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HOW DO YOU KNOW YOUR SAFETY CULTURE IS ON TRACK?

A strong safety culture is one trait commonly shared by motor carriers that value employee well-being and operational efficiency. But how do you know your efforts to build said culture are on track?

Understanding the strength of your culture requires more than just observing employees at work—it's about gathering data from various sources and quantifying those results to determine if your company is meeting expectations. Here are five effective methods to help you measure your safety culture.

ANNUAL SAFETY PERCEPTION SURVEY

An annual safety perception survey allows employees to provide feedback on their perceptions of safety within the organization. The survey often covers aspects such as management's commitment to safety, the effectiveness of safety training, and the adequacy of safety resources. By conducting this survey annually, you can track changes in employee perceptions over time, identify trends, and pinpoint areas that need improvement. The results can help determine if management's perceptions are aligned with employee perceptions.

PULSE SURVEYS

Pulse surveys offer more immediate insights. These short, frequent surveys are designed to capture the current state of safety culture regularly, such as monthly or quarterly. Pulse surveys are handy for monitoring the effectiveness of recent safety initiatives or policy changes. By quickly assessing how employees feel about specific safety aspects, you can consider making timely adjustments and addressing any emerging issues before they become more problematic.

SAFETY OBSERVATION REPORTS

Safety observation reports involve employees and supervisors documenting safety-related behaviors and conditions they observe in the workplace. This method provides real-time data on how safety protocols are followed, highlighting potential hazards that surveys might not capture. Encouraging employee participation helps to foster a culture of vigilance and proactive problem-solving.

NEAR-MISS REPORTING

A near miss is an event that could have resulted in an accident or injury but did not, either by chance or through timely intervention. Encouraging employees to report near misses may provide insights into potential risks and unsafe conditions that might otherwise go unnoticed. A high rate of reporting combined with a low rate of actual incidents often reflects a strong safety culture where employees feel empowered to speak up.

SAFETY CULTURE AUDITS

A safety culture audit thoroughly evaluates the organization's safety practices, policies, and behaviors. Unlike other methods, which can rely primarily on employee feedback, an internal or external team usually conducts an audit that reviews documentation, observes workplace practices, and interviews employees at various levels. Safety culture audits objectively assess how safety is managed and integrated into daily operations.

Note: These lists are not intended to be all-inclusive.

CALL TO ACTION

- Consider implementing methods to measure your safety culture.



TIME TO DISCUSS WINTER DRIVING HAZARDS



Winter is here, and the risk of vehicle accidents and work-related injuries increases as the weather worsens around the country. A motor carrier's operations team plays a crucial role in helping to communicate winter-related hazards to drivers, office and shop workers, and vendors. Keeping safety at the top of everyone's mind is a goal for many motor carriers in the winter months. Here are some talking points to consider when discussing winter hazards:

WINTER DRIVING HAZARDS

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Winter brings a host of unpredictable weather conditions, such as snowstorms, fog, and freezing rain. These conditions can reduce visibility and affect a driver's ability to perceive hazards and react in time. Additionally, shorter days can cause fatigue, creating a driving distraction.

ADVERSE ROAD CONDITIONS

Snow, slush, and ice are common road hazards in winter. Each diminishes tire grip and can affect the vehicle's maneuverability and stopping distances. Winter storms can also lead to traffic delays, unexpected detours, and road closures, all of which can create a stressful environment and may increase instances of aggressive driving and road rage.

VEHICLE ISSUES

Cold weather can exacerbate mechanical issues such as a battery losing power, oil thickening in the engine, and brakes freezing overnight. These issues can lead to costly business interruptions, roadside repairs, and delivery delays.

ACCIDENT PREVENTION TIPS FOR DRIVERS

CONDUCT PRE-TRIP INSPECTIONS

Talk with drivers about conducting a thorough pre-trip inspection before starting any trip. Consider accompanying the drivers as they perform their walk-around, offer your observations, and ask questions to emphasize the importance of this crucial task.

MONITOR WEATHER REPORTS

Dispatchers can help drivers by informing them about weather forecasts along their routes. If conditions deteriorate rapidly, dispatchers can call receivers to inform them of the situation, alleviating the driver's burden so they can focus on finding a safe place to wait out the storm.

COMMUNICATE THE ESSENTIAL 7 DRIVING TECHNIQUES

Remind drivers of some essential accident prevention techniques:

- Observe the proper speed for conditions. (Ex. Slow down in inclement weather.)
- Maintain proper following distance. (Ex. Add one second for every hazard present.)
- Avoid distractions. (Ex. Silence and put away cell phones before driving.)
- Be attentive to the road ahead. (Ex. Watch for traffic slowing ahead.)
- React properly to hazards. (Ex. Know how to recover from a jackknife.)



WINTER-RELATED INJURY & ILLNESS HAZARDS

WALKING AND WORKING SURFACES

Frozen surfaces around the tractor-trailer, such as the tractor steps and walkways around the truck, can become slippery and increase the risk of slips, trips, and falls. Potholes, uneven surfaces, and other hazards may also be present.

WEATHER-RELATED EQUIPMENT HAZARDS

Snow and ice can accumulate on the roof and sides of the tractor and trailer, posing a hazard while drivers work outside the vehicle. Wearing improper footwear can also increase the risk of trench foot if the driver's feet become drenched or exposed to icy water for a prolonged period.

EXPOSURE TO THE ELEMENTS

Exposure to cold temperatures, especially during loading/unloading and fueling, can lead to several ailments. Colds, flu, and respiratory illnesses are common in winter. Drivers can also suffer from frostbite and hypothermia if exposed to extreme cold temperatures.

INJURY & ILLNESS PREVENTION TIPS

CONDUCT SAFETY TRAINING

Communicate safe work practices with all employees. Discuss winter hazards and prevention techniques regularly, including how to communicate hazards to management. Also, observe employees and correct unsafe behaviors immediately.

PLAN FOR EMERGENCIES

Equip drivers with the knowledge and tools to handle emergencies such as breakdowns or accidents in winter conditions. Ensure they know whom to contact and what steps to take in an emergency. Also, remind drivers to pack extra warm clothing, food, and water on trips in case they are forced to park for a prolonged period.

COMMUNICATE THE ESSENTIAL 7 WORK PRACTICES

Remind drivers of some essential accident prevention techniques:

- Be attentive to your surroundings. Ex. Watch for ice and potholes when walking.
- Use personal protective equipment. Ex. Wear gloves and water-resistant footwear.
- Follow established safety procedures. Ex. Report an accident immediately to your insurer.





FIVE WAYS TO HELP REDUCE THE RISK OF CATASTROPHIC LOSSES

In the transportation industry, motor carriers face a myriad of risks that can lead to catastrophic losses, including accidents, cargo damage, and the looming threat of “nuclear verdicts”—massive jury awards that can weaken even well-established companies. Consider using the following risk management strategies as part of your operation to help reduce the risk of a catastrophic loss.

INVEST IN DRIVER TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Various Truck Crash Involvement studies have shown that a driver’s past behavior increases the probability of a future crash. For this reason, motor carriers should consider investing in driver training to help reduce the risk of severe losses. Examples include road tests, new employee orientation, onboarding, and ongoing training that can help paint the picture that the motor carrier is doing everything in its power to prevent accidents.

CREATE A CULTURE THAT VALUES SAFETY

When safety becomes ingrained in the company’s DNA, the risk of accidents and catastrophic losses may decrease as employees are more likely to adhere to best practices and report potential hazards. Create a culture that values safety by integrating safety at every level, from executives to drivers. Leadership should set clear expectations for safety practices and lead by example.

IMPLEMENT A ROBUST FLEET MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

Motor carriers should strategize how to implement a comprehensive maintenance schedule for their fleets. This program could include regular inspections, timely repairs, and replacing parts nearing the end of their service lives. By proactively addressing mechanical issues, motor carriers can better prevent breakdowns and possible accidents caused by equipment failure.

LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY TO MANAGE RISK

Technology can be a powerful ally in managing risks. Telematics systems allow motor carriers to monitor driver behavior in real time, providing insights into speeding, hard braking, and other risky behaviors that can be addressed proactively. Likewise, in a legal dispute, technology like inward- and outward-facing cameras may help exonerate a driver involved in an accident.

INSURE YOUR FLEET ACCURATELY

Given the rising threat of nuclear verdicts, carriers should work closely with their insurance providers to ensure that their coverage limits are sufficient to protect against catastrophic losses.



CALL TO ACTION

- Consider developing a comprehensive driving training program.

MIRROR CHECK STATION GUIDE



Drivers have a greater chance of reducing the frequency of backing and lane change-related accidents if they are skilled at managing the space around the truck. One key factor that may contribute to these types of incidents is the improper alignment of the truck's fender-, hood-, and door-mounted mirrors.

For this reason, Old Republic Canada created the Mirror Check Station Guide to help support your risk control and safety training efforts. The Mirror Check Station Guide is a 12-page booklet for operations staff and safety trainers tasked with training drivers on proper mirror alignment. Inside this guide is an overview of the importance of proper mirror adjustment and instructions on setting up a permanent or temporary mirror check station at your facility. The setup instructions cover tractor-trailers and straight trucks. Once the mirror check station is completed, trainers can use the lesson plan and handouts provided in the booklet to conduct training with drivers. Classroom instruction and hands-on demonstrations are recommended.

Insureds can download the Mirror Check Station Guide [here](#).



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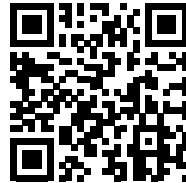
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