



**Every 16 minutes someone dies
in a motor vehicle crash**

**Traffic crashes are a leading cause of
death and injury for your employees**



4 Steps to Creating a Traffic Safety Culture at Work

This flyer discusses why it is important to create a “traffic safety culture” at work, and the 4 steps you, as the employer, can take to create it.

Why does it Matter?

Every 16 minutes someone dies in a motor vehicle crash, every 14 seconds an injury occurs and every 8 seconds a crash occurs. Did you know that:

- The economic cost of motor vehicle crashes that occurred in 2010 totaled \$242 billion. This is equivalent to approximately \$784 for every person living in the United States and 1.6 percent of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product.
- The lifetime economic cost to society for each fatality is \$1.4 million. Over 90 percent of this amount is attributable to lost workplace and household productivity and legal costs.
- Lost workplace productivity costs totaled \$57.6 billion, which equaled 24 percent of the total costs.

These crashes are happening throughout the day and during the night whether a person is working or not. However, if the driver is working or commuting to and from work, your company may bear the expenses for any injuries that occur.

Are you prepared for that contingency? Have you taken steps to minimize the impact to your company and at the same time improve your employees' safety? Developing a traffic safety culture that goes beyond what the law requires at your company can greatly reduce the risk your employees face and at the same time protect your company's bottom line. It's a win-win situation.

What is a Traffic Safety Culture?

But it is not just your employees' practices and behaviors. It is important to remember that the employer's leadership on accepted behaviors is critical in creating such a culture. We have all heard the phrase, “Do as I say, not as I do” however in this situation it must be “Do as I say AND as

I do.” That demonstrates true leadership and shows that a traffic safety culture is important to the company. As a leader, it requires that you become the embodiment of traffic safety, which requires conviction and commitment. When that commitment is displayed, the employees know

that you not only care about the company, you care about them, and want them to return home to their friends and families safely after a day's work. Also, a traffic safety culture can help your employees' morale.

Remember that for the vast majority of your employees, traffic crashes are a leading cause of death and injury in general. For your employees that are between the ages 21 to 64, traffic crashes are in the top ten causes of death. It is the number one cause of death for young adults ages 21 to 24 and the third cause for people ages 25-34. This

means that traffic crashes are the most likely cause for a catastrophic event that could impact your company and your company's families.

The best news about all of this is that over 80% of traffic crashes are due to human error. That means that many fatalities and injuries can be significantly reduced with the proper effort and focus. By being proactive and encouraging safety behavior, you are making a difference in the lives of your employees and benefiting your company.

What are the Four Steps to Creating a Traffic Safety Culture?

The four basic steps in creating a traffic safety culture are:

- Educate
- Engage
- Train
- Monitor

Let's consider each of these steps, looking first at "Educate."

Educate: Setting out the reasons for this effort allows your employees to understand the context and the risks created in driving. As we mature we tend to become commonplace about driving. By describing the various factors that create risks, such as drinking and driving, or using a cell phone while driving, or not wearing a seat belt, you begin to validate this endeavor. Educating your employees gives them the knowledge and the tools to act.



Engage: Engaged employees are involved and enthusiastic about the effort. This requires that as a leader, you take the time to frequently communicate about your concerns and listen to their responses. Engagement requires that there be an atmosphere of open discussion which can lead to understanding. This also includes a discussion on a great "radio station:" WII-FM, or in other words: What's In It For Me. Employees need to understand the benefits and the leadership needs to set the example. Finally, engaging the employees requires that there be a clear set of goals and expectations.



Train: It is vital that the appropriate behavior happens when driving. This is more than the high school driver training program. Training your employees is about demonstrating ways to respond to a number of situations, many of which are life threatening. It is about ensuring your employees understand the importance of what they have learned. Remember, while training may have up-front costs of time and money, the cost of not training your employees can have a much bigger negative impact on your company.

Monitor: You have to be willing to monitor your employees' actions and determine if they are making the right choices while driving. Keep in mind that they are representing your company while driving. Additionally, monitoring means not only before and during, it means afterwards. If there is a crash or a problem with your employee's driving, do your follow up, determine the cause, and work to correct the issue.

Educate, Engage, Train, and Monitor – Then Repeat

One of the biggest mistakes made in creating a traffic safety culture is not following through with the initial effort. Educating or training is not a one-time event. It is not something to put up on the shelf and forget about. A company's safety culture is maintained in an on-going process. Only with commitment by the leadership does everyone understand that the boss is serious about being safe. There must be continuing education and on-going monitoring. Training on what to

do in certain situations is necessary and at a later time, training again. Always keep the lines of communication open on why this is important.

It is also possible to encourage your employees to share the information with their family and friends. Sharing the message that their lives matter – whether or not they work for you – is a message that resonates and proves you really have created a "Traffic Safety Culture."

Additional Resources

Check out the Guidelines for Employers to Reduce Motor Vehicle Crashes for an in-depth discussion on this topic.

It was written for NETS (Network of Employers for Traffic Safety), NHTSA, and OSHA. Possible traffic safety topics for educating and training could include:

- Distracted Driving
- Impaired Driving
- Drugged Driving
- Drowsy Driving
- Aggressive Driving
- Wearing Safety Belts
- Young Drivers

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