

Provide Necessary Supervision

Unlike workplaces where workers are present at the same location for the entire work day, workers who drive will be on the road part of the day, all day, and sometimes for days at a time. This can make it challenging for supervisors to meet their supervisory responsibilities. It can be difficult monitoring employees they can't see, hear or speak with to provide guidance and instruction. To stay connected with employees and do an effective job of supervising mobile employees:

1. Know your responsibilities

The Occupational Health & Safety Act, Canada Labour Code II and Workplace Insurance Act and associated regulations state several responsibilities of supervisors. You need to be familiar with your company policies and workplace specific procedures that may define your responsibilities as a supervisor. As well, because employers often delegate some of their responsibilities, it's handy for supervisors to understand employer responsibilities.



2. Participate in periodic assessments

Every six to twelve months, ride along with the people you supervise or manage. Observe how they drive. Look for the right behaviours and attitudes. Confirm they operate the vehicle according to legal requirements as well as company policies and procedures. Watch for opportunities to improve their driving and for skill gaps that can be addressed with appropriate training. Ride-alongs are a great place for one-on-one discussions that build solid work relationships.



3. Hold regular tailgate meetings

There are plenty of road safety topics to discuss. Once a week, gather the crew for a brief tailgate meeting where you can focus on a particular topic, chat about a recent near miss or discuss new hazards that need attention.



4. Be part of the orientation process

If you will be responsible for a new hire, make sure you are part of the on-boarding process. Help provide them with the information they need to be successful in their new role, including when they undertake the riskiest part of their job - driving.



5. Demonstrate vehicle inspections

Pre-trip inspections are required for work vehicles, and supervisors are usually responsible to ensure they are done. Rather than presuming employees know how to properly inspect the vehicle they drive for work, explain your expectations and show them what they need to do. Provide a **Vehicle Inspection Form** and explain when and how they should complete and submit it. Point them to **Tips for Conducting Vehicle Inspections**. A few weeks later, observe them as they inspect the vehicle to verify they continue to do so correctly.



6. Do spot checks

Regularly spot-check vehicles that employees drive for work to verify the vehicle remains in suitable condition and that each driver is practicing good vehicle housekeeping.



7. Check vehicle maintenance records

Review vehicle maintenance records to confirm work vehicles are being maintained as per company requirements and/or manufacturer recommendations. Compare inspection records to maintenance records to verify that repairs identified in the inspections are being done before the vehicle is used for work.



8. Lead by example

Employees look to leaders for the example they should follow and the practices they should apply. Supervisors need to consistently model the driving behaviours and attitudes that the company expects of all employees. Supervisors need to walk the talk.



9. Understand fatigue

It's commonly understood that fatigue is a form of impairment that can negatively affect anyone's ability to drive. Unrealistic work schedules, long duration drives and other work factors contribute to fatigue. Supervisors need to understand the implications of fatigue when they are assigning work, and watch for the symptoms in the people they supervise. Supervisors need to walk the talk.



10. Be part of the safety committee

Actively participating on your health and safety committee is a great way to keep pace with road safety concerns. By being a certified representative or by simply sitting in on meetings, you can have a positive influence in steering the policies and practices in the right direction.



11. Investigate crashes when they occur

As traumatic as crashes can be, they also provide opportunities to learn what needs to be done to prevent reoccurrence. Because supervisors have close associations with front-line employees and understand operational realities, they can provide the investigation with valuable insights. Supervisors are also in the best position to take swift action to implement corrective actions.

