



Driver Motivation

» Ensuring Fleet Safety Through Better Driving Practices

After your drivers have completed driver training courses and the consequences of unsafe operation are well known, are they still having accidents or ignoring safe driving techniques? They're aware of the dangers, but they're disregarding safety rules and company policies. You need to motivate employees to follow established safety rules and policies.

What Is Motivation?

Motivating employees is the process of supplying the incentives that will encourage, inspire, cultivate and influence individuals to act in a desired behavior to achieve a specific goal. Motivation isn't the process of manipulating people to one's own advantage and against their own interest and free will.

It's difficult to force employees to work safely, but you can provide a work environment in which employees decide to drive safely and conform to company procedures and policies.

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Is Motivation Really the Problem?

Have you evaluated your driver qualification and placement program? Is your program successful in matching skills, qualifications, and knowledge to the job? Have job standards been established? Do you have an employee orientation program that includes safety rules? Have you questioned a driver who has recently completed an orientation to determine its effectiveness? Has the Safety Policy been explained and reinforced?

Are your vehicles well maintained and in good condition? Are material handling aids available to the drivers? Does scheduling anticipate speed limits and traffic conditions? Do your vehicles have safety belts, air bags and antilock brakes?

Some Theories on Motivation

There are many theories on motivating employees. One theorist believes the structure of organizations creates conflicts with the needs of employees, who become passive and develop an attitude that everything the company does is wrong.

Accidents can occur due to poor attitude, inattention, or the disregard of company rules.

One solution involves group decision making, soliciting worker perceptions of problems and solutions, and worker input on implementing decisions.

Another approach focuses on "hygiene factors" that cause neutral feelings among workers after they reach a level that workers feel are appropriate. According to this theory, the hygiene factors are: company rules and policies, quality of supervision, interpersonal relationships, salary, benefits, working conditions and job security. This is the environmental structure you create.

The motivational factors are: **achievement, recognition, growth and advancement possibilities, quality of work, and responsibility.** These factors are believed to motivate individuals.

If unsafe working conditions are present, there will be strong dissatisfaction among employees concerning safety. If quality supervision is lacking, there will be strong dissatisfaction regarding productivity and safety rules.

Building **achievement, responsibility, employee input, recognition, and quality of work** into your safety program and management system will motivate your work force towards safety.

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Motivational Incentive Programs

Many fleets have successfully implemented incentive programs to foster and reward safe driving. Incentive programs usually take the form of safe driving award pins, cash, merchandise, patches, or jackets. What approach will work best for your fleet?

Skill events such as fleet "roadeos" promote friendly competition. These events can have an added benefit of bringing together family and friends to enhance **pride**, **professionalism** and **recognition**. Incentive criteria should be developed and applied on a consistent basis for your program to achieve maximum benefits. Consider award levels, length of time or mileage of non-preventable accidents, penalties for preventable accidents, full and part-time drivers, and publicity for the driver and company. Our Loss Control Department can help you in the formulation of your program.

Benefits

Most motivational theories offer common solutions. Establish a work environment built on a sense of achievement, recognition, responsibility, group decision making, enjoyment of the job and opportunities for growth and advancement. By building motivation into the work environment, your employees will respond favorably and your safety record will likely improve.

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