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Your Role in CMV Driver Retention and Safety

by Chris Parker, Loss Control Specialist

In a study contracted by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, it was concluded that "a significant relationship exists between job change rate and crash involvement". (1) One key component of the study was an examination of the motor carrier's role in reducing driver turnover.

The role of motor carrier management in both driver retention and overall safety can be described as one of facilitation. While highway safety ultimately comes down to situations and actions on the road, trucking companies play essential roles in providing drivers with the physical and psychological tools needed to deal with the many safety situations that arise while driving.

In the study, motor carrier management personnel (i.e., executives, senior managers, and safety directors) were asked a series of questions about driver retention and safety and the design and effect of formal and informal safety programs. The responses received were summarized to present a management perspective on the trucking company's role in promoting driver retention and safety, with the following broad categories of responses ultimately defined:

- **Preemptive Programs** – Focus on safety training and education, with the objective being to provide preventative measures. In most cases, these are designed as group-based programs. They also encompass remedial training for drivers involved in crashes. Vehicle maintenance programs may also be classified in this category as they are often viewed by drivers as safety and satisfaction programs.
- **Outcome-Based Programs** – Typically described as proactive incentive and/or reward programs. Anecdotal evidence indicates that the larger the company, the more organized and sophisticated these programs become. Formal programs include safety recognition dinners and exclusive "Million Mile" clubs. More informal programs include driver meetings that highlight new company safety data or recognize an individual driver's efforts.
- **Personal Support Programs** – Trucking companies recognize that employee satisfaction is closely tied to initiatives that focus on the driver as an individual. Examples include trucking companies with targeted driver outreach programs that pair drivers with trainers, managers, ombudsmen, and even counselors. The goal is to provide immediate support and response to driver issues and concerns.

Fleet owners and safety directors would be well advised to consider how their safety and driver appreciation programs support employee satisfaction and contribute to reduced turnover. IAT's Loss Control team can help you assess your program and work with you to enhance its effectiveness.

(1) FMCSA-RT-03-004

Telematics Policy Best Practices

by Jared Fritts, Loss Control Specialist

The development and implementation of telematics devices in both commercial and non-commercial vehicles have been invaluable in making roadways safer over the last several years. Chances are that almost every commercial vehicle we see on the road today is recording and transferring telematics data of some kind. Telematics data that is being recorded can include in-cab and outward-facing video footage, GPS tracking, real-time hours of service updates, excessive speeding, sharp acceleration, sudden braking, vehicle roll detection, tracking of idle time, tire pressure, equipment maintenance alerts, fuel consumption, numerous unsafe driving behaviors, and more.

With the ever-increasing amount of data that is available, it is equally as important that motor carriers and fleets develop telematics policies and standards that are enforced and clearly communicated to all drivers.

Key components of a telematics policy will include the following:

- A thorough explanation of the telematics policy to all drivers and employees prior to the policy being implemented.
  - Why is this policy going into effect?
  - What is being measured?
  - How does the system/device work?
  - What happens if standards are not met or violations are recorded?
  - How can drivers improve their performance?

All drivers should review, sign, and date the telematics policy.

- **Enforce a zero-tolerance policy for tampering or disabling of any telematics device.**

- **Run telematics reports daily to address violations and coach drivers to change unsafe driving behaviors. Ensure all driver training and coaching is documented.**

- **Develop and enforce required remedial training and disciplinary policies around telematics alerts and violations of set standards. Be sure to include bonuses, raises, and/or acknowledgment of those drivers that meet or exceed the standards of the telematics policy.**

- **Understand who owns and has access to your telematics data. Perform in-depth reviews of all contracts signed with vendors.**

Telematics systems alone will not reduce accidents, but with clear and enforced policies and procedures surrounding the use of these systems, you can greatly improve your company's overall safety culture.

The Importance of Sprinkler Testing

by Tim Unger, Loss Control Specialist

A fire sprinkler system can provide dependable protection in the event of a fire – if it's working properly. To ensure that the fire protection systems in your building will function as expected in the event of a fire, you must ensure the water supply is adequate and the system's alarms will function and signal the fire department. While it is possible for an adequately trained employee to conduct the below testing, it is recommended that a qualified sprinkler contractor be utilized to ensure testing is completed properly.

2" Main Drain Flow Test

The 2" main drain flow test is completed by opening the main drain allowing water to flow. Pressure readings are recorded prior to the flow (static) and during the flow (residual). The test serves as a tool in evaluating the condition of the water supply to the fire sprinkler system. It can reveal any deterioration of the water supply by comparing the test results to those of previous test results. The 2" drain is connected to the fire riser and is generally piped through an exterior wall to the outside. It is recommended that the main drain flow test be conducted on an annual basis. Changes in pressure warrant further investigation by a qualified sprinkler contractor.

Water Flow Alarm Testing

Water flow alarms can either be mechanical or electrical. They are intended to provide an alarm when a sprinkler head has been activated and water flows through the system.

> ***Mechanical Alarms:*** These will sound when the movement of water forces a paddle wheel to ring the motor-water gong, or alarm bell. Mechanical alarms should be tested quarterly. If your alarms are also monitored by an alarm company, notify them before proceeding with the test. The alarm should be received by the central station within 90 seconds of opening the inspector's test connection.
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> ***Electrical Alarms:*** Electrical flow switch alarms use sensing switches to send a signal to an alarm panel and an off-site alarm company. Testing of the electrical flow alarms should be completed semi-annually.

Both alarms are tested by opening the inspector's test connection valve.

Tamper Alarms

Tamper or supervisory alarms can send an alert via an electrical switch when the water supply valve is either closed, partially closed or being "tampered" with. These alarms should be tested semi-annually. If the water supply valve is also outside of the building, you should consider locking the valve for added protection.

In addition to testing the above systems, it is also important to check the sprinkler heads throughout the building. Each of the sprinkler heads should have a clearance of 18" from any storage or obstacles in order to function properly. Lastly, the area around the fire risers should also be clear of storage to allow easy access to the riser in the event of an emergency.

The above information was sourced from NFPA 25: Standard for the Inspection, Testing and Maintenance of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems (Table 5.1.1.2 and 13.1.1.2).