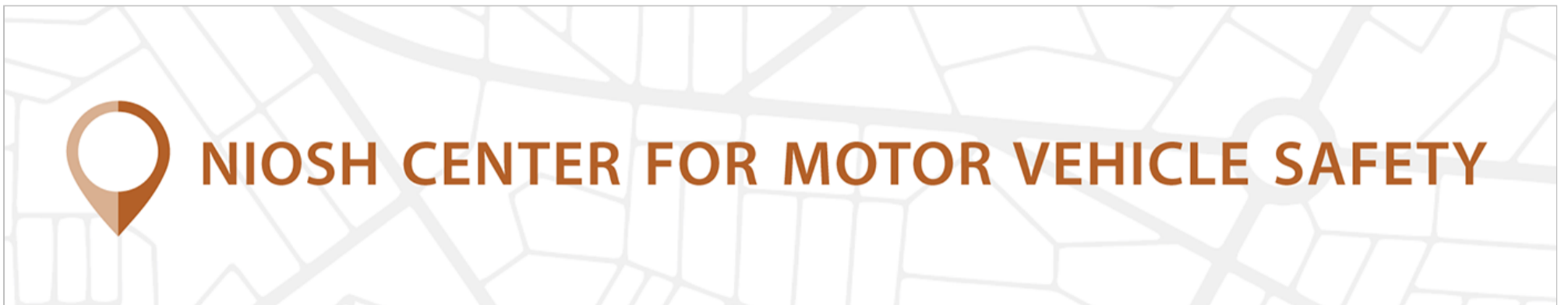


Behind the Wheel at Work



Behind the Wheel at Work is a quarterly eNewsletter bringing you the latest news from the NIOSH Center for Motor Vehicle Safety.

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10 Actions to Protect Drivers at Work

Workers across all occupations and industries drive as part of their jobs – moving freight and passengers, making sales calls, traveling between construction sites, delivering food, making on-site repairs, providing home healthcare, and more. The legal, scientific, and technological landscape of work-related motor vehicle safety (MVS) has changed significantly over the past few years. Laws and regulations have changed. Research gives us new evidence about the nature of risks and how best to manage them. Newer technologies give employers new ways to promote safer driving and prevent crashes. **It's time to take a fresh look at what employers can add to their toolbox of policies and interventions to protect their employees who drive for work.**

Continue reading for 10 actions we consider to be the most important to take when implementing an MVS program. Everyone benefits when employers protect their workers from driving hazards, including workers' families and communities.

Who should take these actions?

Any business whose employees drive during work hours should have a program in place. Employee driving can look very different across businesses and industries. Workers may drive their company's fleet vehicle or their own personal vehicle; they may drive heavy trucks or passenger cars; they may drive as their primary work task (taxi drivers) or from worksite to worksite (home healthcare professionals). All these workers will benefit from a motor vehicle safety program!



Create a culture of motor vehicle safety.

Employees need to know that leaders and frontline supervisors care about their safety. Safety is a value that should take precedence over production quotas.

- Recognize driving-related risks such as fatigue and speeding. Take action to reduce those risks.
- Identify a member of the top management team to be your company's MVS champion.
- Invest company resources (staff and money) in an MVS program.
- Speak to all employees regularly about driving safety.
- Use key performance indicators (KPIs) (collisions per million miles driven, percentage of workers trained within 3 months of being hired, cost per motor vehicle claim) to track the success of your company's MVS program.
- Hold those responsible for managing your MVS program accountable for results. Consider including management

responsibilities in performance evaluations.

- Serve as a role model for MVS by participating in program activities (in-vehicle monitoring, road safety training) and complying with all MVS policies.



Develop policies and procedures.

Policies and procedures give visibility to the risks that your company wants to actively manage and set rules for employees to follow. They also explain *how* these risks will be managed so that everyone knows what to expect.

- Identify common risky driving behaviors within your own workforce using available data.
- Assess your fleet's driving environment and the risks your drivers encounter (e.g., rural two-lane roads), then select priority topics for policies and procedures.
- When you write policies and procedures:
 - Involve frontline employees and supervisors.
 - Define roles, responsibilities, and accountability at all levels of the company.
 - Specify consequences for violations of policies.
 - Develop KPIs to measure your program's success.
 - Decide how and when MVS performance results will be reported to company leaders.
 - Build in routine audit and reassessment to account for new technology, organizational changes, or changes to laws and regulations.



Select, train, and assess drivers.

Driver training can help new employees gain basic skills, knowledge, and attitudes to operate vehicles safely and in line with your company's expectations. More experienced drivers may need a periodic "refresher" to maintain their skills and knowledge, while high-risk drivers (those involved in at-fault collisions or with multiple traffic offenses or policy violations) can benefit from driver training to improve their skills, knowledge, and attitudes.

- Select safe drivers:
 - Make sure every worker assigned to drive has a valid driver's license.
 - As part of the hiring process, obtain and review the motor vehicle record (MVR) of all workers who will drive on the job. Establish minimum requirements for driver selection based on the number and type of driving violations and license suspensions on record.
- Train drivers:
 - Give basic driver training to new hires and periodic refresher training to more experienced drivers.
 - Driver training can take place online, in the classroom, in a driving simulator, behind the wheel (in the type of vehicle the driver is expected to operate), or using a combination of methods. Best practice is to cover theory through classroom or online instruction followed by practical training behind the wheel.
 - For drivers of large trucks and buses, give training on topics important to safe operation of these vehicles (securing cargo, pre-trip inspections, hours-of-service rules).
 - Give remedial training to drivers who meet criteria set by your program (drivers classified as high risk). If possible, this training should address risky behaviors shown by individual drivers.
- Assess drivers' skills and performance regularly:
 - Conduct regular MVR checks to identify traffic violations and license suspensions. Consider purchasing software that continuously monitors MVRs.
 - Consider having supervisors conduct "commentary drives" to gain insights into drivers' perceptions of the driving environment and help them improve their skills and performance.
 - Keep a record for each driver. Include information on acknowledgements of company policies, driver training, any driving scores or ratings your company uses, summaries of in-vehicle monitoring data, crash history, traffic violations and license suspensions, infractions of company policies, and positive recognition for safe driving.

04

Use in-vehicle monitoring systems (IVMS).

These systems track speeding, harsh braking, acceleration, cornering, and other behaviors, allowing employers to identify risky driving behaviors before an incident occurs. Supervisors can use this information to coach drivers who need help. IVMS with cameras provide employers with additional context about in-vehicle behaviors (e.g., distractions) to help coach and address driver behaviors.


- Select an IVMS that tracks metrics that will identify the driving behaviors causing crashes in your workforce.
- Consider an IVMS with forward-facing and driver-facing cameras, both of which can provide useful context for driver coaching.
- Communicate clear and consistent expectations to all workers in your organization. Describe the IVMS program as a positive way to create and sustain safe driving behaviors.
- Provide one-on-one coaching to drivers with risky driving behaviors in a timely manner, using a positive, instructive approach.
- Set realistic IVMS-related goals for drivers and worker teams, such as a 50% decrease in harsh braking events over a year. Celebrate when goals are achieved (small reward, team party).
- Understand that a worker's overall pattern of driving behaviors may be more valuable information than isolated events. For example, a harsh braking event may indicate that the driver made the safest choice and avoided a crash, but repeated hard braking events over time may indicate fatigue, distraction, or following too closely.

05

Reduce distracted driving.

Distracted driving is usually associated with cell phones, but there are many other sources of distraction (adjusting vehicle controls or navigation system, reaching for a dropped object, interacting with passengers or pets, or just daydreaming).


Hands-free phones are not the solution to distracted driving. Research shows that they are just as distracting as handheld phones. A strong company policy – ideally, a full ban on the use of cell phones while driving – is important for protecting your workers.

- Ban all phone use (texting, handheld, hands-free) while driving a company vehicle and ban use of company-issued phones while driving a personal vehicle.
- Require workers to pull over in a safe location to look up directions, text, or to make or receive a call.
- Communicate to workers that driving is their primary job when they are behind the wheel.
- Provide workers with information to help them talk to their family about distracted driving.
- Consider using phone-blocking [technology](#)  to limit workers' cell phone use while driving.
- Consider using technology that detects and warns drivers of distracted driving behaviors (such as cameras that detect when eye gaze is not on the road).

06

Prevent fatigued driving.

Whatever the source – inadequate or poor-quality sleep, long hours of work or driving, shift work, stress, or sleep disorders – fatigue affects our ability to drive safely.

- Set policies for maximum numbers of overtime hours and consecutive shifts.
- Monitor compliance with [federal hours-of-service regulations](#)  for drivers covered by them.
- Ensure sufficient staffing levels across operations, factoring in the inevitable absences that occur due to vacation days, sickness, and turnover.
- Implement a workplace sleep disorder screening/management program.

- Provide worker training on sleep health and fatigue management.
- Allow for rest breaks and napping during extended work shifts.
- Give supervisors and workers fatigue-symptom checklists and encourage self-reporting.
- Encourage peer monitoring of fatigue symptoms among co-workers.
- During incident investigations, collect data on sleep history of workers involved, hours worked leading up to the incident, time of day, and hours of driving.
- Communicate the following to workers:
 - Get enough sleep (7-9 hours each day). If fatigue persists after adequate sleep, get screened for health problems that may be affecting your sleep, such as sleep apnea.
 - If you feel fatigued while driving: pull over, drink a cup of coffee, and take a 15-30 minute nap before continuing (research shows it works!).



Prevent impaired driving.

Driving while impaired by prescription or over-the-counter medication, alcohol, and other substances is unsafe and illegal. Employers should stay aware of changes in laws, technology for testing impairment, and research about the effects of substances on safe driving.

- Develop a policy that prohibits workers from operating a vehicle under the influence of alcohol, other drugs, or prescribed medications that could affect their ability to drive safely.
- If drug testing is used, make sure your policy describes the conditions under which testing will occur (ongoing periodic random testing, whenever impairment is suspected, or only after a crash), the threshold that will constitute impairment, and the consequences of a positive test.
- Partner with an attorney to review your policy to ensure it aligns with current laws in each state where your company operates.
- Provide access to support for employees with substance abuse problems, either through in-house programs or referrals to local resources.
- Educate drivers on the effects of substances on safe driving and the details of your policies.
- Communicate the following to workers:
 - Comply with your company's impaired driving policies.
 - Seek help if you are struggling with substance abuse.



Ensure safe speeds.

As speed increases, the driver has less time to react to road hazards and maneuver to avoid a crash. And, the higher the speed, the more deadly the crash – in the United States, driving over the speed limit or too fast for conditions is the factor cited most often by law enforcement officers when they investigate a fatal crash.

- Establish a safe-speed policy and consider the following:
 - Require drivers to report any speeding convictions on their driver's license.
 - Set severe consequences for drivers with speeding convictions on or off the job and give speeding convictions substantial weight in criteria for identifying high-risk drivers.
 - Set maximum fleet speeds. Many IVMS can identify speeding by comparing vehicle speed to the speed limit for the road.
 - Assess drivers' schedules and work assignments to make sure that work can be completed at safe speeds.
 - In driver training, emphasize that speed must be adjusted to suit road conditions.



Select and maintain safe vehicles.

Today's vehicles are safer than ever before. Advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) such as forward collision warning and lane departure warning can monitor the area around a vehicle and warn the driver of a potential crash. Other ADAS, including automatic emergency braking and lane keeping assist, will temporarily take control of the vehicle to avoid a crash. Today's vehicles are also much more "crashworthy" than in the past – they are better able to withstand the forces of a crash and protect the occupants from injury.

- Purchase or lease vehicles with high safety ratings based on crash testing. Consult the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's "[5-Star Safety Ratings](#) " and the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety's "[Top Safety Picks.](#)"
- Select vehicles with ADAS. Many types of ADAS have already been shown to [reduce crashes, claims, and injuries.](#) These include forward collision warning, automatic emergency braking, blind spot warning, lane departure warning, and rear cross-traffic alert.
- Ensure that drivers understand how ADAS operate – their personal vehicles may not have the same safety features. Include information about ADAS in driver orientation and training. [My Car Does What](#) is a great resource that will help reinforce employer-provided training.
- Establish policies for pre-trip inspections, scheduled maintenance, vehicle repairs and recalls, and vehicle replacement.
- Keep maintenance and repair records for any vehicle you purchase or lease.
- Communicate the following to workers:
 - Seek information about the operation of ADAS installed in their vehicle so that they understand what ADAS can and cannot do. [My Car Does What](#) is a useful interactive resource.
 - Keep tires properly inflated.



Use data to drive program decisions.

Your company's fleet operations generate a great deal of data, but it's of little value unless you analyze it regularly and use it to make decisions that will improve your policies and prevent crashes. Similarly, the collection of information on incidents and identification of factors that contribute to crashes will give your company an opportunity to learn what went wrong and make changes to prevent similar events in the future.

- Analyze fleet safety data:
 - Use data sources such as crash and claims data; drivers' personnel, training, and driving performance records; motor vehicle record checks; vehicle use and maintenance records; IVMS data; workers' compensation claims; incident and near miss reports; and incident investigations.
 - Hire personnel with the skills needed to manage and analyze the data and interpret and communicate the results.
 - Use complete and accurate data to calculate your KPIs. KPIs generally stay consistent over time, but they can be adjusted to account for emerging hazards or issues.
 - Conduct periodic data-driven audits of your motor vehicle safety program.
- Require drivers to report incidents:
 - Determine which types of incidents need to be reported. Best practice is to require reporting of all incidents, regardless of severity, and to have drivers fill out a standard incident reporting form.
 - Give drivers what they need to report an incident and stay safe at the incident scene.
 - Provide clear, detailed instructions about what to do. Include information about points of contact, preserving and documenting the scene, interacting with law enforcement officers and witnesses, and complying with alcohol or drug testing requirements.
 - Require drivers to keep emergency equipment in the vehicle (reflective triangles, first aid kit).
- Review incidents:
 - Set up a review process for all incidents that meet a pre-set threshold of severity.
 - Compile all relevant information, including the incident reporting form filled out by the driver, reports from law enforcement or insurance investigators, and witness statements.
 - Identify factors before, during, and after the incident that contributed to its occurrence and severity.

- Determine corrective actions to be taken and document that they have been completed.

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Update on the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Response

While the NIOSH Center for Motor Vehicle Safety will continue to share valuable safety information in our quarterly Behind the Wheel at Work eNewsletter, you can stay up to date on the COVID-19 response in real time on CDC's [COVID-19 webpage](#) or sign up for CDC's [COVID-19 newsletter](#).

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