

Driver meeting topics

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Driver meeting topics

Automobile fleet loss control

Driver meeting topics

Introduction

These discussion topics have been prepared as a means of presenting safe driving facts and ideas about vehicle operation, driving techniques, hazards and accident causes. The key to the success of this program is driver participation. By getting drivers to talk and think about the fine points of safe driving, driver attitudes and awareness can be improved. Drivers can be involved through questions and answers and encouraging them to offer suggestions covering the topics discussed.

The purpose of the "Discussion Topic" is to focus a group discussion with a group leader and drivers. The focus is a topic of mutual interest where all involved can learn, express opinions and benefit from the experience of others. The group leader presents the topic and controls the discussion. The group leader should encourage participation from all participants and keep the discussion focused on the topic.

Instructions

1. Prior to the meeting
 - A. Schedule the meeting.
 - B. Notify drivers.
 - C. Review the topic to be discussed.
 - D. Arrange for a meeting place where drivers can be seen and heard easily.
 - E. Arrange for any equipment that might be needed such as projectors, chalk boards, flip charts etc.
2. Running the meeting
 - A. Complement and welcome drivers.
 - B. Emphasize the need for safe driving.
 - 1) Cover the operation's accident rate
 - 2) Review any accidents, safety violations.
Discuss how the accidents could be prevented and consequences of violations.
 - 3) Review driving conditions to be prepared for during the weeks ahead.
 - C. Encourage driver participation. Urge them to answer questions, offer suggestions, and provide examples. The purpose is to get all drivers thinking about safe vehicle operation.
 - D. Introduce the discussion topic.
 - E. Guide the discussion.
 - F. Close the meeting. Recap the discussion in your own words. Thank drivers for their participation.
 - G. Always document meetings - attendees, topics, date and time.

Driver meeting topics

Driver fatigue

There are limitations to what a vehicle can do. There are limitations to what a driver can do. While these limits vary by individual, professional drivers should know their limitations, and what to do about them. One of the most common limitations and one which contributes to accidents is driver fatigue.

- Contributing Causes of driver fatigue:
 - Carbon monoxide leakage into the cab.
 - Exceeding hours of service.
 - Adverse or demanding driving conditions.
 - Inadequate sleep.
 - Prescribed medications.
 - Alcohol.
 - Drugs.
 - Preoccupation - worry over personal problems.
 - Overeating.
 - Improper diet.

- Effects of driver fatigue:
 - Slower reaction time.
 - Irritability or bad temper.
 - Careless decisions.
 - Loss of attention.
 - Reduced vision.

- Avoiding driver fatigue:
 - Sufficient sleep.
 - Proper diet.
 - Rest stops.
 - Short walks or exercise.

- Presentation:
 - Introduce driver fatigue as a cause of accidents.
 - What are some contributing causes?
 - Summarize discussion.
 - Which are most critical?
 - How does fatigue affect driving ability?
 - How can a driver avoid fatigue?

Driver meeting topics

Backing

A sure way to avoid backing accidents is to avoid backing. Unfortunately this is not always possible. Backing is a hazardous maneuver. Professional drivers are aware of backing hazards and know how to avoid them. Backing accidents can be prevented.

- Contributing factors to backing accidents:
 - Failure to look immediately before backing
 - Failure to check the blind spots.
 - Failure to check clearances.
 - Full dependence on a guide or mirrors.
 - Operating different size vehicles.
 - Backing too rapidly.
 - Reduced visibility due to weather or light conditions.
 - Failure to set brakes; chock wheels.

- Some ways to avoid backing accidents:
 - Plan ahead - avoid backing if possible.
 - Avoid backing to turn around.
 - Identify locations where backing should never be done.
 - Avoid backing unfamiliar vehicles.
 - Back out of traffic rather than in to it.
 - Before backing, walk around vehicle to check for children, posts, hydrants, other vehicles - check clearances.
 - Shut off the radio and open the window.
 - Use mirrors on both sides of the vehicle.
 - Use wide angle mirrors.
 - Use a guide.
 - Use a back up alarm on vehicles.
 - Look immediately before backing.
 - Set brakes; chock wheels.
 - Back slowly - keep alert – look.
 - Back in the right direction to provide most visibility.

- Presentation:
 - Introduce backing accident topic to drivers.
 - What are some of the causes of backing accidents?
 - Which are most critical?
 - Where are the blind spots?
 - How can backing accidents be avoided?
 - Summarize the discussion.

Driver meeting topics

Following

The following distance in front of the vehicle is a danger zone. It is also the area around your vehicle that you have the greatest control over. The following distance must provide adequate space to react, slow and stop to avoid rear-ending the vehicle ahead. Adequate following distance varies with speed, size of the vehicle and driving conditions. Professional drivers know their vehicles and allow a cushion of safe following distance.

- Causes of rear-end collisions:
 - Following too closely or tailgating.
 - Lack of alertness.
 - Distractions.
 - Poor brakes or tires.
 - Road and weather conditions

- Avoiding rear end collisions:
 - Drive ahead of your vehicle - be alert to the total traffic picture by scanning the area in your danger zone.
 - Apply the Three Second Rule by picking a fixed reference point over which you can time the travel of your vehicle (e.g.: a sign, overpass shadow line, etc). When the car ahead passes this point, start counting one thousand and one, one thousand and two etc. The front of your vehicle should not pass this point until you have completed your count to 3. The count should be increased for larger, heavier vehicles, wet or icy roads, poor visibility, nighttime, etc.
 - Know your slowing down and stopping distances.
 - Stopping distance is reaction distance plus the vehicle braking distance at the current speed.
 - The average reaction time for an alert driver is 3/4 to one second.
 - A vehicle travels about 1.5 times its speed in feet per second
 - In 3/4 of a second the distance a vehicle travels can be determined by adding the first digit of the speed to the last digit. For example:
 - 55 MPH = 55 + 5 = 60 feet per second
 - 30 MPH = 30 + 3 = 33 feet per second
 - Braking distance increases with the square of the speed. For example if a vehicle can stop in 20 feet at 20 MPH, at 60 MPH or 3 times the speed it will take 9 times as far to stop or 180 feet. At 40 MPH or twice the speed it will take 4 times as far to stop or 80 feet. This assumes that vehicle is in good condition and the pavement is dry.
 - Know the condition of the equipment you are driving.
 - Adjust to the traffic flow and avoid sudden complete stops.
 - Add following distance, more time, when driving conditions are not normal - slick roads, heavy traffic, reduced visibility.

- Presentation:
 - Introduce following and rear-end accidents as the topic for discussion.
 - What are some of the causes of rear end accidents?
 - How can they be avoided?
 - Emphasize reaction time, braking distance.
 - Explain how far a vehicle travels at any speed.
 - Explain how the timed interval method of determining following distance works.
 - Caution extra distance needed for adverse conditions.
 - Summarize the discussion.

Driver meeting topics

Intersections

Intersections present many hazards. They require "moments of decision." Intersections present "who has the right of way?" discussions. The professional driver knows that the law never gives the "right-of-way" to anyone. The only one who can give it is the driver.

- Some contributing causes of accidents:
 - Failure to yield the "right-of-way".
 - Failure to reduce speed.
 - Failure to maintain a safe following distance.
 - Passing in the intersection.
 - Jumping or running traffic lights.
 - Ignoring blind spots - particularly on right turns with large vehicles.
 - Believing the other vehicle will stop for signs, or turn as indicated.

- How to avoid accidents:
 - Yield the "right-of-way".
 - Scan danger zones.
 - Maintain a safe following distance.
 - Anticipate traffic control signal changes.
 - Cover brake and slow down when visibility is limited.
 - Know in advance what you are going to do. Avoid split second decisions.
 - Show what you are going to do with signals and vehicle position.
 - Avoid lane changes in and around intersections.
 - Turn from the proper lanes to the proper lanes.
 - Large vehicles should use outside lane of multi-lane left turn intersections.

- Presentation:
 - Introduce topic on intersections.
 - What kind of accidents can happen at intersections?
 - What are some of the causes of intersection accidents?
 - Which are most critical?
 - How can intersection accidents be avoided?
 - Summarize discussion in your own words.

Intersection accidents can be prevented by thinking ahead, maintaining a good driving attitude about traffic conditions and actions of others and driving skillfully.

Driver meeting topics

Passing

To avoid passing accidents you need vision and space. Professional drivers also depend on experience. Passing is recognized as one of the most dangerous maneuvers on the road. Additionally, it rarely results in any saved time as overall traffic flow will continue to hinder a driver trying to go faster than the others on the road.

- Some contributing causes of accidents:
 - Passing on curves, hills, narrow roads, bridges
 - Impatience
 - Hesitation
 - Limited visibility due to weather or light conditions
 - Passing with adverse road conditions
 - Driving while impaired
 - Failure to signal

- How to avoid accidents:
 - Do not pass unless you can do so within legal speed limit
 - Know your clear distance - vision and space.
 - Signal intention to pass.
 - Allow for sufficient acceleration space.
 - Help others pass safely.
 - Twelve points of passing from the NSC:
 1. Is the pass necessary?
 2. Maintain a safe following distance
 3. Check traffic ahead
 4. Check traffic behind
 5. Signal
 6. Swing into left lane
 7. Accelerate
 8. Tap horn
 9. Signal
 10. Check blind spots
 11. Return to lane
 12. Cancel signal and resume speed.

- Presentation:
 - Introduce passing topic
 - What do you believe are some of the causes of passing accidents?
 - What kind of accidents can happen when passing?
 - What do we gain by passing?
 - What about slow moving vehicles?
 - Discuss NSC passing method.
 - Summarize discussion in your own words

Driver meeting topics

Stopping and parking

Accidents that occur while the vehicle is stopped or parked are often not so serious - fender benders - and some involve pedestrians. Some loss includes vehicle theft and vandalism. Parking accidents should not be overlooked.

- Some contributing causes of accidents:
 - Improper parking on an incline, illegal parking
 - Pulling out from a parking spot into the path of another vehicle
 - Opening a door in the path of another vehicle
 - Poor visibility because of blind spots
 - Leaving the keys in the vehicle or the engine running

- How to avoid accidents:
 - Park properly.
 - Look around - are you parked across from a driveway?
 - Signal.
 - Yield "right-of-way" in parking lots.
 - Check blind spots.
 - Reduce speed in parking lots.
 - Lock the vehicle and take the keys.
 - Set the brake and turn wheels to prevent roll-away.

- Presentation:
 - Introduce topic on parking.
 - What are some contributing causes of parking accidents?
 - What are reasonable security precautions to take?
 - How can parking lot accidents be avoided?
 - Summarize discussion in your own words.

Driver meeting topics

Night driving

During night driving, you can't see as well or as far as during day driving. Your vehicle can not be seen as well.

- Some contributing causes of night time accidents:
 - Over-driving headlights.
 - Recovering from glare of oncoming headlights.
 - Not turning on headlights soon enough as darkness approaches.
 - Eye fatigue.
 - Vehicle lights in poor condition - dirty, out of adjustment or burned out.
 - Reflections from mirrors.
 - Pedestrians in dark clothing.
 - More alcohol and drug use and greater fatigue than during the day.

- How to avoid night driving accidents:
 - Drive slower.
 - Use low beams when visibility is poor - at dusk, fog, rain or snow.
 - Inspect lights regularly and assure headlights are adjusted.
 - Keep your eyes moving. Watch for eye fatigue.
 - Look to the right side of the road to avoid glare.
 - Depress high beams when following or approaching.
 - Dim vehicle instrument lights.
 - Don't drive with senses impaired.

- Presentation:
 - Introduce night driving topic. The accident rate is 2.5 times greater at night than during the day
 - What are some causes of night driving accidents?
 - How can drivers avoid night driving accidents?
 - Summarize discussion.

Driver meeting topics

Driving habits

Habits are easily formed, but difficult to change. Recognizing one's own bad habits is also difficult, but well worth the effort. Correcting one bad habit may eliminate one bad accident.

- Some bad habits that could contributing to accidents
 - Failure to "keep your mind on driving" - daydreaming, preoccupation, boredom etc.
 - Failure to communicate - signals, lane changes, stopping.
 - Routines - familiarity of same route - failure to see the trees for the forest.
 - Failure to pre check the vehicle.
 - Failure to plan, to allow time.
 - Failure to use seat belts.
 - Assuming what the other driver will do.
 - Faulty driving behavior such as:
 - Improper lane positioning
 - Running the yellow, jumping the green or rolling stops.
 - One arm driving.
 - Depending on mirrors instead of checking blind spots.
 - Poor attitude - always in a rush, impatient.

- Some good habits that could help avoid accidents:
 - Smith System:
 - Aim High in Steering
 - Get the Big Picture
 - Keep Your Eyes Moving
 - Leave Yourself an Out
 - Make Sure They See You
 - IPDE:
 - Identify the Hazard
 - Predict the Result
 - Decide What to Do
 - Execute in Time

- Presentation:
 - Introduce topic on driving habits.
 - What do you believe are some bad habits that cause accidents?
 - What good habits can help avoid accidents?
 - How can you change your habits for the better?
 - Summarize discussion in your own words.

Driver meeting topics

Weather

Good weather - bad weather - we can't change it - we must adjust to it. Bad weather causes accidents to fair weather drivers.

- Some contributing causes of bad weather accidents:
 - Driving too fast for conditions.
 - Wind effects on a vehicle - especially vans and trucks.
 - Slippery roads.
 - Hydroplaning.
 - Reduced visibility and ability to be seen.
 - Windows frosted or steamed.
 - Failure to clean windows or running out of windshield fluid.
 - Poor mechanical equipment - tires, windshield wipers, defroster, heater.

- How to avoid bad weather accidents:
 - Reduce speed and increase following distance.
 - Learn how to stop on slippery surfaces, how to correct a skid.
 - Experience ABS braking systems - you can steer!
 - Keep equipment in good condition.
 - Keep windows clean.
 - Warm up the engine before traveling.
 - Keep especially alert for pedestrians.
 - Turn lights on when visibility is reduced.
 - Stop driving if conditions deteriorate badly.

- Presentation:
 - Introduce topic on weather conditions.
 - What are some causes of weather related accidents?
 - How can weather related accidents be avoided?
 - Discuss driving in adverse weather - skids, stopping, hydroplaning.
 - Summarize discussion in your own words.

Driver meeting topics

Interstates

Limited access highways have better accident rates than other roads because vehicles travel in the same direction at comparable speeds. However, increased speeds can increase some hazards and will result in greater injury potentials.

- Some contributing causes of interstate accidents:
 - Highway hypnosis.
 - Slowing or stopping on ramps.
 - Lane changes without checking or signaling.
 - Following too closely.
 - Driving slower or faster than the pace of traffic.
 - Failure to adjust speed for conditions - traffic, weather, road conditions, light.
 - Forced merges (at lane ends and blends) and construction zones.

- How to avoid interstate accidents:
 - Scan and Plan ahead to avoid sudden decisions.
 - Get up to speed before entering an interstate.
 - Check traffic and signal lane changes.
 - Maintain a safe following distance.
 - Maintain a “cushion of space” around you.
 - Flow with the traffic.
 - Use rest stops to break routine.

- Presentation:
 - Introduce interstate driving topic.
 - What are some causes of freeway or interstate accidents?
 - How can interstate accidents be avoided?
 - Summarize discussion in your own words.

Driver meeting topics

Driving influences

There are six basic influences a driver must deal with: LIGHT, WEATHER, ROAD, VEHICLE, TRAFFIC and DRIVER. These influences help the driver recognize hazards and how to cope with them.

- Some contributing causes of driving influence accidents:
 - Traveling too fast for conditions.
 - Light
 - o Over-driving headlights at night
 - o Blinded by headlight glare
 - o Blinded by morning or afternoon sun, reflected light from sun or vehicle components
 - Weather
 - o Driving in heavy rain, snow or fog with reduced visibility
 - o Slippery road surfaces.
 - o High winds.
 - Road
 - o Obstructions and poor road surfaces
 - Vehicle
 - o Defective brakes, steering, tires, headlights, windshield wipers, heater.
 - o Emergency stops
 - Traffic
 - o Construction zones
 - o School zones
 - o Rural or urban areas
 - Drivers
 - o Debilitated drivers by alcohol or other drugs
 - o Immature drivers
 - o Driving errors or poor maneuvers

- How to avoid driving influence caused accidents:
 - Adjust speed and following distance to driving conditions.
 - Use headlights to see and be seen.
 - Use sunglasses, visors for daytime glare.
 - Check and maintain vehicle regularly.
 - Learn emergency driving: stopping on slippery pavement, correcting a skid, emergency stopping.
 - Consider conditions before starting out.
 - Keep alert to driving conditions.
 - Do not drink and drive
 - Do not use drugs that cause drowsiness.
 - Drive defensively.

- Presentation:
 - Introduce topic of driving influences.
 - Review the six basic influences and ask for examples of each.
 - Ask how to anticipate and correct for adverse driving influences?
 - Summarize discussion in your own words.

Driver meeting topics

Maintenance/inspections

Safe driving and planned maintenance go hand-in-hand in total fleet safety. The best contribution a driver can make to good maintenance is frequent and thorough inspections.

- Some contributing causes of vehicle defect accidents:
 - Failure to make a thorough inspection.
 - Failure to heed warning signals a vehicle transmits through sound, sight and feel.
 - Failure to report a defect.
 - Vehicle neglect or abuse.

- Some indications of vehicle problems:
 - Bad shocks, weak springs (nose dive)
 - Over or under inflated tires
 - Defective wiring, lights, horn, windshield wipers, mirrors
 - Under or over steer issues
 - Leakage
 - Worn or defective belts and hoses
 - Low air pressure
 - Defective gauges

- How to avoid accidents:
 - Develop thorough inspection habits
 - Organize an inspection routine
 - Note and report defects
 - Develop a relationship with maintenance personnel
 - Know your vehicle

- Presentation:
 - Introduce maintenance and inspection topic.
 - What are some causes of maintenance/inspection accidents?
 - What indicates a vehicle problem?
 - How can a driver avoid maintenance related accidents?
 - Review driver inspection procedures.
 - Summarize discussion in your own words.