



How to Reduce Accidents With a Monthly Safety Initiative



Accidents, Unsafe Behaviors, And Your Drivers

What's causing your drivers to have accidents? Bad weather? Road conditions? Bad luck? None of the above. People cause accidents. It's your drivers and their unsafe behaviors - every time. This doesn't have to be a reality, though. You can greatly reduce your accident and injury losses if you implement a monthly safety initiative.

The fact that your people are causing your accidents is an important distinction to make. If accidents were caused by other factors, we'd be hopeless to suffer and take our lumps. However, since accidents are caused by people and their unsafe behaviors, they can be prevented. All you need to do is train your drivers on proper defensive driving techniques.

Here's another earth-shattering revelation: it's likely that only a handful of unsafe behaviors are causing your accidents. There are thousands of potential unsafe behaviors, but they aren't all the culprits behind your accidents. For example, [29% of accidents are rear-end collisions](#), and nearly all of those are caused by following too closely.

If only a few unsafe behaviors are causing your company's most common and costly accidents, that makes your job even easier. Focus on preventing those specific unsafe behaviors and watch your accident numbers plummet. We recommend implementing a monthly safety initiative (or MSI for short) to do so.

If you want to learn more about this topic, you're in the right place. This whitepaper will teach you:

- What an MSI is and how it works
- How to implement a Monthly Safety Initiative
- Next steps after implementation

Ready to reduce your company's accidents and protect your people? Read on.





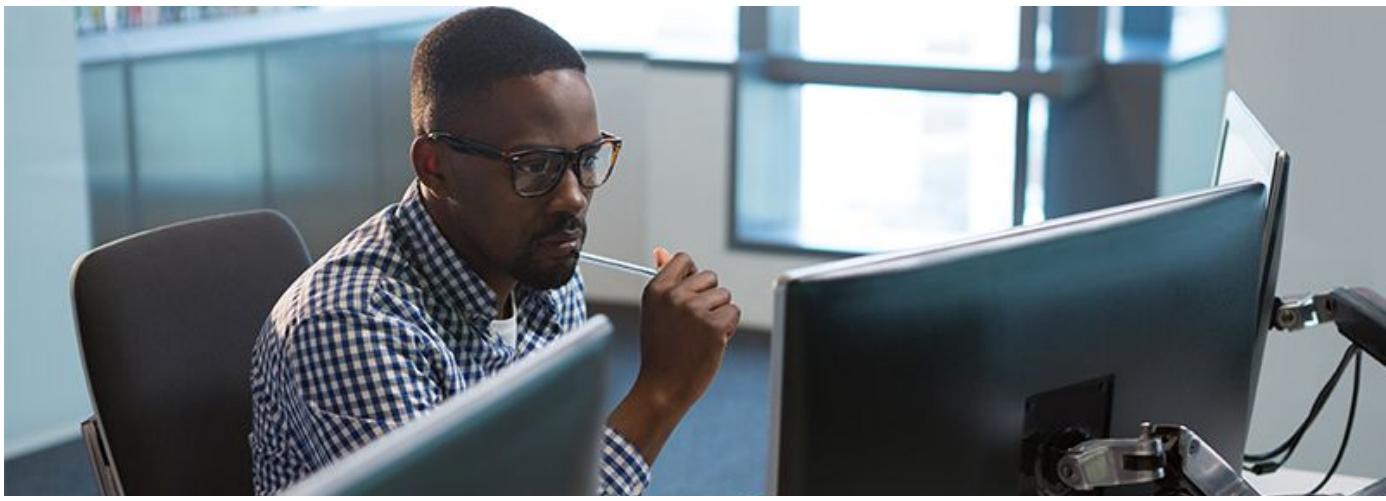
The Power of Retraining

If you're doing your job right, you're training your drivers on essential defensive driving practices when they are first hired. This isn't enough on its own, though. Your drivers need to be retrained, retrained again, and then retrained some more. And here's why.

If I asked you to solve an algebraic expression for two variables, you'd probably look at me like I was crazy. However, most of us were able to do so when we were 16. In fact, [less than half of the adults in the United States](#) can solve a basic math problem that would be taught in middle school. The reason is simple - if you don't use it, you lose it. And it works the same way with defensive driving for your employees. Your employees will fall into unsafe driving habits if you don't put them through retraining. Unsafe habits eventually hurt your bottom line and, worse yet, hurt your people.

An MSI solves this problem for you. An MSI consists of monthly safety meetings where each meeting covers a specific safety topic. The meetings can include a variety of media and activities, but most often they include videos, activities, quizzes, and discussion questions for your group to do together.

An MSI normally lasts a calendar year. Each month focuses on one of your loss leaders or most common types of accidents, such as maintaining a safe following distance, proper lane changing and merging, and intersections and turns. When our clients implement a model like this, their accident rates for the topic focused on that month are often reduced by 30%.



The Steps to Implementing The MSI

An MSI will reduce your most common and costly accidents, saving you money on claims, repairs and lost time. Best of all, it protects people from serious accidents and injuries. But an MSI doesn't just come out of thin air. How do you successfully implement one?

In short, you need to:

1. Plan your topics
2. Plan and create your content
3. Advertise it to get buy-in



Click to Learn about MSI

Get monthly shipments of professionally-made safety training materials.

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Plan Your Topics

You won't get anywhere reducing your accidents and injuries if you don't keep track of what's causing them in the first place. You need to figure out what your most common and costly accidents are before launching an MSI.

Tracking unsafe behaviors starts with tracking accidents, but that's not enough on its own. Tracking accidents is what we call a "lagging indicator." Lagging indicators represent something that's already happened, and there's nothing you can do with that information to stop it from happening again.

Leading indicators, on the other hand, are used to predict lagging indicators. They are red flags that allow you to be proactive. For example, a head-on collision is a lagging indicator. Texting and driving (which causes swerving in lane) is a leading indicator. It predicts that an accident is likely to occur. If you address the unsafe behavior, you can prevent the accident.



The Relationship Between Leading Indicators And Accidents

It's important to address leading indicators because unsafe behaviors behind the wheel will ALWAYS lead to an accident. In fact, it's backed-up with scientific research. It all comes down to Heinrich's theory of 300:29:1. The theory goes like this:

300

For every 300 identical unsafe behaviors that go unnoticed. . .

29

There will be 29 near misses or minor accidents . . .

1

And one major, life-altering accident.

Take following too closely for example. When you tailgate someone, you're putting yourself at a higher risk of a rear-end collision. If you do it 300 times, you will likely have 29 panic stops or minor fender benders. Eventually, you will cause a severe collision, potentially ending someone's life. It's a numbers game.

Putting aside the specific numbers, the point is that repeated unsafe behaviors are guaranteed to cause accidents if they go unchecked. That's why it's important to find the leading indicators of your accidents and train to those specific topics.





How to Track Unsafe Behaviors

More likely than not, the following unsafe behaviors are the ones causing your most common and costly accidents:

- Failure to maintain a safe following distance
- Failure to Look Ahead for Risk
- Failure to Look Around at intersections
- Distracted driving
- Backing without getting out and looking or getting a spotter
- Failure to detect pedestrians and cyclists

While you could just focus on these topics and most likely see a large reduction in your accident numbers, it's most impactful to find the specific unsafe behaviors causing your accidents. The easiest way to do so is with event video records.

If you haven't already invested in event video recorders like Drivecam or Smartdrive, we highly recommend you do. They show you what really causes your accidents and near-misses. They are video cameras that are triggered by force such as a collision, a hard brake, or a sudden change in speed. Once triggered, they save the footage that happened the seconds before and after the event, both in and out of the vehicle. They don't store anything else. They make it easy to protect your company from fraudulent claims and catch accident-causing unsafe behaviors.

Once installed, these cameras will make it easy for you to find unsafe behaviors BEFORE they cause accidents. And, they will help you uncover what causes your most common and costly accidents so you can train towards those topics.



Plan and Create Your Content

Once you have your topics, you need to plan how you will train your drivers on them. What will you cover in your meetings? Will you lecture? Will you show PowerPoints and YouTube videos? Adult learning theories point out that these strategies will not be very effective.

Adults want to be engaged in the learning process. They want to be involved in the classroom. And, they want to know how they will benefit from learning the material.

Yes, you will likely need some sort of presentation or video, but that's not enough on its own. To successfully train and educate your drivers on essential defensive driving techniques, you need a combination of the following to supplement your main presentation:

- Activities
- Exercises
- Discussion questions
- Quizzes

This combination of resources and media will effectively engage your drivers, allow them to fully understand the material, and lead to better learning outcomes.

Of course, it takes time, energy, and resources to plan out all of this training content. That's why you may want to go with an off-the-shelf resource.

Our Monthly Safety Initiative provides you with monthly shipments of training materials, professionally-developed safety training videos, and access to a learning management system. You'll receive high-quality safety materials that have a history of effectively reducing accidents and injuries without the hassle of creating everything yourself

Advertise It to Get Buy-In

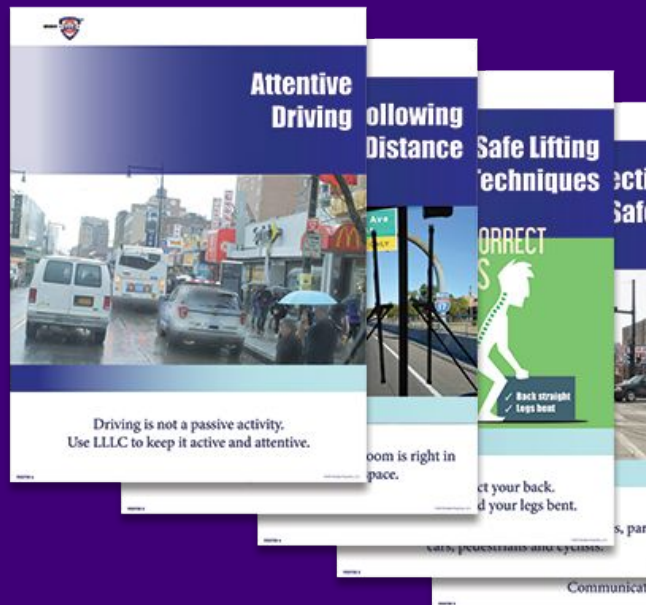
By implementing an MSI, you're shaking up your drivers' work-lives. This is bound to encounter some resistance. However, with effective change management strategies, you can overcome this resistance and have your drivers buy-in to the process.

Effective change management is akin to effective advertising. You need your drivers to be excited for the training, understand why they need it, realize how it will benefit them, and know what's to come.

Advertise your MSI with a combination of:

- Posters
- Emails
- Memos
- Announcements

These company-wide communications should be transparent, frequent, consistent, and - most importantly - demonstrate everything your drivers will gain from the training. Make it clear that the MSI is an investment in their careers and safety.



Don't Set It And Forget It

Creating and launching a successful MSI takes a lot of effort. This burden can be lifted with an off-the-shelf model such as our Monthly Safety Initiative product. However, regardless of whether you create it on your own or invest in something professionally-made, you need follow-through.

Ask for driver feedback. Ask for manager feedback. Remain consistent and never miss a meeting. Track your accident numbers to see how this initiative impacts your bottom line and your people. You're investing time and money, so you need to be sure you're receiving a positive return on investment.

Of course, if you implement an MSI correctly, we know you'll be happy with the results. Thousands of companies like yours are watching their accident numbers plummet and their profits go up with this process. More importantly, they have made the effort to ensure their drivers go home in one piece every night. If you want to learn more, all you need to do is [contact us using this link](#).

