



Implementing a Safe Driving Program

Why should you be concerned about occupational driving?

If you have workers who are driving from site to site, or travelling to a meeting, or even going out for a coffee run, they are considered occupational drivers by the WSIB.

Occupational driving poses unique risks for employers. According to the THSAO (Transportation Health and Safety Association of Ontario) driving is one of the highest risk activities an employer ever requires employees to undertake, and unlike a worksite, the types of drivers and vehicles sharing the road with employees are not under the control of the employer.

Employers have both a legal duty (under the Occupational Health and Safety Act) and a moral duty to protect workers from the hazards of occupational driving. A safe driving program can help achieve this goal. Driving programs should be customized to fit the needs of each workplace. This package provides a general look at how to implement a safe driving program and tools to assess the driving hazards at your worksite.

A model to implement a safe driving program

- 1. Identify Hazards**
Worker exposure, hazard types, risk
- 2. Assess Hazards and Determine Controls**
Elimination, administration, personal controls
- 3. Implement Program**
Policies, procedures, training, orientation
- 4. Annual Review & Continual Monitoring**
Program review, incident investigation

1 Identify driving hazards at your worksite

The first step in establishing a driving program is to determine who your occupational drivers are, and what risks they are exposed to. Completing the **'Occupational Driver Assessment'** worksheet included in this package will indicate the number of occupational drivers in your company and the average amount of time they each spend driving. Results from the worksheet may show that some groups drive far more often than other groups. In these situations, a tiered approach to driver training can be taken with high-exposure groups receiving more intensive training than low-exposure groups.

Once the amount of driving is determined, the next step is to determine what types of hazards workers are exposed to while they are driving. The **'Hazard Control Plan'** worksheet can help determine what these hazards are. The sheet should be completed with the joint health and safety committee, occupational drivers, maintenance department, examining incident reports, and any other sources you may find relevant. Assemble a team of representatives, or at least ensure there is input from these groups.

What is Occupational Driving?

An occupational driver is anyone who operates a motor vehicle as part of his or her job. This includes:

- Drivers of company trucks
- Workers travelling from site to site on provincial roads
- Workers travelling to meetings
- Workers picking up office supplies

Occupational driving does not include travel to and from work.

2 Assess hazards and determine controls: Elimination, administration and personal controls

Once hazards are identified, steps need to be taken to control them. Determine which hazards are the most severe, then how best to eliminate or control them. Elimination of hazards is ideal, followed by administrative controls and then the use of personal protective equipment. Samples of each are listed below:

Elimination	Administration	Personal Controls
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Re-evaluating the necessity of trips taken. Is a conference call possible instead? - Can alternate forms of travel, such as buses, planes or trains be used? - Are safer routes available? - Are safer travel times available? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safe driving policies and procedures - Orientation and safe driver training - Recruitment and selection - Medical screening - Collision investigations, incident recording - Preventive maintenance - Vehicle inspections - On-road driver assessments - Identifying the safest route - Monitoring road conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Require vehicle inspections - Road emergency kits - Air bags - Winter tires - Ergonomics checks and considerations - Sunglasses - Appropriate clothing - Manufacturer's original equipment (vehicle is not altered)

Using policies and procedures to control hazards.

Many unsafe driving activities; such as cell phone use, driving while tired, or driving during a snowstorm are not illegal in Ontario. To prevent drivers from engaging in these and other unsafe activities (which they often don't want to do, but feel they should due to time, work pressure etc.) policies and procedures can clearly outline what type of driving behaviour is expected and acceptable. Procedures can insist cell phones only be used when the vehicle is safely parked; or fatigue policies can encourage workers to pull over and rest when they are tired.

Types of Policies and Procedures

- Verification of employee qualifications
- Emergency procedures
- Use of cell phones and other in-car distractions
- Weather
- Vehicle condition
- Maintenance of vehicle
- Fatigue and hours of work
- Night driving
- Medications

3 Implementing a program: Training and orientation

Typically a safe driving program is implemented through introducing safe driving policies and procedures to workers as well as hands-on training in driving techniques, such as defensive driving or skid school.

In order to be effective, policies and procedures should be introduced to new workers during the orientation process. Ensure that all employees, whether new or more experienced, understand that procedures are a requirement, not a suggestion.

Policies and procedures will most likely need to be updated if the company evolves or changes. Adjustments to procedures can be introduced to employees through refresher training, which can be offered every two years, or more frequently if needed.



Hands-on driver training can vary between groups of employees. Employees with greater exposure to the risks of occupational driving will require more training than occasional drivers. On the next page is a sample chart on how driver training can be tiered.

Sample of tiered training levels

Training Level	Exposure Level km/year	Training Required
1	up to 9,999	- In-vehicle evaluation - One-day classroom training: vehicle dynamics, braking, reaction times, stopping distances, and driving hazards
2	10,000 to 49,999	- Level one training - Advanced driver training with professional driving school
3	50,000+	- Level 1 and 2 training - Further tailored to match hazard levels and type of driving
Refresher Training	All employees	- Minimum every two years

4 Annual review and continual monitoring

All employees should be encouraged to report all incidents that occur during the course of occupational driving. Incidents should be reviewed, documented and monitored to see if any trends emerge. Are incidents occurring in a particular area or with a particular type of vehicle or driver?

On at least an annual basis, the entire safe driving program should be reviewed. Employers should ask:

- Are the risks suitably controlled?
- Are there new routes or new equipment?
- Have incident statistics changed?
- Are incidents increasing or decreasing?

If procedures or policies need to change, resources must to be allocated and a timeline established. Refresher training will have to be scheduled to introduce new procedure changes to employees.

To help review your program and identify gaps, two checklists have been provided: Risk Management Check-up for Small Business (under 20 employees), and a Risk Management Check-up for Medium to Large Business. Once completed, the checklist can act as an action plan for updating your safe driving program.

Workplace Safety North thanks the Transportation Health and Safety Association of Ontario for their generous sharing of information and resources used to prepare these materials.