

SAFETY GAZETTE



IN THIS ISSUE

VALUATION AND HIGH-VALUE ITEMS IN MOVING AND STORAGE

TIME TO RECONSIDER AIR DISC BRAKES (ADB)

FMCSA DATAQs

AND MORE!



Distracted Driving

Written by: Tim Unger, Loss Control Specialist

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) designates each April as National Distracted Driving Awareness Month. NHTSA increases awareness efforts in April and encourages law enforcement across the country to join in. Now is an excellent time to review your company's policies and procedures in regards to distracted driving to ensure they are effective.

When we use the phrase *distracted driving*, most people will automatically think of driving while using a cell phone. Use of a cell phone is a large contributor to driver distraction, but it's not the only risk factor. Distracted driving is defined as any activity that diverts attention from driving, including talking or texting on the phone, eating and drinking, talking with passengers in the vehicle, fiddling with the stereo, entertainment or navigation system, and more. Any of these activities can drastically increase the risk of becoming involved in an accident.

Distracted driving involves one or more of the following:

Visual distraction—looking away from the road at 55 miles per hour for as little as three seconds will result in the vehicle traveling 250 feet, almost the length of a football field.

Manual Distraction—removing one, or both hands from the steering wheel to perform non-driving tasks, such as using a cell phone or adjusting the radio.

Cognitive Distraction—known as the most dangerous form of driver distraction, involves activity that causes the driver to take their mind off of the task of driving. Daydreaming is a common form of cognitive distraction. Multi-tasking while driving can also lead to cognitive distraction.

What should your company do to ensure you are doing your best to address and potentially reduce the dangers of distracted driving in your own fleet? Read on.

1) Develop a formal policy that addresses distracted driving. The policy should apply to everyone in your company, whether they drive a company vehicle, or a personal vehicle on company business. It should clearly outline your expectations in regards to all distractions while driving including the use of cell phones. The best practice is to prohibit phone use while operating a vehicle. Even hands-free use of a cell phone creates a cognitive distraction and should be avoided.

2) To be effective, safety policies should be communicated on a regular basis. This should be done by requiring all employees who drive on company business to be aware of your distracted driving policies by providing a copy to them and retaining a signed copy. The policy should also be addressed as a reminder in safety meetings or safety communications.

3) Management should make a concerted effort to lead by example. When on the road, managers and supervisors should let all employees know that they will not take phone calls, texts or emails. They should ensure when they are returning calls or emails that they are parked safely. Many cell phones have a “Do not Disturb While Driving” function that can automatically reply that the user is driving and will respond at a later time.

Data reveals that most drivers acknowledge that distracted driving is a safety concern. Yet hundreds of thousands of drivers admit to texting and using cell phones while driving. Don't assume that the drivers in your company understand the risks. Take the appropriate steps to help eliminate distracted driving in your fleet today.

"Valuation" and High-Value Items in the Moving & Storage Industry



Written by: Scott Sloan, Senior Loss Control Representative

Occasionally, customers have high-value household goods (HHG) that they wish to have moved. Having a way to identify these items, such as artwork, jewelry, statuary and more, can help reduce the issue of under-valuing goods. In the case of damage or loss, this can also help ensure that customers have adequate insurance coverage. Moving and Storage professionals are aware of *valuation*, with most insurance carrier policies paying \$0.60/pound for damaged household goods (often inadequate to cover losses).



Helping customers to understand valuation is critical to making the best decision to protect their valuables. It is also critical to have the customer sign a bill of lading (BOL), or other documentation, that explains valuation so that in the event of a claim, they understand how the claim will be paid. Obtaining customer signatures for valuation of HHG is always best practice. Failing to do this can result in large customer service issues.

An **inventory** is a great way to identify these items, unveil risk exposures and determine items that cannot be vaulted and must be accounted for when coming out of storage. Once identified, a strategy should be developed to handle the household goods. One of the best risk transfer strategies is to have the customer move those items instead of you; however, this is not always possible, so discussing additional insurance policies may be the right solution. The most important thing is to have a process in place to handle these situations before they occur.

Storage of high-value goods can pose additional risks to the moving company. If heat, cold, or moisture can affect the item, such as paintings, then precautions need to be taken to protect the item(s) while in your care, custody and control. Warehouse receipts should be provided for items in storage, especially if they will be stored for more than 30 days. This will let the moving company know if these high-value items have increased the total values of warehouse goods to the point that they may exceed the limits of the insurance policy. If you decide to store high-value items, setting up a section of the warehouse to accommodate them would be ideal. This area can be locked, possibly video monitored and climate controlled. Limiting exposure of these items to designated personnel will help reduce the potential for damage or loss. It will also put your customer's mind at ease.

Having policies and procedures in place before high-value goods are encountered not only makes the moving company look more professional and improve customer service, they can help prevent additional problems in the event of a loss to a high-value household good.



Time to Reconsider Air Disc Brakes

Written by: Christopher Parker, Loss Control Specialist

Take a fresh look at the benefit of equipping your new trucks and trailers with air disc brakes (ADB). The disc brake of today is a vast improvement over the technology of yesteryear. The improved stopping distance for disc, as compared to drum brakes, can be 25 to 30 feet depending on tires, speed and road conditions. Additionally, the open design of disc brakes reduces fade by preventing heat buildup, keeping the mechanism cooler even when traveling downhill.

A recent survey for a trade magazine indicated that close to 50 % of respondents acknowledged that cost is a primary factor holding them back from purchasing disc brakes. While admittedly the initial cost is higher, disc brakes provide a long-term cost benefit in terms of ease of maintenance and lower total operating cost.

One manufacturer, Bendix, provides an excellent online cost benefit analyzer free of charge at www.valuebybendix.com. Using it, and assuming a fleet of 25 trucks and the default parameters with regard to configuration, trade-in cycle, annual miles, accident rates and other metrics demonstrated that such a fleet might achieve an ROI of \$5,655 per unit or \$141,375 over a five-year life cycle.

The good news is that an increasing number of fleets are calculating the benefit and making the decision to invest in ADB. While the take rate for new trucks was just 12% to 15% a few years ago, OEMs are reporting it to be 18% to 25% now. Peterbilt, Kenworth, and International are among the manufacturers who now offer ADBs as standard on their Class 8 models. Freightliner has joined the chorus and is making them standard on the new Cascadia model.

While this is great news, progress with the adoption of ADBs on trailers is much slower. One study noted that more than 80% of fleet operators are considering them on new tractors, but less than 20% are doing so for trailers. The same Bendix calculator demonstrates that the ROI is similar for trailers as it is for tractors.

I would be remiss not to acknowledge that a transition to ADBs will require some additional effort on the part of the fleet operator. Mechanics will need to learn how to service and repair them. New tools will be needed and parts inventory will be impacted. Service schedules will also need to be adjusted. Considering the potential return, these measures, though time consuming, could be worthwhile for your operation.

Drivers will also need to be advised that if they regularly operate an ADB equipped truck and are then moved back in to a traditionally equipped one, they need to recognize the different handling and braking characteristics. In one fleet I worked with, we affixed decals to the trucks and trailers equipped with ADB. Absent the decal, the driver was advised to recognize that the unit was equipped otherwise. The driver preference quickly became obvious further encouraging the transition to an ADB fleet.

FMCSA DataQs

Written by: Nancy Ross-Anderson, Loss Control Specialist



If you monitor your BASIC's in the FMCSA Portal, you may have found some inaccuracies in the information. If you believe that information on an FMCSA website about your company, equipment, or driver is incorrect, you have the right to Request a Data Review (RDR), but do your homework and verify before you make a request.

The process of requesting a review is straightforward. The purpose of this article is to walk you through that process and provide you some tips to improve your chances in successfully changing or removing the misinformation.

The new website is located at <https://dataqs.fmcsa.dot.gov>. This is a public site and anyone can request an account.

You may request a review, or monitor your current requests. Once you sign-in to the website, select 'My DataQs' on the left-hand side of the screen.



- Add a request
- **Steps 1 & 2:** Identify what you are inquiring about. This could be a roadside event or a non-roadside event. More commonly, it will be regarding a citation, a violation that is incorrect, or it does not belong to you
- **Step 3:** Make a selection based on the information you are trying to have corrected or removed
- **Step 4:** Provide the detailed information that the submission requires
- **Step 5:** Submit your documentation online or by fax
- **Step 6:** Confirm and submit the request for review

For example, if you choose a citation associated with a violation on an inspection, then you must have been found not guilty, the charge was dismissed, or you were convicted of a different charge. You should not submit an RDR if you were convicted of the original charge or court action is pending.

It is vital to provide detailed information in the request that pertains to you as the carrier, the driver of the vehicle, or the event data in the Motor Carrier Management Information System (MCMIS).

This applies to both the original RDR filing and afterward when submitting supplemental information. Some possible sources of information include:

- State inspection reports
- State crash reports
- Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's driver information resource
- State Department of Motor Vehicles databases
- Commercial motor vehicle registration and driver licensing databases

Only submitting that 'it is not your truck or driver' will not be enough. You will need to back-up any claims with supporting documentation. Be very clear in your explanation.

States make a determination on a case-by-case basis as to whether a requester submitted sufficient documentation to support their RDR. This determination should be based on all evidence presented by the requester, and/or documentation provided by the inspector or officer who recorded the crash or inspection data. You will have 60 calendar days to provide the necessary documentation to the state through DataQs. It is strongly recommended that you provide a copy of the inspection report and/or a copy of the citation. Pictures that are date and time stamped can also help.

If you are a motor carrier with an existing FMCSA Portal account (<https://portal.fmcsa.dot.gov>), you can log into the portal to access DataQs.

More information is available at <https://dataqs.fmcsa.dot.gov>. Look under 'resources' on the left-hand side of the screen and select 'educational material.'