

Road safety

As a truck operator, are you doing enough to prevent road traffic accidents?

According to the World Health Organization, road traffic accidents cause the death of almost 1.35 million people and costs most countries 3% of their gross domestic product. The vast majority of these accidents are avoidable. What lessons can be learnt?

Although accidents happen, and some will be out of your control, there are strategies that can be incorporated into your risk management processes to ensure that you are doing everything you can to reduce losses arising from road traffic accidents.

What are the risks?



How can you mitigate these risks?

Recommended action for truck operators:

1 PLAN

- Identify high risk routes
- Plan for seasonal changes with appropriate training, equipment and route adjustments
- Plan truck stops in secure locations to ensure adequate rest
- Consider a two-driver buddy system for time-critical deliveries over long distances

3 ENFORCE BEST PRACTICE

- Ensure that drivers or subcontractors are aware of and comply with your suggested route
- Ensure your drivers comply with applicable working time and driving hours' regulations
- Establish and publicise a drug and alcohol policy
- Do not allow smoking in driver cabins
- Consider random alcohol breathalyser tests
- Ensure headphones are not used while driving
- Encourage drivers to keep conversations to a minimum and only with a hands-free device
- Consider speed limiters on trucks
- Consider GPS tracking to ensure compliance with the business route planning
- Discourage aggressive driving such as tailgating, flashing or unnecessary or risky overtaking
- Ensure drivers take appropriate breaks from driving to eat and drink
- Encourage regular reporting – your drivers experience road conditions first-hand

WATCH OUT FOR RED FLAGS

- Don't accept seemingly attractive services being offered at low cost – off route.
- Be wary of new drivers and subcontractors – vetting is key
- Don't effect sudden or unexpected changes to the plan
- Don't underestimate language barriers when communicating with drivers or subcontractors
- Never ignore signs of driver/operator fatigue
- Don't prioritise contractual schedule over safety

2

EDUCATE DRIVERS

- Ensure that your drivers are trained in the following and carry out periodic testing:
 - Driving in poor weather conditions (ice, wind, or even bright sunlight)
 - Carrying dangerous or fragile goods
 - The impact of dynamic mechanical stresses on cargo (violent acceleration /braking)
 - Changing lanes safely (mirror, signal, manoeuvre)
 - Maintaining optimum driving conditions in the cabin (well-ventilated, tidy)
 - The effects of over-the-counter or prescription medicine on their ability to drive safely
 - Safe distances between the driver's vehicle and other road users
 - Vehicle stopping times both laden and unladen
 - Relevant highway codes

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CHECK EQUIPMENT

- Ensure that all vehicles are properly serviced and maintained, all lights are working and are wiped clean before a journey
- Ensure that the truck has plenty of screenwash
- Ensure side view mirrors provide adequate peripheral vision
- Blind spots should be marked to inform other road users
- Ensure reversing alarms are installed on all vehicles



SLOW AND STEADY REDUCES CLAIMS.
Safety first – always.