

Guidelines for Motor Vehicle Policies

Use with Motor Vehicles, Chapter 296-865 WAC

Motor vehicle accidents are one of the highest causes of work-related injuries in Washington State. WISHA rules provide a starting place for motor vehicle policies. Employers are encouraged to take additional measures to help protect their employees.

This tool offers you ideas and recommendations for establishing or improving motor vehicle safety policies in your workplace.

1) Write effective motor vehicle safety policies

In addition to the policies and practices that reflect the requirements in chapter 296-865 WAC, Motor Vehicles; consider the following motor vehicle safety policies:

- Avoid requiring workers to drive irregular hours or far beyond their normal working hours.
- Don't allow workers to conduct business on a cell phone while driving.
- Require drivers to report problems or concerns with vehicles immediately.
- Consider adopting a "one driver, one vehicle" strategy. This can instill a sense of responsibility and ownership for the vehicles. Also, the worker who operates the same vehicle develops familiarity with that vehicle and may more easily identify mechanical problems.
- Require employees to stop driving if they feel fatigue.

Warning signs may include:

- Sore or heavy eyes
- Day dreaming
- Continual yawning
- Feeling stiff or cramped
- Slower reaction to traffic
- Varied speed for no apparent reason
- Poor gear changes
- Rash decisions due to impatience
- Wandering over the centerline or onto the road edge.



Link:

- The Washington State Department of Transportation maintains a map of all the safety rest areas in the state. This link will also give you information on rest area's locations and amenities.

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Safety/restareas/restareamap.htm>

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<http://www.lni.wa.gov/>



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2) Apply procedures to prevent motor vehicle accidents

- Develop work schedules that allow employees to obey speed limits and other applicable regulations.
- Develop delivery schedules that account for periodically taking trucks out of service for scheduled maintenance.
- Provide and maintain vehicle safety devices such as flares, blankets, and radios.
- Conduct the following vehicle safety inspections:
 - Informal inspections on a daily basis
 - Formal vehicle safety inspections on a regular basis.



Link:

- For an example of a daily inspection for trucks, see <http://www.ortrucking.org/pretrip.htm>.

- Develop a no-fault reporting system. This encourages employees to report a greater number of near-misses, problems, and accidents, allowing you to update your safety program to account for those hazards. The following can help you develop a no-fault reporting system:
 - Allow employees to confidentially report accidents and near misses to the safety office.
 - Don't use the information from the employee's report to the safety office for any investigation or to prepare reports for disciplinary action.
 - If an investigation is necessary, require the investigators to document the information source.
 - Thank employees for potentially preventing another near-miss or accident.

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3) Implement an awareness campaign

- Start a "Saved by the Seatbelt/ Safety Seat/ Helmet" feature in your company newsletter or on your safety bulletin board. Request first person accounts of how safety belts, car seats, and motorcycle or bike helmets saved the lives of employees or 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.
- Collaborate with a local college or high school to offer defensive driving courses to employees.
- Hold a pizza party or potluck lunch to celebrate an accident-free quarter or month. Feature the event in your company newsletter or on your safety bulletin board.
- Sponsor a contest where children of employees develop traffic safety messages for Mother's Day and Father's Day. Post the entries so they are visible to employees and visitors. Judge the entries by age group and present the winners with prizes such as coloring books, movie passes, or T-shirts.

4) Develop an evaluation process to improve your policies

- Track near-misses and accidents to determine a pattern. As a result, you can improve your safety policies.
- Set measurable goals to address where your policies need improvement.
- Develop strategies to detail how you will meet the goals.

Example:

Your safety office has informed you that driver fatigue has caused some near-misses and one accident. You set a goal to eliminate all accidents from driver fatigue. You decide on 2 strategies: 1) to develop policies that require drivers to stop when they feel fatigued; and 2) educate employees about the risks and symptoms of driver fatigue.

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<http://www.lni.wa.gov/>



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- Review current policies periodically to determine if they're still adequate.



Links:

- Below are links to other websites that can give you information on motor vehicle safety.
 - NIOSH—Motor Vehicles: www.cdc.gov/niosh/injury/traumamv.html
 - Federal Highway Administration: www.fhwa.dot.gov
 - National Highway Traffic Safety Administration: www.nhtsa.dot.gov
 - Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration: www.fmcsa.dot.gov
 - Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations: www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_02/49cfrv4_02.html#31/
 - Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards: www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_02/49cfrv5_02.html#501
 - Network of Employers for Traffic Safety: www.trafficsafety.org
 - Insurance Institute for Highway Safety: www.hwysafety.org
 - AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety: www.aaafoundation.org/home/

