theft of vehicles, maintenance responsibilities, and reporting vehicle defects to maintenance crews. Rules should also be established for reporting and investigating accidents.

#### Accident Analysis:

Properly investigate all accidents resulting in property damage or bodily injury. Uncover the actual causes of the accident and take the corrective actions needed to prevent reoccurrence. Accident trends for all fleet vehicles should also be periodically analyzed so common problems can be identified and action taken to solve problems.

#### Defensive Driver Training:

Provide initial and continuing training for all drivers. Professional trucking associations, local safety councils, schools, police departments, and the National Safety Council are all good sources for defensive driving and driver improvement programs.

#### Vehicle Safety Inspections:

Vehicle safety inspections should be conducted on a daily basis through the use of a daily vehicle inspection checklist. Set procedures should be developed to report any identified vehicle deficiencies, and these deficiencies should be corrected before the vehicle is allowed on the road. A check of vehicle emergency equipment should also

be made. Emergency equipment should include res/reflectors, fire extinguishers, radio, etc.

Outline Emergency Procedures:

Outline instructions to employees regarding what to do in case of an accident. Generally these instructions should include stopping at once, doing whatever is necessary to protect the people and property involved, and caring for the injured at the scene of the accident. Help should be obtained as soon as possible if needed. Be sure that each vehicle has a claim kit in the glove compartment outlining the above steps and providing the driver with a form to detail what occurred immediately afterward, while the memory is still fresh. Getting names of witnesses and reporting the accident to the employee's supervisor should also occur very quickly after the accident.

Provide Motivation:

Keep all employees interested and involved in the fleet safety effort. Motivation can be achieved through employee recognition, driver incentive programs, added responsibilities, safety meetings, posters, check stuffers, etc.

A Fleet Safety Program, once designed and implemented, should periodically be evaluated to ensure its effectiveness. New aspects, techniques, and variations must be adopted when necessary to keep the program alive, growing, and effective.

*Several additional Risk Management Bulletins are available from SECURA to help you implement and develop a Fleet Safety Program.*