



**Texas Department
of Insurance**



Building a Highway Safety Program in Your Workplace

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Building a Highway Safety Program in Your Workplace Program

How Helping Your Employees Can Help Your Bottom Line

Motor vehicle crashes, on and off the job, are the primary cause of death and injury in the United States. Motor vehicle crashes cost employers over \$50 billion annually in medical care, legal expenses, property damage, and lost productivity. They drive up the cost of benefits such as workers' compensation, Social Security, and private health and disability insurance. In addition, they increase the company overhead involved in administering these programs.

Statistics show that when a worker has an on-the-job highway crash that results in injuries, the cost to that person's employer is more than \$24,000. An off-the-job crash that results in injury costs the employer more than \$18,000.

Starting a highway safety program is one of the simplest and most cost-effective ways of reducing injuries and their related costs. By instructing your employees in basic traffic safety techniques including motor vehicle, safe pedestrian, bicycle, and motorcycle techniques and then rewarding safety-conscious behavior, you can help your employees and their families avoid tragedy.

Making the effort to promote highway safety has a public relations benefit as well. It shows employees that you're concerned with their health and welfare and demonstrates to the community that you're a good corporate citizen.

No matter what kind of highway safety program you have in mind for your workplace remember, even the smallest program can bring significant cost savings—you can follow these six simple steps.

Step #1: Obtain Management's Commitment

To develop a highway safety program, you need the support of management. To obtain that support, you need to show that a highway safety program in the workplace is affordable and simple to implement, that it will alter employee behavior, and that it will have a positive impact on company profits.

How to Approach Management

- Explain how staff resources could be used effectively to organize a program.
- Explain how the program will be evaluated and how progress will be reported to management.

If management is still not convinced of the need for the program, suggest that they conduct a simple needs assessment, collecting information on current costs associated with highway injuries and baseline data on employee attitudes and behaviors related to highway safety. Then, if it looks as if there really is a need for change, they will be more likely to support a program.

Step #2: Identify Your Costs

Identifying exactly what your company pays out for motor vehicle crashes will help you demonstrate the need for a comprehensive motor vehicle and pedestrian safety program. Cost analysis will also enable you to focus the resources where they will be most helpful.

Where to Start

Start by collecting data on both the direct and indirect costs to your company of all motor vehicle crashes in which employees were involved. Work with your human resource manager, safety manager, workers' compensation representative, accountants, and medical and motor vehicle insurance representatives to obtain the numbers you'll need.

Using the Worksheet

At the end of this publication, you will find Worksheet 1: Costs of Highway Crashes. Identify each itemized expense that is relevant to your company, collect the necessary data, and total your company's expenditures. If your company has incurred expenses that are not itemized on this list, be sure to add them to the worksheet.

Step #3: Develop An Action Plan

Set concrete objectives

Write your objectives in terms of measurable behaviors.

Set a realistic date for meeting each objective.

Example: "Raise employee use of safety belts on the job from 42% to 50% in the next 60 days." Each month, choose activities that support the objectives. In order to ensure that you meet your objectives, you must arrange for ongoing activities that support your goals. When designing these activities, be sure that they relate directly to the attitudes and behaviors you want to change, and assign responsibilities clearly.

Example: “Personnel will distribute a fact sheet on the importance of safety belt use to every employee this week.”

Design a system for documenting your results

Assign specific personnel and recordkeeping systems for documenting each activity designed to reach your objectives. Note any problems in implementation.

Create an evaluation plan

Formulate a plan for evaluating the success of your program. In order to have a clear criterion for assessing progress, collect baseline data on relevant factors such as safety belt use before implementing your traffic safety program. Determine exactly how to measure changes in attitudes and behavior. (See Step #6.) Determine who will be in charge of evaluations and how often evaluations will be conducted.

Step #4: Implement Highway Safety Policies

Create a clear and comprehensive set of traffic safety policies and communicate them to all employees. Post them throughout the workplace, distribute copies periodically, and discuss the policies at company meetings. Offer incentives for sticking to the rules, and point out the consequences of disregarding them. Feel free to adapt the following sample policies for your use.

Sample Alcohol Use Policy

“This company has a vital interest in maintaining safe, healthy, and efficient working conditions for its employees. Therefore, the consumption of alcohol by any employee during ‘duty hours’ is prohibited. Duty hours consist of all working hours, including break periods and on-call periods, whether on or off company premises. The consumption of alcohol while performing company business or while in a company facility is prohibited. The use of alcohol during non-working hours under circumstances that this company determines adversely affect the company’s reputation in the community is also prohibited.”

Sample Safety Belt Use Policy

“This company recognizes that safety belt use is an important and effective means of protecting our employees. Employees should always use safety belts while traveling on official business, and employees should operate vehicles only after passengers are buckled up. Establishing mandatory safety belt use is now a policy of the highest priority.”

Step #5: Implement An Awareness Campaign

Encourage employees to come up with fun, creative ways to boost awareness of safety issues and procedures. Invite suggestions on what types of special privileges and awards would most likely motivate employees to engage in safe driving practices. To get you started, here are some ideas for year-round activities.

Winter

- Create a list of “Duties of a Responsible Party Host,” and send it out as a memo or post it on the bulletin board. Include recipes for non-alcoholic beverages and tips on how to handle intoxicated guests.
- Sponsor a “Designated Driver” program at your company’s holiday party. Offer a special gift to any employee or guest who agrees to be a designated driver and abstains from drinking alcoholic beverages that evening.
- For the holidays, donate child safety seats to a local charity.
- Challenge your employees to come up with ideas for alcohol-free holiday activities. Pick one to sponsor.

Spring

- Conduct a safety belt check day. Have parking lot attendants check drivers and passengers as they enter and leave the lot. Different departments or shifts can compete for the highest use rate. Offer awards for the winners.
- Start a “Saved by the Belt/Safety Seat/Helmet” feature in your company newsletter. Request first-person accounts of how safety belts, car seats, and motorcycle or bicycle helmets saved the lives of employees and their family members.
- Sponsor a brown-bag lunch and invite a speaker from your local highway safety office, police department, or fire station to discuss highway safety issues.

Summer

- Promote the use of safety belts in paycheck stuffers. Remind employees to always obey posted speed limits and not to drink and drive, especially during the busy vacation season between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

- Host a company picnic, and as employees and their families arrive, give a reward to each person who is wearing a safety belt, using child safety seats, or wearing a motorcycle or bicycle helmet.
- Sponsor a contest in which the children of employees develop traffic safety messages for Father's Day. Post the entries so that they are visible to employees and visitors. Judge the entries by age group and present the winners with coloring books, free movie passes, or T-shirts.
- Spread the message to your employees that while motorcycles and bicycles are fun, motorcycle- and bicycle-related injuries are not.

Fall

- Send employees reminders about the beginning of the new school year and the need to pay special attention to children boarding and exiting school buses.
- Hold a raffle for safety items such as bicycle helmets and car seats at the next employee meeting. Begin the meeting with a reminder to buckle up, obey posted speed limits, avoid drinking and driving, and always wear motorcycle or bicycle helmets.
- Hold a pizza party or potluck lunch to celebrate a crash-free quarter or month. Feature the event in your company newsletter.
- Collaborate with a local college or high school to offer defensive driving courses to young employees.

Step #6: Evaluate Your Program

At regular intervals, evaluate the progress your employees have made toward reaching your program objective. Consider each objective carefully when deciding what evaluation method to use.

If you are having trouble devising a way to evaluate a certain objective, maybe the objective itself is too vaguely written. Revise it so that it describes a measurable or observable behavior, as in the following example:

(Difficult to measure reliably) "Employees understand the concept of the designated driver."

(Easier to measure reliably) "One hundred percent of employees are able, when asked, to define a 'designated driver' as the member of a group who refrains completely from consuming alcohol at a social event

and takes responsibility for driving home friends or fellow workers who have consumed alcohol."

Evaluation should be ongoing. If you learn that your employees' highway safety habits are improving, great! Get the information out to management and the workforce alike to justify the program and reinforce learning. But if evaluation shows that you are not yet achieving success, don't be discouraged. You've just obtained valuable information that can help you refocus your efforts in more productive ways.

This Program was developed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation.

Using the Worksheet

At the end of this program, you will find Worksheet 1: Sample Evaluation Formats. These formats are provided to show you some of the different ways you can evaluate different kinds of objectives.

For example, Sample Objective #1 deals with employee attitudes and beliefs. A good way to learn about people's attitudes is to ask them direct questions, such as those in the three Sample Questionnaire Items provided. When you write your own questionnaires, make sure that each attitude or belief is clearly stated and that you give employees a range of responses to check or circle.

Sample Objective #2 deals with hard financial data related to company expenditures over a target time period. The best way to collect this data is with a written data collection form. Use the same form whenever you collect data, so that you can easily compare findings from different time periods.

Sample Objective #3 deals with actual employee behaviors. The best way to measure this kind of objective is through real-life observations. To help you make and record accurate observations, use a written form like the one shown on the worksheet.

Footnotes

¹ What do Traffic Crashes Cost? Total Cost to Employers by State and Industry. DOT HS 808-478. Washington, D.C.: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, December 1996.

Worksheet: The Cost of Highway Crashes

See Step #2 on how to use this part of the worksheet.

Direct Costs	Cost
Workers' compensation benefits	\$ _____
Healthcare costs for off-duty injuries	\$ _____
Increases in medical insurance premiums	\$ _____
Auto insurance and liability claims and settlements	\$ _____
Physical and vocational rehabilitation costs	\$ _____
Life insurance and survivor benefits	\$ _____
Group health insurance dependent coverage	\$ _____
Property damage (equipment, products, etc.)	\$ _____
Motor vehicle repair and replacement	\$ _____
TOTAL	\$ _____
See Step #6 on how to use this worksheet.	
Indirect Costs	Cost
Supervisor's time (rescheduling, making special arrangements)	\$ _____
Fleet manager's time to coordinate vehicle repair, replacement, etc.	\$ _____
Reassignment of personnel to cover for missing employees (less efficiency)	\$ _____
Overtime pay (to cover work of missing employees)	\$ _____
Employee replacement	\$ _____
Reentry and retraining of injured employees	\$ _____
Administrative costs (documentation of injuries, treatment, absences; crash investigation)	\$ _____
Inspection costs	\$ _____
Failure to meet customer requirements resulting in loss of business	\$ _____
TOTAL	\$ _____

Sample Objective #1: Employees will demonstrate attitudes and beliefs that foster compliance with motor vehicle safety regulations.

Sample Objective #2: Dollars spent on workers' compensation will drop by at least 10% between the first and second quarters of the year.

Sample Data Collection Form

Dollars spent on workers' compensation

First Quarter \$_____ Second Quarter \$_____

Sample Objective #3: The number of employees observed following the company's highway safety policies will rise by at least 25% by the end of the first year after implementation.

Sample Form for Direct Observation

Number of employees observed wearing seat belts or helmets when entering parking lot on annual check day

Before program instituted_____ After program begun_____

Number of children strapped into regulation safety seats

Last year's picnic_____ This year's picnic_____

Number of official designated drivers at holiday party

Last year_____ This year_____

Sample Questionnaire Items

1. Posted speed limits should be followed exactly.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

2. It is safe to drive after drinking alcohol as long as you drive more slowly than usual.

Agree

Uncertain

Disagree

3. Children should be buckled into safety seats every time they travel in a motor vehicle.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree