

Michigan Municipal Workers' Compensation Fund Safety and Health Resource Manual

Sample Motor Vehicle Safety Policy And Program Vehicle Safety Program Guideposts

- Designate someone with management responsibility to coordinate vehicle safety activities. Top management should fully support a vehicle safety program and convey that support to all employees orally and in writing.
- Obtain Motor Vehicle Reports on all drivers who might drive vehicles for the organization before hiring them and annually thereafter.
- Establish a policy and procedure that defines the standards employees must meet to drive vehicles for the organization. Generally accepted practice is to select drivers with fewer than two at fault violations or two accidents or one of each within the previous three years. A DUI in the last five years should disqualify a candidate or an employee for a position requiring the driving of organization vehicles.
- Consider transferring current drivers having violations that exceed this number to non-driving jobs.
- Use a thorough job application form to establish a driver's past job history.
- Consider making the job offer contingent on the employee successfully completing a pre-employment physical examination. The examination should determine the driver's ability to meet the organization's performance standards for drivers.
- Contact previous employers for references. Ask about the candidate's driving history.
- Conduct a thorough credit check to determine the applicant's personal management abilities.
- Consider requiring a written test and a road test as a qualifier for drivers who might drive unique equipment or equipment with which they are not familiar.
- Investigate all accidents thoroughly review the report as soon as possible. Determine if the accident was preventable.
- Establish a vehicle inspection and preventive maintenance program on a time or mileage basis and keep records to substantiate these activities.

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Vehicle Inspection Procedure

1. Approach vehicle; look for leaks of coolant, fuel or lubricants under the vehicle. Note body condition.
2. Under hood, check battery water level, oil level (and last oil change date), transmission fluid level, belt and hose condition and adjustment. Fill windshield washer reservoir.
3. Start engine for warm up. Check for abnormal noise and gauges for normal readings. Try steering wheel for excess play.
4. Depress brake pedal for excessive travel, mushy or hard feel.
5. Check horn and windshield wipers. Turn on all lights including emergency flasher. Check high and low beam.
6. Check tire inflation and tread.
7. Check emergency equipment including fire extinguisher, first aid kit, emergency triangles, spare tire, jack, spare fuses and bulbs.
8. Walk around vehicle checking lights and reflectors.
9. Recheck all gauges, fasten seat belt, turn off lights and check the parking/emergency brake.
10. Make test stop within one block. Check operation of transmission.

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Vehicle Check -- Repair Request

Vehicle # _____ Date _____

Operator _____ Mileage _____

CHECK DEFECTS ONLY. Explain under REMARKS

GENERAL CONDITION

_____ **Body**, doors, window
_____ Leaks

Engine Compartment

_____ Fluid levels
_____ Belts
_____ Battery

Exterior

_____ Head lights, tail lights
_____ Signal brake lights
_____ Tires, wheels, spare
_____ Exhaust
_____ Suspension
_____ Emergency flashers

BEHIND THE WHEEL

_____ Gauges
_____ Heater/defroster
_____ Windshield wiper, washer
_____ Mirrors
_____ Horn
_____ Clutch
_____ Service Brake
_____ Parking, emergency brake
_____ Steering wheel
_____ Seat belts
_____ Emergency Equipment

REMARKS:

REPORTING DRIVER

MAINTENANCE

_____ **Repairs** made
_____ No repair needed

By: _____
Date: _____

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Vehicle Fleet Safety

Model Administrative Policy for Vehicle Fleet Safety

1. INTRODUCTION

Many municipal operations require the operation of vehicles. How drivers handle vehicles and the municipality maintains them can directly affect worker safety.

Each year motor vehicle-related injury claims continue to increase. Insurance pays most direct costs of these accidents; however, the municipality pays indirect costs. These indirect costs may include increased premiums, loss of vehicle use, vehicle replacement costs, loss of employee productivity, deductible payments, increased paperwork, etc.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of a fleet safety policy and procedure is to assure that each employee who operates a vehicle on municipal business maintains acceptable standards of proficiency and safety.

3. POLICY AND PRACTICES

- A. [Name of Municipality] desires to eliminate any conditions that adversely affect the well being of employees and threaten financial stability through accidental losses.
- B. Employees shall operate all vehicles that they use for municipal business safely and economically. To accomplish this, employees must comply with the following practices:
 - 1. All drivers will have a valid state driver's license for the vehicles they operate.
 - 2. Employees will comply with all applicable motor vehicle laws. The vehicle operator is responsible for any traffic citations.
 - 3. [Name of Municipality] prohibits unauthorized passengers or drivers to either operate or ride in the vehicle.
 - 4. Employees will always wear seat belts, whether operating or riding as a passenger in the vehicle.
 - 5. Employees will report and participate in the investigations of all vehicle collisions or property damage accidents according to policy.
 - 6. Employees will use municipal vehicles for official use only.
 - 7. Employees may not take home municipal vehicles overnight except as follows:
 - a. Employees may take home a municipal vehicle for one night when job duties take place late at night after normal working hours or early in the morning before normal working hours with consent of department head or designee.
 - b. Employees may take a vehicle home when their supervisors have assigned them to be "on 24-hour call" for department emergencies.
 - c. Employees may take home a vehicle for more than one night only if the department head specifically authorizes it in writing.
- C. Municipal vehicles shall always be available for municipal business.

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- D. Employees may use municipal vehicles for travel to lunch if they are on business or in a location where driving to obtain their personal vehicles would result in an extra and unnecessary expenditure of time and money.
- E. Employees will operate vehicles only when they are in safe operating condition. Each employee driving a vehicle on business shall inspect the vehicle to assure that the vehicle is in sound operating condition.
- F. Each driver's privilege to operate a vehicle on official business extends only as long as the driver operates the vehicle in a safe and efficient manner. A record of "preventable" accidents shall result in appropriate disciplinary action.
- G. Employees performing work that requires the operation of a municipal vehicle must notify their immediate supervisors if their license is expired, is suspended, or is revoked. Failure to report shall be cause for disciplinary action.
- H. The [Job Title] shall be responsible for coordinating municipal Fleet Safety and Loss Control programs in cooperation with the Risk Manager (Safety Director) and Personnel Office.
- I. Supervisors and managers will select employees who will be required to drive full or part-time with care. No employee shall drive a municipal vehicle unless the employee's supervisor has certified him or her to do so.
- J. The Personnel Office shall maintain a Vehicle Operator Record on each employee.
- K. Employees shall report all vehicle accidents and the municipality shall investigate the accident in accordance with related policies and procedures.
- L. Vehicles shall contain appropriate warning and safety devices.
- M. Employees shall not use personal vehicles on official business unless there is no municipal vehicle available and they obtain specific authorization to do so from their department manager.

4. DRIVER SELECTION, TRAINING, PERFORMANCE EVALUATION & MONITORING

A. Driver Selection

Although driving may be incidental to the employee's primary job responsibilities, the considerations given to driver selection are often the most important factor that will affect municipal vehicle accidents. Therefore, [Name of Municipality] expects managers and supervisors to comply with the following when hiring individuals who will drive vehicles:

1. Evaluate driver qualifications through the following:
 - a. Previous Employer's Reference. Check to verify employment and to help determine the driving qualifications and history of the applicant.
 - b. Motor Vehicle Records. Check through the Michigan Secretary of State, Government Subscription Service.
 - c. Personnel File if current employee. Review to consider driver training received, record of preventable accidents, driving history, driving certifications, vehicle operator record, etc.
2. Managers and supervisors may consider drivers of municipal vehicles as qualified to drive when they meet the following criteria:

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- a. Possess a valid driver's license of the proper class and a driving record that meets all performance and other standards specified in this administrative policy.
 - b. Capable of passing a physical examination when a question of fitness to drive arises because of illness or injury.
 - c. Capable of passing written tests on driving regulations whenever required.
 - d. Capable of passing driving tests.
 - e. Have demonstrated proficiency with the particular type of vehicle or equipment they will routinely operate.
3. Managers and supervisors must examine applicants' driving records carefully and consistently as a routine part of the screening, background investigation, and hiring process. They must:
- a. Reject applicants with poor driving records for positions that require vehicle operation. The following is a partial list of conditions or convictions that should cause immediate concern:
 - Two at fault accidents in the past three years, or
 - Two minor traffic convictions in the past three years, or
 - A combination of one at fault accident and one minor traffic conviction in the past three years, or
 - Operating under the influence of liquor or drugs, or
 - Operating with an unlawful blood alcohol content, or
 - Failure to stop or report an accident, or
 - Negligent homicide, manslaughter, assaults involving the operation of a motor vehicle, or
 - Driving on a suspended or revoked license.
 - b. Verify that applicants possess, or are eligible to obtain, any special license endorsements the law requires for the type or types of vehicle they will operate in performing their duties. Here we speak primarily of the Commercial Driver's License (CDL) requirements.
 - c. Determine the candidate's physical and mental fitness to operate motor vehicles after extending a job offer.
4. The Personnel Office shall maintain a Vehicle Operator Record in each employee's personnel file. Supervisors are responsible for reporting vehicle operator information to the Personnel Office.

B. Driver Training

To evaluate and assist drivers in maintaining an acceptable level of performance, [Name of Municipality] shall periodically administer or arrange for attendance at a Defensive Driving Course.

[Name of Municipality] shall make assignments for the course as follows:

1. Mandatory attendance for employees who have been involved in a "preventable accident."
2. Mandatory attendance for employees whose immediate supervisors determine that they have questionable driving capabilities or habits.

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3. Voluntary attendance for employees who have not attended a Defensive Driving Course in the past three (3) years.

C. Performance Evaluation and Monitoring

Because careless or poor driving may lead to worker injuries and to decreased public confidence in [Name of Municipality], we require managers and supervisors to monitor and evaluate employees who operate vehicles. They must:

1. Check all employees' driving records at least annually.
2. Assign a specific individual to oversee the license review and screening process. This individual should also manage the entity's compliance with Commercial Driver's License, federal random drug testing and other legal requirements. The review should conform to the guidelines in your motor vehicle operations policy.
3. Take appropriate corrective action for current employees with unacceptable records. Corrective actions may range from reassignment to non-driving related positions up to discharge. Falsification of information about driving records by employees is cause for immediate termination.
4. Establish corrective actions necessary to restore employee to driving position and period for completion. Document actions taken.
5. Forward all documentation of the annual review and the actions the supervisor has taken to Human Resources.

5. ACCIDENT REPORTING PROCEDURES

- A. An employee involved in an accident shall obtain appropriate medical treatment, if needed, as outlined in the municipality's health and safety policies.
- B. The employee, if physically able, shall call for a police officer as provided in the reporting policies. The employee shall also request that all parties and properties concerned remain at the scene of the accident, if possible, until a law enforcement representative has released them.
- C. Employees shall refrain from making statements regarding the accident to anyone other than the investigating police officer, municipal management, and representatives of the municipality's or an employee's personal insurance provider. Employees shall limit statements to factual observations.
- D. The Safety Director (or other designated individual) must receive a copy of all police reports and any accompanying statements within 48 hours. The Safety Director will report such accidents to the insurance carrier and the employee Health and Safety Committee chairperson.
- E. If the collision involves an injury, the employee and his or her supervisor will file appropriate reports as provided by policy.
- F. The employee shall fill out a Vehicle Accident/Incident Report within forty-eight (48) hours and submit it to his or her supervisor. The supervisor will send copies to the Safety Director for comment and then file the report with the Personnel Office for inclusion in the employee's personnel file.

If the accident may result in someone alleging liability against the municipality, the Safety Director shall also file the report with the insurance carrier. If the accident is serious, the Safety Director should report it to the insurance carrier immediately.

- G. The employee shall report damage to the vehicle on the "Auto Accident Notice" form available from his or her supervisor.

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H. The employee shall submit to a drug test as specified by policy.

6. FLEET INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE

To protect the safety of employees and increase their productivity, reduce accidents, extend the life of the fleet, and maintain good public relations [Name of Municipality] requires regular inspections and maintenance of vehicles as an important part of its Fleet Program.

A. Management

The management of [Name of Municipality] supports the inspection and maintenance program. They will assure that adequate funding is available for the program and will hold managers and supervisors accountable for assuring that the program is well-established and adequately supervised.

B. Managers and Supervisors

Managers and supervisors are responsible for:

1. Supporting the inspection and maintenance program. They must assure that the program is adequately supervised and effective. This includes controlling the maintenance-operations schedule so that it provides safe equipment for operational needs.
2. Providing equipment, tools and adequate shop facilities necessary for the program to work.
3. Making sure that maintenance personnel receive training that upgrades their knowledge and job skills through municipal meetings, retraining sessions, special and manufacturers' schools.
4. Supervising drivers to assure that they participate and comply with fleet inspection and maintenance requirements. This may include establishing an incentive and award program to encourage employee participation and compliance.

C. Drivers

Drivers are responsible for the condition and safe operation of their assigned vehicles. [Name of Municipality] requires drivers to check their vehicles for possible defects and report them according to policy.

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Vehicle Fleet Safety Procedures

Driver Selection

Even though driving may be incidental to the employee's primary job responsibilities, the considerations given to driver selection are often the most important factor that will affect company vehicle accidents.

1. Evaluate driver qualifications through the following:
 - Previous Employers Reference. Check to verify employment and to help determine the driving qualifications and history of the applicant.
 - Motor Vehicle Records. Check through the Michigan Secretary of State.
 - Personnel File if current employee. Review to consider driver training received, record of preventable accidents, driving history, driving certifications, vehicle operator record, etc.
2. Managers and supervisors may consider drivers of municipal vehicles as qualified to drive when they meet the following criteria:
 - Possess a valid driver's license of the proper class.
 - Able to pass a physical examination when a question of fitness to drive arises because of illness or injury.
 - Able to pass written tests on driving regulations whenever required.
 - Able to pass a driving test.
 - Have demonstrated proficiency with the particular type of vehicle or equipment they will routinely operate.
3. The Personnel Office shall maintain a Vehicle Operator Record in each employee's personnel file. Supervisors are responsible for reporting vehicle operator information to the Personnel Office.

Driver Training

[Name of Municipality] shall periodically administer or arrange for attendance at a Defensive Driving Course.

Assignments for the course shall be made as follows:

1. Mandatory attendance for employees who have been involved in a "preventable accident."
2. Mandatory attendance for employees whose immediate supervisors determine that they have questionable driving capabilities or habits.
3. Voluntary attendance for employee who have not attended a Defensive Driver Course in the past five (3) years.

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Reporting Procedures: Vehicular Collisions

1. An employee involved in a collision shall obtain appropriate medical treatment, if needed, as outlined in the municipality's health and safety policies.
2. The involved employee, if physically able, shall call for a police officer as provided in the reporting policies. The employee shall also request that all parties and properties concerned remain at the scene of the accident, if possible, until a law enforcement representative has released them.
3. Each employee shall refrain from making statements regarding the accident to anyone other than the investigating officer, employer's officials, and employer or personal insurance municipal representatives. Statements shall be confined to factual observations.
4. The Safety Director (or other designated individual) must receive a copy of all police reports and any accompanying statements within 48 hours. The Safety Director will report such accidents to the insurance carrier and the employee Health and Safety Committee chairperson.
5. If the collision involves an industrial injury, the appropriate reports will be filed as provided by policy.
6. The Employee shall fill out a Vehicle Accident/Incident Report within forty-eight (48) hours and submit it to this or her supervisor. The supervisor will send copies to the Safety Director for comment and then file the report with the Personnel Office for inclusion in the employee's personnel file.

If the accident may result in someone alleging liability against the company, the Risk Manager shall also file the report with the insurance carrier. If the accident is serious, the Risk Manager should report it to the insurance carrier immediately.
7. Damage to the vehicle shall be reported on the "Auto Accident Notice" form available from your supervisor.

Driver Road Testing Program

Setting up the Course

Your organization can use road testing as one means of determining how a driver applicant will perform once you employ him or her. A standardized road test should require applicants to handle the routine road hazards that they are likely to encounter daily as drivers for your organization (or department). Therefore, you should first plan the course on a map. The course should include streets, alleys, expressways, back roads, bridges, grades, overpasses, school zones, railroad crossings, controlled intersections, left turns, right turns, backing and parking situations. An ideal test run will cover 10 to 20 miles.

Establishing Performance Standards

Measure the effectiveness of the road test by having several of your best drivers run the course. Use their average score to serve as a standard for qualification.

Administering the Road Test

Check the applicant's driver's license to determine that he or she has the license necessary for the class of vehicles he or she will operate. Provide the driver with a map of the course and give him or her instructions. Let the driver get the feel of the vehicle and become familiar with the controls by proceeding with the yard test of pre-tripping, backing and parking before pulling onto the road.

Give directions for the route well in advance to avoid last minute maneuvers. Do not distract the driver with unnecessary conversation during the test.

Evaluating the Driver

The road test has three categories.

Qualified - Meets your organization's performance requirements.

Needs Improvement - Demonstrates marginal performance that training can improve.

Unqualified - Does not meet organization's standards.

Since most drivers will not have a perfect score, you should use the road test results as a basis for future remedial driver training to upgrade their performance.

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Driver's Road Test

Driver's Name: _____ Department: _____

License No: _____ State _____ Social Security No _____

Qualified For: Truck _____ Type _____ Tractor _____ Type _____ Auto _____

	QUALIFIED	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	NOT QUALIFIED
PRE-TRIP INSPECTION			
Service brakes (Lines, fittings)			
Parking (hand) brake			
Steering mechanism			
Lighting devices and reflectors. (Headlights - high and low beam, clearance, taillights, stop lights, turn signals, reflectors, side markers, four-way flasher.			
Tires. (Inflation, tread wear, cuts in sidewalls, mating, lugs or studs, grease leaks around hubs, mud flaps, valve caps, spare tire)			
Horn. windshield wiper(s), windows. Cleans & adjusts mirrors.			
Coupling devices. (Fifth wheel, jaws, release lever on pintle hook, tow-bar, safety chains, converter gear, air lines)			
OPERATION			
Putting the vehicle in operation. (Checks air pressure and instruments, emergency brake set, disengages clutch, warms up engine, proper gear selection, checks traffic, shifts smoothly, tests brakes.)			
Use of the vehicle's controls and emergency equipment. (Clutch and transmission, brakes, steering, lights, tools, tire chains, emergency warning devices, fire extinguisher.)			

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	QUALIFIED	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	NOT QUALIFIED
Backing and parking vehicle. (Gets out and checks, sounds horn, avoids backing to blind side, backs slowly, uses guide if necessary, parks legally, secures unit properly, uses 4 way flashers.)			
Operating the vehicle in traffic and while passing other vehicles. (Leaving curb, speed control, smoothness of operation, shifting gears, anticipates traffic problems, obeys traffic laws, signals properly, passes with sufficient space and smoothly, uses mirrors.)			
Turning the vehicle. (Signals in advance, turns from proper lane, checks traffic before turning, turns at reasonable speed into proper lane. yields right-of-way.)			
Braking and slowing the vehicle by means other than braking. (Uses engine to reduce speed by shifting to lower gear smoothly)			
Defensive Driving. Has good attitude, yields right-of-way, maintains good space cushion, slows down at intersections, and checks cross traffic at intersections.			

This is to certify that _____, an applicant for a driving position, took a road test under my supervision on _____ consisting of approximately _____ miles of driving. It is my opinion that this driver

possesses does not possess
sufficient driving skill to operate safely the type of commercial vehicle listed above.

Driver Supervisor _____

Department: _____

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Preventable Accidents

Motor Vehicle Operations

The National Safety Council's definition of a preventable accident is:

"A preventable accident is any occurrence involving a [Name of Municipality] owned or operated vehicle which results in property damage and/or personal injury, regardless of who was injured, what property was damaged, to what extent, or where it occurred; in which the driver in question failed to do everything he reasonably could have done to prevent the occurrence."

Intersections

The driver is responsible for approaching intersections prepared to take such action as is necessary to avoid accidents, regardless of the actions of other drivers. Failing to obey the law or to heed traffic control devices on the other driver's part does not automatically make the accident non-preventable. In making a determination, you should consider the driver's failure to take every precaution before entering the intersection. If a driver fails to check cross traffic to be sure that vehicles are going to stop, or if he forces the right-of-way instead of yielding, any resulting accident should be ruled preventable.

You must carefully review accidents involving special intersections such as alleys, driveways, plant entrances, etc., to determine what action the driver could have taken to avoid the accident. Many of these intersections are blind and the other driver's vision is blocked. Therefore, you can consider the failure to slow down, sound a warning or yield the right-of-way sufficient cause to rule the accident preventable.

Changing Traffic Lanes

Passing is a voluntary action and failure to pass safely indicates that the driver made a faulty judgment or a lack of consideration of all the factors affecting the maneuver. Actions of oncoming traffic or of the traffic the driver is passing do not excuse him or her. The driver should anticipate and consider these actions before starting the maneuver.

The professional driver yields to a passing vehicle by slowing down or moving to the right if the passing driver is trapped and a sideswipe or cutoff is imminent.

Lane encroachment accidents on the highway or in merging traffic indicate an unwillingness to yield to vehicles or to wait for a safe break in traffic. Blind spots are not a valid excuse. The driver must use extra caution to allow for areas of limited vision.

The driver can avoid "squeeze plays" involving fixed objects or other vehicles by dropping back when it is apparent the other driver is forcing the issue or contesting a common portion of the road.

Pulling away from a parked position is a change of traffic lane and, as such, places responsibility on the driver pulling out. Any accident that results from your driver's actions while pulling out from the curb is preventable.

Failure to observe any of these defensive-driving techniques should result in the accident being ruled preventable.

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Front-end & Rear-End Collisions

The driver can prevent front-end collisions by always maintaining a safe following distance. Tailgating is one of the most frequent causes of accidents and is never excusable. Regardless of abrupt or unexpected stops or actions of the driver ahead, the driver must be able to stop safely. The driver must pay attention to the road ahead to anticipate the actions of the vehicle in front. The driver should adjust his or her speed at night so that the stopping distance is not greater than the forward distance illuminated by the headlights.

Drivers risk being struck from behind by failing to maintain a safe following distance. Failure to signal intentions or failure to slow down gradually for traffic signals or grade crossings, thus trapping the following driver, should be cause for ruling the accident preventable.

Rolling back into a vehicle is the result of not keeping the vehicle under control and is preventable.

Backing

It is extremely rare that a backing accident is ruled not preventable. Even when a person is guiding the driver, the driver is responsible for backing safely. The guide is just an aid and cannot control the movement of the vehicle. The driver must make check clearances for himself.

Turns

Any time a professional driver leaves a traffic lane, the complete responsibility for the maneuver is his or hers. Signaling is not enough. The driver must check traffic on both sides and to the rear carefully before making a change. "Squeeze plays" resulting from left or right turns are the responsibility of the driver making the turn. If a driver fails to signal, signals too late, fails to properly position for the turn, to check mirrors before and during the turn or to take any other necessary defensive action, the resulting accident is preventable.

Accidents involving turns by other drivers require careful investigation. If the non-turning driver fails to recognize that a turn was pending from the actions of another vehicle and thus did not respond accordingly, or if he or she tried to force the right-of-way, the lack of defensive driving means the accident is preventable.

You should rule any accident involving a U-turn on your driver's part to be preventable.

Vehicles Going in Opposite Direction

The head-on or sideswipe accident involving vehicles going in opposite directions is one of the most difficult to classify. Only by learning the exact actions of each vehicle prior to the accident can you determine whether the actions and maneuvers of the opposing vehicle should have given your driver adequate warning of a possible involvement.

If the opposing vehicle was passing and intruded into your driver's lane and he or she failed to slow down, stop or pull to the right, then the resulting accident is preventable because your driver failed to take proper defensive measures.

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In making a determination you should also consider whether the passing driver warned the other driver by horn or flickering headlights.

Mechanical Failure

Before starting a trip, a driver should inspect the vehicle and report unsafe conditions. The driver should obtain immediate repairs if continued operation could cause an accident. If a mechanical failure that the driver should have reasonably detected causes an accident, the accident is preventable.

If a mechanical defect occurs or develops during a trip the driver should notify management. If the driver continues the trip without such notification and an accident results, then the accident is preventable.

Abusive driving which creates abnormal strain and leads to mechanical failure resulting in an accident is also preventable.

Weather

Rain, fog, snow, ice and sleet do not cause accidents. They are environmental conditions to which the driver must adjust. Failure to properly adjust driving to the existing conditions or to get off the road if conditions are severe should be sufficient to decide that the accident was preventable. Failure to use appropriate weather-related equipment that the organization provides should be considered as failure to adjust to conditions and any resulting accident to truck, cargo or property should be ruled preventable.

Fixed Objects

You should consider collisions with fixed objects such as low overheads, buildings, poles as preventable accidents. Asking a bystander's opinion on clearance does not relieve the driver of his responsibility. Resurfaced pavement causing low overhead and other changes in conditions along a route are not valid excuses.

Pedestrians, Bicycles, Motorcycles

The law generally considers that pedestrians have the right-of-way over vehicles even though their actions may be unorthodox. Shopping areas, school zones, play areas and areas of congested pedestrian traffic require reduced speeds; in many cases much below the posted limits. Rule any accident that results from the driver "going too fast for conditions" to be preventable.

Bicycles, mopeds and motorcycles frequently perform sudden, unexpected maneuvers. A driver, who fails to reduce speed, pull over, or otherwise take precautions when this type of equipment is near, has failed to take proper defensive driving measures and the accident is preventable.

Parked Vehicles

Even though your vehicle is stationary, an accident can be ruled preventable. Unconventional parking locations, crooked parking, double parking, failure to put out warning devices, and so on reveal a lack of defensive driving. These actions make an accident preventable.

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You should consider roll-a-ways of a parked vehicle to be preventable in almost all cases. Failure to properly block the wheels, not turning the wheels against the curb, or failure to take any other precaution to avoid vehicle movement, are lack of defensive driving techniques. Therefore, any accident resulting from such failure should be ruled preventable.

Non-Collision

Jack-knifing, over-turning, running off the road are generally the result of emergency action taken to avoid collision. Examine the driving immediately preceding the accident to determine whether the driver's speed was unsafe for conditions or if he or she was tailgating or driving in some other manner that did not permit him or her to keep the vehicle under control. Committing any of these errors result in the judgement that the accident was preventable.

Dropping an improperly secured trailer when pulling out should be judged preventable if the driver could have foreseen the occurrence during his pre-trip inspection.

You must consider passenger accidents that do not involve collisions as preventable if they resulted from faulty driving.

Passenger injuries resulting from evasive action to avoid a collision are preventable if the driver failed to use defensive driving techniques, which would have eliminated the need for sudden or violent action. You must consider sudden starts or stops, speeding over bumpy roads, fast turns, and abrupt acceleration when operating a passenger vehicle as unsafe driving, even though such maneuvers would be acceptable with other types of vehicles. Any accidents resulting from such actions are preventable.

Damage to property or persons from projecting loads, losing part of a load, parts of the vehicle being loose (chains, doors) are preventable if the driver failed to properly secure them, or if the driver failed to secure them tightly during pre-trip inspection.

You should rule cargo damage resulting from violent maneuvers to avoid collision preventable if driving defensively would have eliminated the need for violent action. Damage caused by sudden starts, stops, fast turns, or speeding over bumpy roads, must be considered as a failure to adjust to conditions and is preventable.

Violations of Law or Your Organization's Policy

If your driver violates the law or the organization's policy and the violation contributes to or causes an accident, then you should judge the accident to be preventable. This refers not only to moving vehicle violations, but also to technical violations such as the use of drugs to stay awake, lack of the required hours of sleep, or time off between trips.

Accident Situations Not Described

For any accident not described, you should apply the same type of reasoning as illustrated by the National Safety Council's definition of a preventable accident to it.

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Vehicle Struck From Behind

Have any of your municipal vehicles been struck in the rear? Many times these "Non-preventable" accidents are really preventable. That is, there is something your driver could have reasonably done to avoid the accident. Here are four things you can train your drivers to do to avoid this type of accident.

Signal Your Intentions

Use your directional signals (or arm signals) and brake lights.

Stop Smoothly

Come to a slow, smooth stop to alert a vehicle behind you that you are stopping. Abrupt stops might not give the driver behind you adequate warning that you are stopping.

Stay Away from Tailgaters

- Never allow a tailgater to make you angry. Simply slow down or move to the right. This generally encourages the driver to pass you.
- Increase the following distance between your vehicle and the one ahead of you. This will eliminate the need to brake suddenly and reduce the chance of being hit by the tailgater.
- Force the driver to slow down, thereby making it easier for him to stop safely when you stop.

Avoid A Rear-End Collision When Stopped

Being struck from the rear while stopped in traffic accounts for most rear-end collisions. This may happen to you when you are stopped behind a driver who intends to make a left turn. To avoid being struck in the rear while stopped in traffic:

- Keep a foot on the brake to activate the brake lights.
- Stop at least 10 feet behind the vehicle ahead to prevent any domino effect. A good way to do this is to stop so you can see the rear tires of the vehicle ahead.
- Keep lights on at dusk or in rain and snow.

REMEMBER: The best "DEFENSE" against being rear-ended is to maintain adequate distance between you and the vehicle ahead of you.