

## Driving Employees

# Teach Your Staff to Be Defensive Drivers

**W**HEN YOU have staff who drive on the job, you have to ensure they do so safely to avoid accidents that can injure themselves as well as other drivers or pedestrians.

While your workers' compensation insurance will cover an employee's injuries, your commercial auto insurance would cover claims for third party injuries.

But an accident can also result in lost productivity and higher insurance rates. If someone is seriously injured or killed, your company can be sued for negligence.

Every time one of your employees gets behind the wheel, they should remember the importance of using defensive driving techniques. That's why it's important you train them properly.

Defensive driving can save lives. It means staying alert, avoiding distractions and being ready for anything – such as an erratic driver, bad weather, road hazards and slow-moving vehicles. It also means avoiding bad habits.



### Train employees to avoid:

- Aggressive driving
- Tailgating
- Drowsy driving
- Speeding
- Moving in and out of traffic
- Using their phone

### And remember to:

- Be aware of blind spots
- Slow down at intersections
- Keep a safe following distance
- Minimize distractions

### Safety training tips

Teaching your employees about defensive driving not only lets them know it's a priority for you, but also an expectation of their performance.

During your safety meeting, discuss the importance of using these defensive driving techniques:

**Be aware of surroundings** – Check mirrors frequently and scan conditions 20 to 30 seconds ahead. Watch for pedestrians, bicyclists and pets along the road.

**Pay attention** – Avoid distractions (eating and cell phones).

**Avoid aggressive driving** – If another motorist shows signs of aggressive driving, don't engage them. Instead, slow down or pull over to avoid that driver.

**Get plenty of rest** – When motorists don't get enough sleep, they increase their chances of getting into an accident. Getting enough rest goes hand in hand with safe driving.

**Don't depend on other drivers** – Don't assume another driver is going to move out of the way. Drive defensively and be considerate of other drivers.

**Follow the three-second rule** – When the car in front of you passes a certain point, count three full seconds. If you reach that same point in less than three seconds, you're following too close.

**Have an escape route** – In all driving situations, the best way to avoid potential danger is to position the vehicle where it has the best chance of seeing and being seen by other drivers.

Try to have someplace to move your vehicle if the immediate path is suddenly blocked.

### The takeaway

We cannot control what other drivers do, but we can control how we drive. Defensive driving techniques can help your employees reduce the chance of getting into a traffic accident and potentially hurting themselves or someone else.

Regularly remind your driving staff to be on the defensive when they get behind the wheel. ❖