

# Driving and Avoiding Roadway Crashes

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Courtesy of Centers for Disease Control/James Gathany

Now more than ever, a vast majority of Texas businesses rely upon some facet of the trucking industry for their supplies/raw materials and/or for the delivery of their products and services. Sadly, transportation accidents continue to be one of the three leading causes of workplace fatalities and are the number one cause of workplace fatalities for men. It is also interesting to note that within fatal transportation accidents, the numbers are nearly equally divided between drivers and pedestrians. For the employers and victims, a workplace crash can have far-reaching financial, medical, and legal consequences. In order to reduce this disturbing trend in workplace fatalities and injuries, the development and implementation of effective transportation safety programs is essential. Let us now examine this situation more closely.

## Who is at risk?

Anyone who operates a motor vehicle as part of his or her job is at risk of being involved in a roadway crash. Roadway crashes are by far the leading cause of death for transport workers. Millions of other workers who are not full-time professional drivers operate company or personal vehicles for deliveries, sales and repair calls, client visits, and many other tasks. Roadway crashes are also the leading cause of death for workers in clerical and professional specialty jobs, and the second leading cause for executives, sales workers, and technicians.

## What can an employer do?

Unlike other workplaces, the roadway is not a closed environment. Preventing work-related roadway crashes requires strategies that combine traffic safety principles and sound safety management practices. Although employers cannot control roadway conditions, they can promote safe driving behavior by providing safety information to workers and by setting and enforcing driver safety policies. Crashes are not an unavoidable part of doing business. Employers can take steps to protect their employees and their companies:

## Policies

- Assign a key member of the management team responsibility and authority to set and enforce comprehensive driver safety policy.
- Enforce mandatory seat belt use.
- Do not require workers to drive irregular hours or far beyond their normal working hours.
- Do not require workers to conduct business on a cell phone while driving.
- Develop work schedules that allow employees to obey speed limits and to follow applicable hours-of-service regulations.

## Fleet Management

- Adopt a structured vehicle maintenance program.
- Provide company vehicles that offer the highest possible levels of occupant protection.

## Safety Programs

- Teach workers strategies for recognizing and managing driver fatigue and in-vehicle distractions.
- Provide training to workers operating specialized motor vehicles or equipment.
- Emphasize to workers the need to follow safe driving practices on and off the job.

## Driver Performance

- Ensure that workers assigned to drive on the job have a valid driver's license that is appropriate for the type of vehicle to be driven.
- Check driving records of prospective employees, and perform periodic rechecks after hiring.

- Maintain complete and accurate records of workers' driving performance.

This publication was produced with information from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation (TDI-DWC)

The Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation (TDI-DWC) has the following publications to provide safety information to help prevent roadway crashes:

- Fleet Motor Safety Program
- How Risky is Your Driving at Work?
- Are you Road Ready? Checklist
- Building a Highway Safety Program
- Vehicle Checklist
- Driving Distractions
- Road Rage
- Defensive Driving
- Driver Fatigue and Road Trance

Texas Department of Insurance/Division of Workers' Compensation/Federal Programs