

Establish good driver habits with new hire orientation

All fleet managers should strive to develop a strong safety culture. This foundation includes a set of core policies and procedures that outline expected behaviors and accentuate safety as a top priority. During a new driver orientation, introducing drivers to an organization's safety policies and procedures is key. A good orientation establishes the initial framework for how a new driver will perceive and comply with a company's safety program.

Include key topics

New, experienced drivers typically need eight to 16 hours of initial training before they begin transporting loads for a new company. The length and type of training is dependent on their individual knowledge and skills, as well as the uniqueness of your operations. However, there are key topics which should be covered in all orientation programs, including:

- **Maintenance and inspections** — Train drivers on your organization's expectations regarding maintenance procedures and inspections. This training should include how to report problems, and what consequences will follow out-of-service violations. Driver orientation also gives the carrier an opportunity to ensure drivers understand how the Compliance Safety & Accountability (CSA) scoring system affects them and their careers.
 - **Fatigue and hours of service** — Review hours of service requirements with drivers. Each new driver should be trained on proper logging techniques, as well as your organization's specific logging requirements. Be sure to clearly state any consequences for hours-of-service violations.
 - **Cargo security and securement** — This training should include anything that is unique to your operation, including: cargo securement, tie downs, temperature monitoring, security measures, challenges associated with customer lots and/or locations and meeting customer expectations.
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- **Accident reporting process** — Review your organization's accident reporting process with each new driver. Provide contact names and phone numbers to each driver, and teach them how and when to report an accident. Train them how to get information from all parties involved, obtain witness information and take good pictures that adequately document the accident scene.
 - **Driver safety** — Introduce drivers to the equipment they will be operating. Also, train them on personal protection and injury prevention relating to the equipment they will operate and the cargo they will be transporting.
 - **Safe driving policies** — Create written safety policies and procedures, and have new drivers review them. As part of this review, teach drivers the consequences of deviating from your organization's expectations. They should understand and affirm your commitment to safety.
 - **Defensive driver training** — Drivers of all experience levels need refresher training. This training is essential to help them keep their skills sharp and to address any bad driving habits they may have developed. Appropriate topics include: speed and space management, inclement weather, distracted driving, yielding the right-of-way, fatigue management, backing safety, and truck stop awareness. There are many training tools available to help with defensive driver training including DVD's, online training, technical bulletins, and safety related articles.

Follow up to reinforce training

It is a good idea to follow up with all new drivers within thirty days of their initial hire date. This gives management an opportunity to see how drivers are performing, answer any questions or concerns they may have and ensure they retain the information you provided during driver orientation. This follow-up meeting also provides an opportunity for management to restate the organization's commitment to safety.

Document all training

Documentation should consist of the date, topics covered, resources used and distributed and signatures from the trainer and the trainee confirming the training is complete. It is a good idea to create a training checklist to ensure all orientation training is completed in a consistent manner. Keep this record on file as it can be used for proof of training, if needed. Use the attached guide to help develop your own custom orientation checklist.

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New Driver Orientation Guide

Maintenance and Inspection

- Pre and post trip inspections
- Completing the daily Driver Vehicle Inspection Report (DVIR)
- Reporting problems to maintenance and on-the-road repairs/servicing
- Roadside inspections
 - Requirement for going through them
 - Professionalism, proper attitude and respect for officers
 - Cannot violate an out-of-service violation
 - Handling repairs and violations
 - Turning in inspection reports
 - Impact of violations on company and driver - CSA and PSP

Fatigue and Hours-of -Service Regulations

- Recognizing the signs of fatigue and requirement to stop driving
- Hours of service regulations
 - 11-hour, 14-hour, 60/70-hour and 30-minute break rules
 - 100 air-mile radius driver and 150 air-mile radius driver exceptions and requirements.
- Proper logging requirements including trip receipts
- Turning in logs and related paperwork
- Log violation monitoring and disciplinary procedures
- Complete a log exercise based on a sample trip
- If using electronic logging — proper procedures

Cargo

- In-Route Security
 - Use of locks and seals
 - Safe places to park
 - Not stopping for first 200 miles, except to inspect load
 - Monitoring for suspicious activity
 - Not discussing contents of load with anyone
 - Dropping trailers in approved locations only
- Preventing food spoilage
 - Reefer operation and maintenance
 - Circulation — cargo placement and chute function
 - Accepting loads — inspection and temperature
 - Monitoring load temperature
 - Recording load temperature on BOL at time of pick-up and delivery
 - Determining load weight and proper distribution
- Securement
 - Determining number, type and placement of securement devices

- Driver understands working load limits — Table 393.108
- Inspection of devices
- Protection of cargo from securement devices
- Tarping requirements and procedures
- Measuring height of every load
- Over height, width and weight loads
- Working with pilot cars

Accident Procedures

- Must stop and report all incidents immediately, no matter how small
- Follow procedures on accident form
- Proper use of orange triangles
- Importance of taking photos

Driver Safety

- Seatbelt requirement
- Three point contact getting on and off equipment
- Proper use of personal protective equipment
- Not lifting heavy loads — get help or mechanical aid
- Pinch points — identifying and staying away from
- Personal security — parking in safe areas and monitoring surroundings
- Hazards of and safe handling of vehicle fluids
- HAZMAT — understanding hazards of and safe handling of hazardous cargo

Safe Driving Policies

- Backing procedures
 - Positioning to back from driver side
 - Turning on four-way flashers, radio off, window open
 - Get out and look (Goal)
 - Safety precautions when using a spotter
 - Hazards of backing across roadways
- Intersections & turns
 - Importance of using caution when approaching
 - Respecting the right-of way of others
 - Ensuring adequate time when turning to not interfere with oncoming and cross traffic
 - Hazards of backing up in traffic
 - Right turns — proper positioning of truck to limit crossing lanes and preventing right turn squeeze accidents
 - Left turns — choosing intersections with a green arrow and turning from the outside lane of two-lane turns
 - Prohibitions against U-turns; understanding the hazard
- Ramps and curves
 - Posted speeds are meant for cars; trucks should be 10 or more miles slower

- Exit ramps—be in the right lane before you need to exit so an abrupt lane change is not needed; use deceleration lane to slow before exiting
- Entrance ramps—get up to highway speed on the ramp; time your merge appropriately.
- Lane changes and passing
 - Limit lane changes by getting into the correct lane and staying there
 - Utilize mirrors properly and monitor blind spots; using the lean forward and look method
 - Signal your intention early; always use turn signals
 - Don't lose focus on the vehicle ahead; rear-ends occur often when drivers are too focused on the lane they are moving into
 - Passing on two-lane roads is very dangerous - is passing really necessary
- City driving
 - Utilizing truck routes
 - Monitoring signs: no trucks, low overhead clearances (underside)
 - Navigating tighter turns—waiting for traffic to pass; slower speeds
 - Ensuring you can get out of what you drive into
 - Increased pedestrian and bicycle exposure
- Construction zones
 - Review advance warning signs
 - Merge into the correct lane early
 - Reduce speed and watch for trucks/equipment entering/exiting
 - Do not follow construction vehicles into construction zone
- Rail crossings
 - Raised road/tracks limit clearance—follow signs and use truck routes
 - At intersections, stop ahead of the crossing so trailer is not across tracks
- Motorcycles
 - Difficult to see, especially in blind spots
 - Watch for frequent lane changes
 - Oncoming speed difficult to measure—use caution when pulling out in front of or turning into their lane of travel
- Mountains and steep inclines
 - Importance of brake inspection and adjustment
 - Speed and proper gear selection
 - Proper braking techniques
 - Hazards of coasting downhill
 - Function of run away ramp
- Parking
 - Selecting safe rest and parking areas
 - Parking in pull-through spots—limits backing
 - Walk around inspection for damage prior to leaving
 - Not on exit or entrance ramps—collision hazard

- Loss of control accidents and rollovers—major causes
 - Driving too fast for conditions into curves and turns, while changing lanes, or on/off ramps
 - Following too close—results in emergency braking
 - Steering overcorrection and hard braking
 - Improper centering of load
 - Inadequate or faulty load securement
 - Wheels on soft shoulders (guidance on what to do)
- Inclement weather
 - Driving in snow and on ice
 - Driving in fog and low visibility conditions
 - High winds—impact on trailers and large flatbed loads
 - Lights on; reduce speed
 - Increase following distance by at least two seconds
 - Slow gradually; well in advance of intended stopping point
 - Notifying dispatch of delays
 - Knowing when to park and wait it out
 - Emergency supplies: warm clothes, food and water, etc.

Defensive driving concepts

- Hazard perception—the process of continually monitoring the driving environment for potential hazards and taking steps to neutralize possible emergency situations
- Adjusting speed to match road, traffic, and weather conditions
- Proper following distance—counting method
- Hazards of following other trucks too close; limited visibility results in reduced perception time
- Proper scanning: ahead, to the sides, and rear
- Limiting glances away from forward roadway (should be less than 2 seconds)
- Hazards of performing distracting activities and inattention; cell phone policy and texting prohibition
- Knowing when to park due to fatigue/illness, weather conditions, equipment problems, etc.
- Causes of skidding and jackknifing, and techniques for avoiding and recovering from skids and jackknives
- Dangers of steering overcorrection
- Dangers of driving on soft shoulders

Other Company Specific Policies, e.g.

- Passenger policy
- Drug and alcohol policy