

# The Advisor

## On the road: Best practices for fleet safety

Any organization that asks employees to drive as part of their work duties should implement a fleet safety program.

A fleet safety program is designed to protect both employees and companies and to prevent accidents while driving. Based on the needs of the organization, programs can include procedures for hiring and training drivers, policies about expected behaviors while driving, and plans for preventative maintenance.

Fleet safety matters: Transportation incidents remain the most frequent cause of fatal occupational incidents. In 2022, they accounted for nearly 38 percent of all worker deaths across the country, according to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

In addition to being dangerous, they're also expensive – the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation estimates an average on-the-job injury crash costs an employer \$74,000. And in cases where businesses are taken to court over a collision that resulted in injuries or fatalities, [damages quickly can reach millions of dollars](#).

Best practices when it comes to fleet safety include:

- Developing a procedure and criteria for assessing and hiring drivers
- Implementing a non-owned vehicle policy
- Enforcing driving rules
- Being proactive with training and maintenance

Read on for more information.

### Developing a procedure and criteria for assessing and hiring drivers

It's crucial for any organization hiring drivers to make sure they're putting safe drivers on the roads.

Best practices for hiring include:

- Reviewing the driving history of applicants by running a motor vehicle report during the hiring process. Motor vehicle reports show three years of driving records and include all violations – not just those that occurred on the job. These records not only help companies determine whether drivers meet their hiring



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criteria but can also allow them to quickly exclude candidates who have been convicted of serious driving crimes (leaving the scene of an accident, driving under the influence, other felonies).

- Establishing criteria so all applicants are treated the same – essentially, determining the number and type of driving violations a person can have and still be hired
- Examining the applicant’s license to make sure it’s not expired, is from the correct state, and has the appropriate endorsements
- Requiring the applicant to complete an on-the-road driving test

All driver qualification procedures should be written and documented.

### **Implementing a non-owned vehicle policy**

Organizations that ask their employees to drive their own vehicles on company business still need established, written policies and procedures to determine whether employees are qualified to drive and whether the vehicles they’re driving are safe.

One of the most important – and simplest – steps businesses can take is to annually obtain proof of insurance coverage from each employee (via a declarations page) to ensure they have appropriate limits. In the event of an on-the-job accident, an employee’s personal insurance policy will respond first, and the business’s non-owned auto policy only will respond once the employee’s personal policy limits have been reached. Typically, insurance companies recommend that employees using their vehicles for business purposes have limits of \$100,000 per person and \$300,000 per occurrence.

Other things to consider:

- Obtaining non-owned auto coverage, which will respond in the event of an accident
- Making sure the vehicle is registered in the employee’s name and that the employee is appropriately licensed
- Running regular motor vehicle report checks on anyone who is driving, regardless of whether they will be driving company or personal vehicles
- Inspecting the personal vehicle to ensure it is in good condition or requiring that all personal vehicles pass state-mandated safety inspections

### **Enforcing driving rules**

Whether employees are driving company-owned vehicles or their own cars, it’s important to set expectations about appropriate driving behavior.

A “rules of the road” policy can cover a variety of topics, including:

- Distracted driving, including the use of mobile devices and whether employees are expected to answer work communications while driving
- Seatbelt usage
- Alcohol and drug use while operating vehicles on company business
- Pre-trip vehicle inspections
- What to do in the event of an accident
- Clarification about whether the company or the employee is responsible for fines/fees related to traffic offenses or parking tickets

Best practice is to have all employees sign attesting they’ve read and agree to the driving rules.

## Being proactive with training and maintenance

At minimum, people being hired to drive should receive orientation training to ensure they can safely operate company vehicles. Other opportunities for training include offering more specialized training to address driving issues observed companywide or following an accident.

Another proactive step companies can take to keep employees safe on the roads – and to limit unexpected, costly repairs – is to develop a fleet maintenance program for vehicles. This can include regularly scheduled inspections by a mechanic and established standards related to age and condition of vehicles. Any issues that are identified, along with all maintenance and repair, should be documented for each vehicle in your organization's fleet.

Ultimately, the right fleet safety program for your organization will vary based on the type of operations you perform. The team at Schauer Group can advise your organization on the specific policies and procedures that should be considered to keep your team and your business safe. If you'd like to discuss further, please contact your Schauer Group representative.

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## SOURCES

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[Risk Control Topics: Hired/Non-Owned Fleet Safety – Best Practices, Berkley Technology Underwriters](#)

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