

Safe Work Procedures

Safe work procedures are road safety cornerstones. If they are done well, procedures explain the correct methods employees in your organization can apply for driving success – and to prevent costly crashes. Effective procedures are ones that clearly explain how the organization expects its employees to drive. They are easy to understand and apply. Use resources in this section to build safe driving procedures that work.

- **Building Effective Procedures** – provides practical guidance that will help you build safe driving procedures that work.
- **Example Safe Work Procedures** – offers several examples of procedures that you can download, customize and print, and make them part of your road safety program.



Building Effective Procedures

Effective safe work procedures are essential tools for minimizing exposure to driving-related hazards. The key to building safe driving procedures that work is to convert the “best practices” knowledge that experienced drivers use with success into easily understandable instructions that all drivers can and will follow. This section explains how to build effective safe driving procedures.

Get started

1. Gather a small, knowledgeable team

People drafting procedures must be familiar with the work-related driving employees undertake, and the hazards they encounter. Together, the team needs to know the range of practical options available to manage associated risks. Involve your drivers, especially those with a reputation for “doing it right”. Include someone who can put good ideas onto paper in a clear and ordered manner.

2. Assemble sufficient resources

Make sure the team has what it needs to succeed. They need time to meet, research and discuss. They will need to consult with management and perhaps external experts. Provide the team with what they need to do a good job.

3. Confirm priorities

Check the results of your risk assessments. Is management involved and on board with paying attention to highest-ranked risks, first? Is the team clear on its goals?

Assemble necessary information

1. Talk to employees that drive for work

Procedures must be practical. If drivers can't do the things the procedure specifies, it won't work. Talk with the people you expect to apply the procedure. They know the hazards they face and have good ideas about how to minimize risks. Ask them to describe how they complete that task, and why they do it that way. Even if they are currently using an incorrect procedure, you will gain valuable insight into the hazard that the new procedure needs to address.

2. Ask around

Your organization is likely not the first to draft a procedure for controlling exposure to a given driving hazard. Ask other employers what works for them. Search online. Check with your health and safety association. Take advantage of the resources IHSA's offers on the ihsa.ca/roadsafetysolutions topic page.

3. Check existing policies

In order to achieve objectives, procedures need to align with policies. Review your safety program to see how its policies would inform the procedure you are developing. Check with management to make sure policies are current and correct.

4. Check the regulations

Safety regulations are often results-based – they describe result(s) that must be achieved, rather than steps that must be followed to achieve it. However, some regulations have specific requirements that your procedures need to address.

Build your procedure

There is no one “correct” recipe for building safe driving procedures. However, effective safe work procedures share some common characteristics. Consider the guidance below.

Ask key questions

- **Why** is the organization building this procedure?
- **What** are the objectives? **What** should this procedure accomplish?
- **Who** is going to use the procedure?
- **When** will this procedure apply?
- **Where** will this procedure apply?



Break it down

Driving is a complex series of inter-related actions. To analyze the driving circumstance you



want to address, break it down into a series of smaller, manageable parts. For example, you will probably be overwhelmed by the prospect of building a procedure for “how to drive a truck for construction work”. If you deconstruct that, you can see your main objective is really to build a procedure for operating ½-ton pickups on busy downtown construction sites. The task becomes much easier to accomplish.

Similarly, if you are developing a procedure for transporting workers from a mustering point to the job site, there are a number of tasks within that job – inspecting the vehicle, travelling to the mustering point, loading passengers, driving to the job site, off-loading passengers, etc. Each task involves specific hazards as well as steps the driver and / or passengers can take to minimize risks. Divide the job into discrete tasks, think about the hazards associated with each one and decide what steps will work best

Have a system

Adopt a methodical, step-by-step approach to understand the hazard and to explain the actions involved in the procedure.



Keep steps in order

Arrange the procedure in a logical, cohesive order. Usually, that means organizing things according to time. For example, if you are developing a procedure to minimize risks of musculoskeletal injuries due to incorrect driving posture, there is a sequence of steps to follow to achieve the best driving position. First, adjust the seat height, then move the seat forward to allow proper pedal control, then adjust then cushion under your knees, then the backrest, etc.



Use a familiar format

If your organization already has a document format that employees like and it works for the company, use it. If you need to develop a format, develop



one that you can also apply to other safety documents. Employees more readily accept, understand and apply information they receive in a familiar format.

Use clear language

Short sentences, simple language and clear directions work best.



Use pictures, diagrams or flow charts

It can take several long paragraphs to describe what proper seat adjustment looks like, and yet each reader might interpret them differently. One picture quickly and concisely conveys more information. Because it requires less time to interpret, drivers are more likely to apply graphic information correctly.



Use positive language

Rather than telling drivers what not to do, use affirmative statements and instructions that explain what they are to do. In circumstances where you know drivers commonly make mistakes or do things the “wrong way”, you can pre-empt that using “do not” instructions.



Keep it brief

Procedures need to be as brief as possible, but not so brief that they leave out necessary details. Aim to keep each procedure to one or two pages.



Review the draft procedure

Once your small team is happy with their product, ask a few drivers to review the safe work procedure. Does it make sense? Do they understand what they are expected to do? Can they follow the procedure? Will they? What do the supervisors think? Use their suggestions to make improvements.



Communicate it

No procedure can be effective until it is communicated to employees and they know what they need to do. Try a combination of communication methods.



- Have a supervisor sit down and review the procedure with each affected employee, discuss points important to that driver, answer their questions, and confirm they know how and when to apply the procedure.
- Have supervisors lead tailgate talks to discuss the procedures.
- Post the procedure on the company intranet so employees can review it when they like. Keep a copy of the safe work procedure in the vehicle. Keep a copy of the safety plan where all employees have ready access to it.
- Place a sticker on or in vehicles to remind drivers of critical steps in a procedure.
- Reinforce understanding with an annual “refresher” review and quiz at a safety meeting.
- Nothing communicates a new procedure better than a solid, consistent example by managers, supervisors and safety champions within the company.

Test it

Implement the procedure and watch how it goes. Do you see drivers doing what the procedure explains they are to do? Are the measures accomplishing intended outcomes?



Continual improvement

Every organization’s driving circumstances evolve. Employees use new routes to new customers. The company buys vehicles with different equipment, technology and features. New hires come on board. The hazards drivers encounter change; so do the actions available to manage them.



Review procedures at least annually. Involve drivers in the conversation. Are you seeing the results you expected? What's working? What's not working? Make necessary improvements, and communicate them.

Safe Work Procedures Commonly Included in a Road Safety Program

Listed below are several of the procedures that belong in an effective road safety program. You can find examples and templates to download and customize to be workplace specific at [Safe Work Procedures](#).



- General driving rules – seatbelt use, safe speed, driving for conditions
- Fatigue management
- Distracted driving / cell phone use
- Employee-owned vehicles used for work
- Carrying passengers or clients
- Employee check-in
- Vehicle emergency kits /equipment
- Driver assessment and training
- Journey management
- Vehicle inspection
- Backing / reversing
- Installing tire chains
- Driver seating position, mirror adjustment

