

## 10 steps to a safe driving program

The single most hazardous task many employees perform each day is driving to and from work. Road accidents remain the number one cause of employee fatalities. If your focus is on chemicals, falls, amputations, and other front-line hazards, you may need to give driving equal attention.

Beyond the incalculable personal price, vehicle crashes cost employers \$60 billion annually in medical care, legal expenses, property damage, and lost productivity. They drive up the cost of benefits like workers' compensation, health and disability insurance, and Social Security.

The average crash costs an employer \$16,500. When injury is involved, that rises to \$74,000 and typically exceeds \$500,000 when there is a fatality.



### RELATED CONTENT



[Be prepared for rainy, wintry driving](#)



[Make safe driving a priority](#)



[Are your workers hanging up to drive?](#)

According to September 2014 data from the Bureau

of Labor Statistics (BLS), fatal transportation incidents were down 10 percent in 2013, but still accounted for about two out of every five fatal work injuries in 2013. Of the 1,740 transportation-related deaths last year, nearly three out of every five (a total of 991) involved motorized land vehicles.

### 10-step approach

With some exceptions in marine and agricultural employment, OSHA does not regulate [driving](#). But the agency is involved in the effort to make driving safer. According to OSHA guidelines for reducing vehicle crashes, employers should establish a safety program that seeks to:

- Save lives and reduce the risk of life-altering injuries among your workers,
- Protect your organization's human and financial resources, *and*
- Guard against potential company and personal liabilities.

OSHA advocates a program developed by the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS) centered around 10 elements:

- **Senior management commitment and employee involvement.** Senior management provides leadership, sets policies, and establishes safety culture.
- **Written policies and procedures.** Create a clear, comprehensive and enforceable set of traffic safety policies and make them a cornerstone of your driving safety program.
- **Driver agreements.** Establish a contract with employees who drive for work purposes. In it, drivers acknowledge awareness and understanding of the rules regarding driver performance, maintenance, and reporting of moving violations.

- **Motor vehicle record (MVR) checks.** Check the driving records of all employees who drive for work purposes. Screen individuals with poor records to avoid future problems.
- **Crash reporting and investigation.** All incidents, regardless of severity, should be reported promptly. Your policies and procedures should clearly guide drivers through their responsibilities in order to determine cause and whether the incident was preventable.
- **Vehicle selection, maintenance, and inspection.** Selecting, properly maintaining, and routinely inspecting company vehicles are essential to incident prevention.
- **Disciplinary action.** Use a policy-based strategy to determine the course of action after a moving violation or preventable incident.
- **Reward/incentive program.** Consider an incentive program that makes safe driving an integral part of your business culture. As with all such programs, reward upstream, positive behaviors and make sure you're not discouraging reporting in any way.
- **Driver training and communication.** You need to be continuously training and teaching. Even experienced, safe drivers need regular training to keep skills sharp and avoid complacency.
- **Regulatory compliance.** Make sure your drivers are aware of applicable federal, state, and local regulations, including those issued by the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, and the Federal Highway Administration.