



Fleet Motor Vehicle Safety Training Program

Goals

The goals of the Fleet Motor Vehicle Safety Training Program are to:

- save lives and reduce injuries by preventing job-related motor vehicle accidents;
- protect a company's human, property, and financial resources; and
- guard against company and personal liabilities associated with job-related driving crashes.

Objectives

The objectives of the Fleet Motor Vehicle Safety Training Program are to:

- provide information on ways to avoid job-related vehicle crashes;
- create safety requirements and guidelines for driving and maintaining vehicles used on-the-job;
- improve and change, if needed, driver attitudes, behaviors, and skills; and
- build a culture of safety throughout the organization.

Background

Motor vehicle crashes are the number one cause of job-related deaths in Texas and

across the U.S.¹ In 2018, 223 Texans died, and nearly 5,200 more received injuries in work-related transportation incidents.² The Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) [Accident Search Results](#) page provides a breakdown of job-related traffic incidents.

Employers who own, lease, or rent vehicles for their employees to use for work, or those who allow employees to drive personal vehicles for work purposes, need a Fleet Motor Vehicle Safety Training Program. Safe driving and vehicle maintenance guidelines and requirements can keep employees safe, reduce company and personal liabilities, and protect the organization's bottom line. It also helps ensure that employers comply with OSHA's [General Duty Clause](#): to provide a workplace free from known hazards that are likely to cause death or serious physical harm.

Elements of a Fleet Motor Vehicle Safety Training Program

Rewarding safety-conscious behavior is vital for an effective, long-term employee safe driving and vehicle maintenance program. [OSHA recommendations for a Fleet Motor Vehicle Safety Training Program](#) include the following elements:



- **Senior management commitment and employee involvement.**
Senior management provides leadership, sets policies, and allocates resources to create a safety culture. Actively encouraging employees to participate at all levels of planning and implementation will help the plan succeed.
- **Written policies and procedures.**
Written statements show the company's commitment to safety by providing clear, thorough, and enforceable employee driving and maintenance requirements.
- **Driver agreements.**
By signing an agreement, drivers acknowledge and understand the organization's Fleet Motor Vehicle Safety Training policies, procedures, and expectations.
- **Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) checks.**
Check employee MVRs regularly to ensure drivers maintain good driving records. Clearly define the maximum number of violations a driver can receive before losing the privilege of driving for work.
- **Crash reporting and investigation.**
Employees must report a crash to their supervisor as soon as possible after an incident. Review all crashes to determine if an incident was preventable. Understanding the cause of the crash and why it happened, regardless of fault, helps eliminate future accidents.
- **Vehicle selection, maintenance, and inspection.**
Selecting, properly maintaining, and routinely inspecting company vehicles helps to prevent crashes and related losses. Choosing safe vehicles for purchase is an essential step in protecting

employees. The website www.safercar.gov provides crash test ratings and other useful vehicle safety information to assist in fleet vehicle purchasing decisions.

- **Disciplinary action system.**
Determine the company's response to employees who receive a moving violation or are involved in a preventable crash. Corrective actions are often on a point system associated with progressive discipline for repeated violations or preventable crashes.
- **Reward and incentive programs.**
Developing and implementing a driver reward or incentive program helps make safe driving part of the business culture. These programs typically involve recognition, money, privileges, or other rewards to encourage safe driving behaviors.
- **Driver training and communication.**
Provide continuous driving training and communication to remind employees to stay focused on safe driving habits.
- **Regulatory compliance.**
Ensure the company's drivers follow all local, state, and federal highway safety regulations. Governing regulators may include the [Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration](#), [U.S. Department of Transportation](#), [National Highway Transportation Safety Administration](#), [Federal Highway Administration](#), and [Employment Standards Administration](#).

For more information on developing a driving safety program, download the Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation's (DWC) [Occupational Driving Safety Workplace Program](#) and the [Occupational Driving Safety Program Checklist](#).

Written Policies and Procedures

A written statement is essential to a successful Fleet Motor Vehicle Safety Training Program. Post the policies and procedures throughout the workplace, distribute copies periodically to the workforce, and discuss the policies at company meetings. Let the guidelines reflect the company's individual safety needs and goals. As an example, organizations may choose to develop and require employees to sign policies on safe behaviors such as seat belt use:

(Name of Company/Organization) recognizes that seat belts are effective in preventing injuries and loss of life. It is a simple fact that wearing a seat belt can reduce the risk of dying in a traffic crash by 45% in a car and by as much as 60% in a truck or SUV.

(Name of Company/Organization) cares about its employees and wants to make sure that no one is injured or killed in a tragedy that could have been prevented by the use of seat belts. Therefore, all employees of (Name of Company/Organization) must wear seat belts when operating a company-owned vehicle or any vehicle on company premises or company business. Additionally, all passengers are to wear seat belts or, where appropriate, child restraints when riding in a company-owned vehicle or a personal vehicle used for company business. All employees and their families are strongly encouraged to use seat belts and the proper child restraints whenever they are driving or riding in any vehicle, in any seating position.

Additional samples of written driving policies and procedures are available through the [National Safety Council](#) and OSHA's [Guidelines for Employers to Reduce Motor Vehicle Crashes](#).



Reporting an Incident

Regardless of the severity of a crash, report all traffic-related incidents. Review each crash to determine its cause and whether it was preventable. In case of an incident:

- stop the vehicle;
- call 9-1-1;
- wait for law enforcement and, if needed, emergency responders to arrive;
- get the insurance information, name(s), and vehicle information from all drivers involved in the incident;
- keep a liability insurance identification card on hand and provide the information to all drivers involved in the incident;
- never admit liability at the accident scene; and
- tell a supervisor about the incident as soon as possible.

Download DWC's [Accident Investigation Safety Training Program](#) publication for more information on crash reporting and investigation.

Vehicle Maintenance and Inspection Requirements

Proper maintenance and routine inspections of company vehicles are vital for employee safety. Schedule regular preventive vehicle maintenance at mileage intervals based on the manufacturer's recommendations. Complete a thorough annual inspection by a mechanic at least once a year. Document the inspection in the vehicle's file should the company ever need to provide the records in court. Encourage employees to report vehicle problems to a supervisor promptly to schedule repairs.

While the company has little control over the maintenance of personal vehicles used for company business, employers should include proper vehicle maintenance as part of their training. Encourage employees to maintain their vehicles to provide maximum safety and reliability.

Annual inspections of motor vehicles registered in Texas are required to evaluate the following equipment:

- tires;
- wheel assembly;
- safety guards or flaps;
- brake system;
- steering;
- lights and beam indicator;
- license plate lamp;
- rear red reflectors;
- turn signals;
- horn;
- mirrors;
- windshield wipers;
- seat belts;
- gas cap;
- window tinting;
- vehicle identification number;
- exhaust system; and
- exhaust emission system.

Employees should inspect the following items before each trip:

- tire pressure;
- fluid levels (oil, transmission, coolant, windshield washer, etc.)
- engine belt tightness;
- seat and mirror adjustment;
- gauges; and
- warning lights.



Download DWC's [Vehicle Safety Checklist](#) for effective vehicle maintenance guidelines. Additionally, ensure employees know [how to use a fire extinguisher](#) if company vehicles and personal vehicles used for work are required to carry one. For information on items to inspect by vehicle type, visit the Texas Department of Public Safety's [Inspection Criteria](#) page.

Safe Driving Training

Schedule employee driving training regularly to keep drivers and supervisors well-skilled and informed. Include safe driving training at:

- new driver orientation;
- fleet driver refresher training;
- “problem driver” remedial training;
- periodic driver meetings; and
- driver performance evaluations and reviews.

Include the following safety tips during fleet driver training:

- **Wear a seat belt.**
The [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) estimates more than 15,000 lives are saved each year in the U.S. when drivers and passengers wear seat belts.
- **Stay alert at the wheel.**
Shift workers, long-haul drivers, business travelers, and other employees with disrupted sleep patterns are at greater risk of driving drowsy. Encourage employees to get eight hours of sleep each night and limit driving to no more than eight hours during every 24-hours. Look for yawning, head-bobbing, or missing an exit, which may signal time for a driving break. Avoid taking medication that may cause drowsiness.



- **Never drink and drive.**
Never drive intoxicated or impaired. Alcohol, illegal drugs, and some prescription and over-the-counter medications can reduce a driver’s coordination, concentration, judgment, and reaction time.
- **Avoid aggressive driving.**
Aggressive driving is often the result of driving when stressed, ill, or angry. Encourage employees to remain calm in traffic and never take other drivers’ actions personally. Decompress, if needed, after an unpleasant confrontation by pulling to a safe location off the road. Avoid speeding, tailgating, and frequent or unpredictable lane changes. Use turn signals, let others pass, and yield to vehicles trying to merge.
- **Ditch the distractions.**
Distractions such as texting, talking on a cell phone, adjusting a music or navigation system, eating, drinking, grooming, or reaching for an object are high-risk moves while driving. In Texas, it is illegal to text and drive. In many municipalities across the state, it is also unlawful to use a handheld electronic device while driving. Texts, calls, and other driving distractions can wait. Keep the focus on the road.
- **Plan the Trip.**
Decide if the trip is necessary. If so, choose the safest route at a time to avoid the heavy traffic. Consider whether bad weather will be a factor during the trip, and if the vehicle is equipped for the journey. Always begin a trip well-rested.

- **Drive defensively.**
Good defensive drivers anticipate other drivers' mistakes. Stay a safe distance from other drivers, obey the speed limit laws, and remain alert to the surroundings. On multi-lane expressways, avoid being caught in the middle lane while boxed in on four sides by other vehicles.
- **Be alert for hazardous road conditions.**
Slow down for bad weather conditions. During periods of heavy rain, do not drive into flooded roadway areas. Be alert for broken pavement and highway construction zones. Do not out-drive your headlights.
- **Know the vehicle.**
Take the time to adjust seats and mirrors before driving. When renting a vehicle, become familiar with the vehicle's controls and blind spots before driving.
- **Use caution when backing.**
Always look for pedestrians, overhead wires, soft or muddy

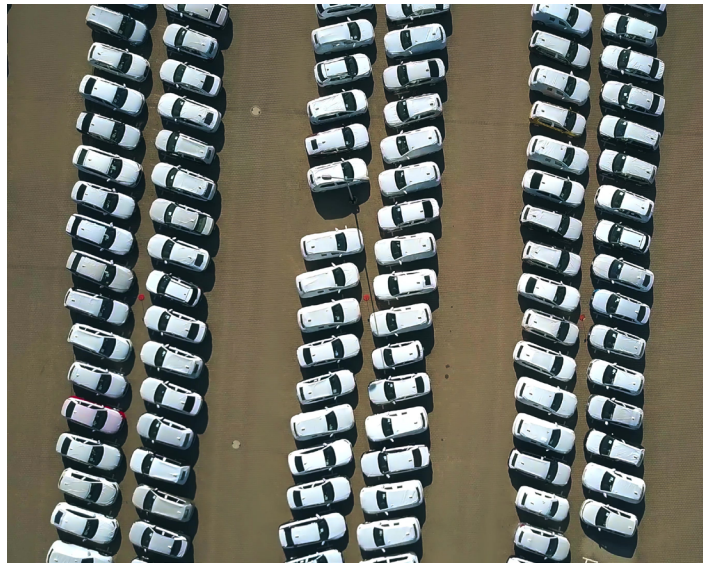


areas, potholes, tire hazards, unoccupied vehicles, and other dangers when backing a vehicle. Use the rearview and side mirrors, along with the backup camera, if available. Encourage employees to stop and walk around their vehicles to look for potential objects if they cannot see behind them.

- **Haul loads safely.**
When hauling heavy equipment, use only drivers who are trained, experienced, and know how to operate the equipment they are transporting. Use the proper trailer for the job and refer to the Texas Department of Transportation's [oversize and over-weight limits](#). Distribute the weight evenly on the trailer to keep the load from tipping or shifting. [Secure the load properly](#) on the trailer before leaving the loading area or work site. Oversized loads such as lumber can overhang a truck bed by 3 feet in the front, 4 inches to the side, and up to 4 feet in the rear. When a load extends more than 4 feet beyond the vehicle, place red or orange flags (at least 12-inch squares) on the load's rear and sides in the daytime. At night, the overhanging load must have two lit red lamps on the rear, two red reflectors on the width, and two lit red lamps, one on each side, to mark the overhang. ([See Texas Transportation Code Section 547.382.](#))

Review Questions

1. What is the longest time an employee should drive in 24 hours?
2. What are two ways to avoid aggressive driving?
3. Good defensive drivers anticipate drivers' mistakes. True or False?
4. When an employee has a work-related vehicle crash, there is never a personal liability lawsuit. True or False?
5. Over-the-counter medications are safe to use while driving. True or False?
6. Name two common driving distractions.
7. A red flag on the rear of an overhanging load is all that is needed. True or False?



For more driving safety information, visit [DWC's Occupational Driving Safety](#) webpage or download the following free DWC publications:

- [Aggressive Driving Fact Sheet](#);
- [Defensive Driving](#);
- [Driving and Using Cell Phones or Electronic Devices Workplace Program](#);
- [Driving Distractions Fact Sheet](#);
- [Driving Fatigue Prevention](#);
- [Driving in Work Zones Fact Sheet](#); or
- [Safe Driving Tips Fact Sheet](#).

Answers

1. Employees should not drive more than eight hours in 24 hours.
2. Avoid aggressive driving by: remaining calm; not driving when stressed, ill, or angry; not taking other drivers' actions personally; decompressing on the side of the road when necessary; avoiding speeding, tailgating, and unpredictable lane changes; using turn signals; letting others pass; and yielding to vehicles trying to merge.
3. True, one of the best ways to defend against accidents is to anticipate other drivers' actions.
4. False, potentially both company and personal liability lawsuits are associated with crashes involving employees driving on company business.
5. False, many over-the-counter medications cause drowsiness and are as dangerous for a driver on the road as being intoxicated or impaired by alcohol or illegal drugs.
6. Driving distractions are anything that takes drivers' attention away from the road. However, the most common driving distractions are texting, using a cell phone, eating, drinking, programming a handheld electronic device or in-dash system, grooming, or reaching for an object.
7. False, use lights and reflectors at night.

References

- ¹ National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, About Motor Vehicle Safety at Work. Website. Accessed October 22, 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/motor-vehicle/about/index.html>.
- ² U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Occupational Injuries/Illnesses and Fatal Injuries Profiles. 2018. Texas. Event or Exposure. Transportation Incidents. All Ownerships. Website. Accessed September 22, 2020. <https://data.bls.gov/gqt/InitialPage>.



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.

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