

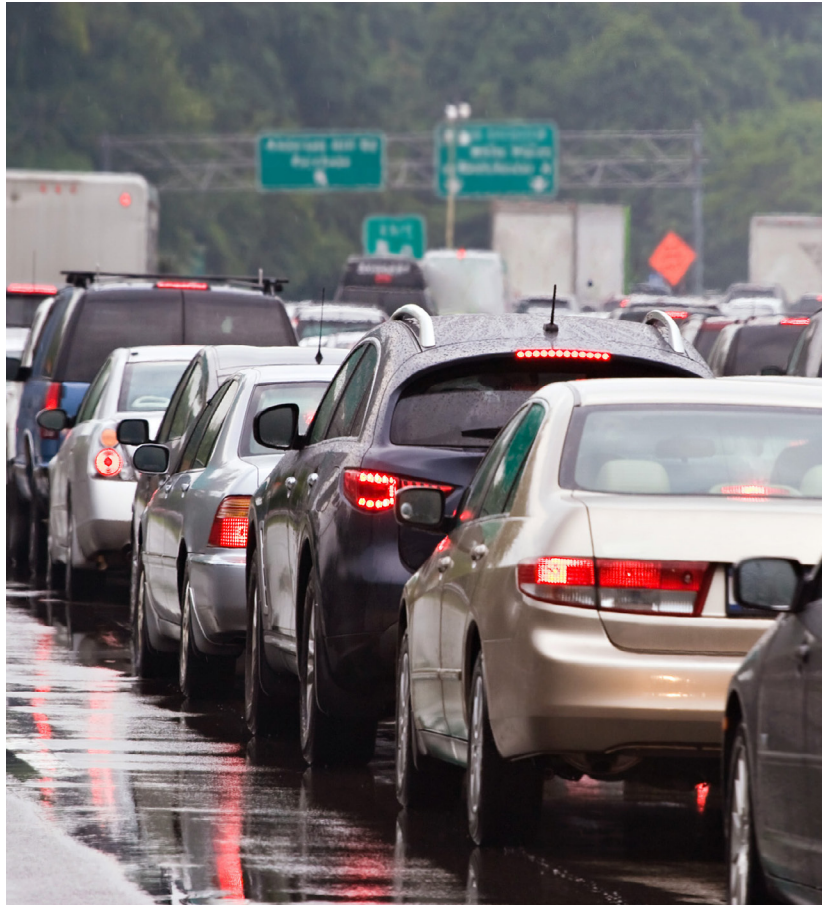
Whether managing a fleet of vehicles, overseeing a mobile sales force, or depending on workers to use personal vehicles on the job, a driving safety program can reduce employees' risks and protect the company's bottom line. To promote safe driving behavior with employees, reinforce the following tips as part of an [Occupational Driving Safety Workplace Program](#).

THE ROADWAY WORKPLACE

For employees who use motor vehicles on the job, the roadway is an extension of the workplace. Although employers cannot control roadway conditions, a clear and complete set of driving safety policies and regular employee training can help control potentially dangerous driving behaviors.

Share the Road

Employees must know how to share the road with pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists, and commercial motor vehicle (CMV) drivers, all of whom have rights on the roadways.



Pedestrians

Texas law requires drivers to yield to pedestrians at marked and unmarked crosswalks. Vehicles may not enter a crosswalk if a pedestrian is approaching it or in it. Train employees to:

- slow down and prepare to stop for pedestrians;
- never pass vehicles stopped at crosswalks;
- look for and yield to pedestrians when turning or when a traffic light turns green (pedestrians may get a signal to walk at the same time); and
- obey the speed limit.



Bicyclists

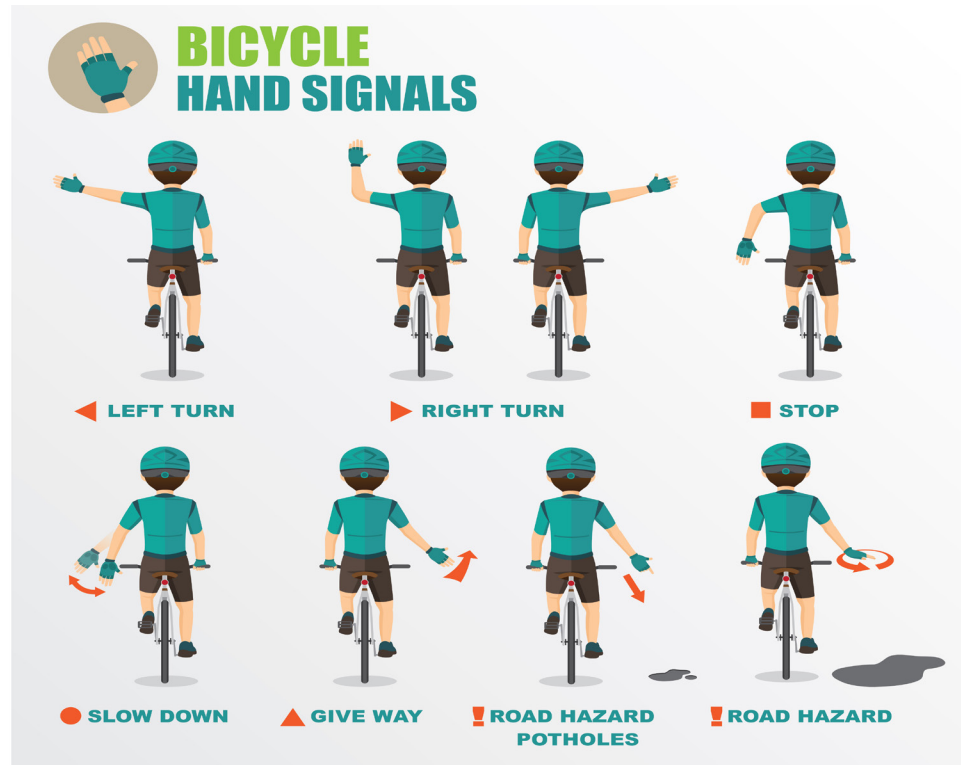
Texas law considers bicycles vehicles that must ride with the traffic and obey all traffic laws. However, bikes are smaller, harder to spot, and lack protection from a crash. Train employees who drive to:

- check for bicyclists in the vehicle's blind spots before turning;
- signal well in advance of turning;
- avoid passing a bicycle at an intersection;
- give bicyclists extra time to cross intersections;
- slow down and give at least four feet of space to bicyclists when passing;



Bicyclists (continued)

- keep in mind that bicyclists riding close to the road's right edge may need to dodge potholes, debris, or other road obstacles without warning;
- avoid honking or startling a bicyclist;
- look for bicyclists before opening a vehicle door; and
- learn bicyclists' hand signals.



Motorcyclists

Like other drivers, motorcyclists must obey traffic signs and signals. However, motorcyclists are often hard for other drivers to see. Train employees to:

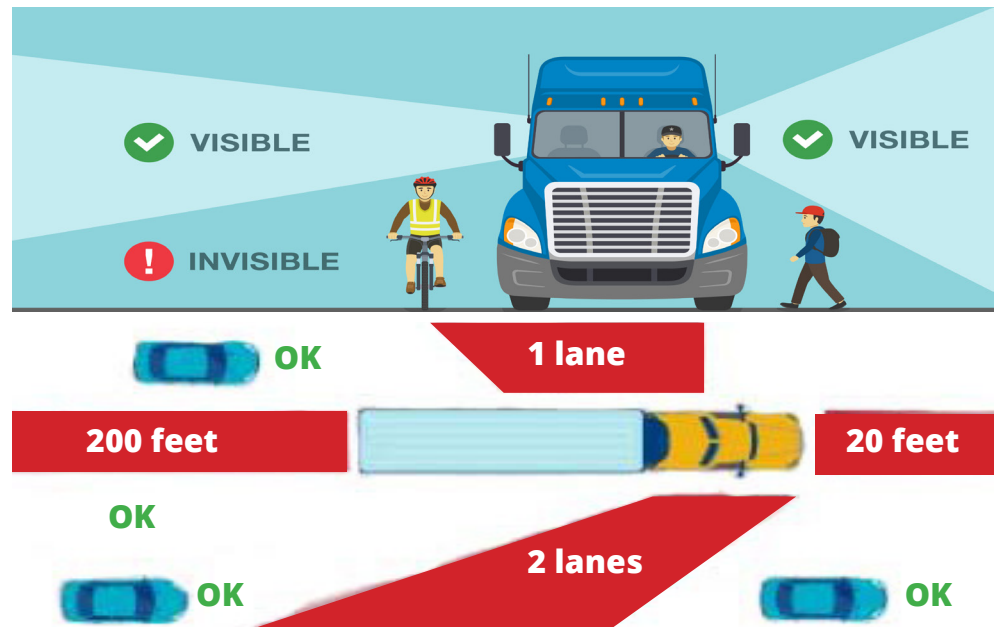
- scan traffic for a helmet or a shadow alongside a vehicle;
- check blind spots before changing lanes or merging;
- search traffic before entering or turning at an intersection;
- predict hazards, such as poor road conditions, bad weather, flying debris, oil slicks, or heavy traffic that may put a motorcyclist at risk;
- leave a four-second space cushion when following a motorcycle (pick a fixed spot on the side of the road that the motorcycle passes and count four seconds until the vehicle in back passes the same point);
- increase distances between a vehicle and a motorcyclist in poor driving conditions, at higher speeds, and at night;
- use turn signals early when merging or making lane changes to help the motorcyclists find a safe lane position; and
- give motorcyclists the same respect and courtesy given to other motorists.



Commercial Motor Vehicles

Keep in mind the physical limitations of CMVs, such as buses and large trucks. Because of CMV's large size and mass, these vehicles accelerate more slowly, speed up faster going downhill, and take longer to stop. Train employees to:

- refrain from cutting in front of a CMV and suddenly slowing down;
- wait to move into a CMV's lane until after both of its headlights and front tires are visible in the rearview mirror;
- remain patient behind high-center-of-gravity CMVs who are slowing at curves or ramps to avoid rollover;
- remain aware that CMVs can cause wind gusts that push smaller vehicles around on the road;
- grip the steering wheel when passing an oncoming truck to offset air turbulence;
- know where a truck's blind spots are – up to 200 feet behind the trailer, 20 feet in front of the tractor, and anywhere along the sides of the trailer;
- know that a truck driver can't see you if you can't see the truck driver's face in his or her side mirrors;
- stay back at least two seconds when following a truck, more depending on conditions;
- avoid driving next to a truck in case the driver needs to make an emergency move, has a blowout, or experiences any operation that could make him or her lose control;
- avoid passing trucks while traveling on a downgrade, which causes CMVs to increase speed;
- watch for wide turns made by truck drivers, who may need to swing left from a middle lane to gain room for a right turn;
- give trucks needed space to make turns at intersections;
- never attempt to pass a truck with a turn signal on; and
- never drive between the truck and the curb.



THE DRIVER

If employees operate motorized vehicles on the job, regularly make the drivers aware of the common causes of roadway crashes and injuries. As part of a comprehensive occupational driving safety program, regular driving training helps change driver attitudes, improve behavior, and increase skills.

Driving Safety Tips

To protect workers, workers' families, and the company's bottom line, reinforce these safe driving tips:

Distracted Driving

The [Network of Employers for Traffic Safety \(NETS\)](#) estimates that distracted driving is a factor in 25-30% of all traffic crashes – about 4,000 vehicle accidents per day. Many companies are creating policies requiring employees to pull to the side of the road before engaging in any activity that distracts from focused driving. Other organizations are banning the use of electronic devices completely while behind the wheel of a vehicle. Each organization must ensure the company's distracted driving policy reflects local laws and the company's tolerance for risk. The most common driving distractions are:

- adjusting vehicle climate and radio controls;
- voicing sync dashboard system tasks;
- eating or drinking;
- using a cell phone, navigation system, or other electronic devices;
- reading a map or publication; and
- grooming.

For more information on ways to prevent distracted driving, review the Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC)-Workplace Safety's free publication, [Driving and Using Cell Phones or Electronic Devices Workplace Program](#).



Seat Belt Use

Wearing seat belts keeps drivers and passengers from ejecting from a vehicle in a crash. Seat belts also increase the chance of employees surviving a car collision by 45% and a truck collision by 60%. Plus, wearing seat belts is a Texas law. Incorporate a seat belt use policy as part of every occupational driving safety program. Include:

- a clear and complete company statement requiring all employees and passengers to wear seat belts in job-related vehicles;
- a contract signed by all employees who drive requiring seat belt use in job-related vehicles; and
- a set of consequences if the policy is not followed.

For more information on company-required seat belt use and sample policies, review DWC's [Occupational Driving Safety Workplace Program](#).

Impaired Driving

Any employee who operates a motor vehicle at work must understand the dangers of driving while impaired by alcohol, illegal drugs, prescription drugs, or over-the-counter medications. While drug testing is required for



some driver licenses, employers should consider testing all employees who drive or are involved in motor vehicle accidents to prevent this behavior. Substances that impair driving and put others in harm's way include:

- alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs that slow coordination, judgment, and reaction times;
- cocaine and methamphetamine, which can make drivers more aggressive and reckless;
- two or more illegal, prescription, or over-the-counter drugs combined, or with alcohol, which can amplify the impairing effects of each; and
- some [prescription and over-the-counter medicines](#), which can cause drowsiness, dizziness, and other side effects.

Urge employees to always read and follow all warning labels on medication before driving or operating heavy machinery. Guidance on employee drug testing is outlined in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards [CFR 1910.1020\(b\)](#); [1910.1020\(c\)](#); [1910.1020\(d\)](#); and [1910.1029\(3\)](#).

Fatigued Driving

The [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) (NHTSA) reports that fatigued or drowsy driving results in thousands of injuries and more than 600 deaths each year. Tired drivers are as dangerous as impaired drivers. Fatigued drivers have slower reactions times and can fall asleep quicker. Company training should encourage employees who are preparing to drive for work to:

- remain rested, getting seven-to-eight hours of sleep;

- schedule trips during normal awake hours (midnight to 6 a.m. are most hazardous);
- give employees plenty of time to reach the destination;
- avoid medications that may cause drowsiness;
- ventilate the vehicle to keep it from becoming too hot or cold;
- take breaks every 100 miles, if possible, to stretch muscles and stay alert;
- stop to sleep at the first signs of drowsiness;
- take a nap if you can't stop for the night; and
- avoid stimulants that can keep you awake but not alert.

Drive Prepared

Most people wouldn't attend an important event without preparing first. Yet every day many employees get on the road without planning a route, checking for emergency equipment, or being physically and mentally prepared to drive. These tips will help employees remain road-ready.

Plan Your Route

Make every trip a safe one by encouraging employees to:

- review and program a navigation system that uses audio before leaving;
- check traffic and road conditions with local media and government websites, such as the [Department of Transportation](#) (TxDOT) or the [Federal Highway Administration](#) (FHWA);
- avoid routes with traffic congestion, construction work zones, narrow lanes, sharp curves, limited sight, or undivided roadways, if possible;
- check with local law enforcement to see where the most crashes occur and avoid those areas;
- encourage employees to inform their supervisor of their itinerary;

- keep a 24-hour roadside service phone number handy; and
- keep the gas tank at least half full or a hybrid vehicle battery charged.

Plan for Emergencies

Always encourage employees to stock vehicles with these essential items in case of emergencies:

- battery charger cables;
- spare tire and jack;
- owner's manual;
- first-aid kit;
- flashlight with extra batteries; and a
- cell phone with a charger.

If the employee is traveling long distances, ensure the following items are added to the emergency kit:

- at least one gallon of water per person per day for three days;
- blanket or sleeping bag and clothing;
- food that won't spoil;
- cat litter or sand for tire traction;
- battery-operated or hand-cranked radio; and
- shovel or ice scraper.

Driver's Training

Other frequent causes of collisions are caused when drivers merge into traffic, back vehicles, tailgate, or fail to use safe braking procedures. As part of a comprehensive occupational driving safety program, regularly review safe driving techniques with employees.

Driving and Merging

The following safe driving techniques help reduce job-related vehicle accidents, injuries, and fatalities. Review these tips with employees who drive for work:

- adjust seats, clean and adjust mirrors, and know your vehicle's blind spots before leaving;
- obey the speed limit;
- maintain a safe driving distance;
- avoid aggressive drivers;
- scan mirrors often while driving;
- communicate driving intentions by using turn signals;
- ensure proper distance after passing and before moving back into a lane;
- watch for vehicles moving into the vehicle's blind spot;
- consider other vehicle's blind spots when merging, especially at on/off highway ramps, junctures of two or more highways, road narrowing on local streets or highways, or lane closures due to construction zones or obstruction; and
- use caution at intersections (where about two-thirds of all traffic injuries occur).

Vehicle Backing

According to the NHTSA, one in four vehicle accidents is caused by [poor backing techniques](#). These backing accidents result in about 500 deaths and 15,000 injuries per year. Ensure

employees know these safe vehicle backing tips:

- know your vehicle's blind spots (a medium-sized truck's blind spots can extend up to 16 feet in front and 160 feet in back);
- practice backing in safe surroundings until familiar with the way the vehicle backs compared to the direction the steering wheel is turned;
- think in advance when parking to avoid unnecessary backing situations;
- park defensively for easy-exit parking spaces that don't crowd neighboring vehicles;
- back into allies if driving is not allowed all the way through; and
- walk around the vehicle to view the backing area and any limitations, including children, soft or muddy areas, potholes, and other clearance problems, such as low-hanging trees or wires.

Tailgating

TxDOT lists tailgating -- following another vehicle too closely -- as one of the primary causes of all motor vehicle crashes. Tailgating leads to rear-end collisions and thousands of injuries and deaths each year. It also reduces a driver's stopping distance (the distance needed to come to a complete and safe stop). Creating awareness of these tailgating hazards is part of an effective employee driving safety program:

- a vehicle's stopping distance is directly proportional to the size and weight of the vehicle;
- it takes twice the distance to stop a heavy truck as it does a car;
- perception time (the time needed to see and process a roadway hazard) and reaction time (the time needed for a driver's body to physically react to their brain's perception) are two separate intervals of time;
- tailgating significantly reduces both perception and reaction times;
- alert drivers need about 2.5 seconds to see a roadway hazard and react to it – that's about 1.5 seconds for perception time and 1.0 seconds for reaction time; and
- the more space a driver allows between vehicles, the more time the driver has to see hazards and react safely.



THE VEHICLE

If the company has a fleet, or if employees drive personal or leased vehicles as part of the job, make certain the vehicles are maintained regularly and mechanically sound. To ensure the vehicles are operating properly:

- adopt a structured vehicle maintenance program that routinely checks:
 - all fluids (oil, brake, windshield wiper, transmission, coolant, and power steering);
 - belts and hoses;
 - battery and ignition systems;
 - headlights, hazard lights, and turn signals;
 - tire pressure and tread depth;
 - windshield washer blades; and
 - brakes.
- provide company vehicles with the highest levels of occupant protection, if possible, by including a:
 - rear-vision camera system;
 - side-mirror blind spot detection;
 - anti-lock (ABS) or auto emergency (AEB) braking systems;
 - airbags;
 - traction or electronic stability control;
 - safety belts;
 - forward-collision warning;
 - adaptive cruise control;
 - lane-departure warning; and
 - tire-pressure monitors.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Employees using a motorized vehicle on the job should prepare for conditions outside of the vehicle that may affect their trip, such as:

- allowing more time to stop in hazardous conditions, including wet, icy, or packed snow-covered roads;
- doubling a safety cushion when driving at night, in bad weather, in heavy traffic, and in construction zones;
- avoiding driving in icy or other treacherous conditions;
- using lights in gloomy weather or when visibility is reduced;
- never attempting to cross a flooded road without knowing how deep it is;
- testing brakes immediately after driving through water;
- taking extra care when crossing bridges or open stretches of road in high winds; and
- wearing sunglasses in bright sunshine or when the setting sun reflects off wet roads.

For more information on DWC's Occupational Driving Safety Workplace Program, [Safety and Health Training Program Descriptions](#), or customized driving safety programs, contact www.txsafetyatwork.com, safetytraining@tdi.texas.gov, or 1-800-252-7031, Option 2.



Safety Violations Hotline

1-800-452-9595

safetyhotline@tdi.texas.gov

The Texas Department of Insurance,
Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC)
E-mail resourcecenter@tdi.texas.gov
or call 1-800-687-7080 for more information.

Disclaimer: Unless otherwise noted, this document was produced by the Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC)-Workplace Safety using information from staff subject specialists, government entities, or other authoritative sources. Information contained in this fact sheet is considered accurate at the time of publication. For more free DWC publications on this and other safety topics and for free occupational safety and health audiovisual loans, visit www.txsafetyatwork.com, call 800-252-7031, option 2, or email resourcecenter@tdi.texas.gov.