

CHECKLIST

Building a Safer Fleet: How to Implement a Driver Safety Training Program

Drivers are the backbone of every commercial fleet. Fleets that invest in a structured, consistent fleet safety training program reduce accidents, strengthen retention and build the kind of safety culture that earns the confidence of insurers and regulators. A four-pillar framework connects people, compliance and technology into one cohesive program. Use this checklist to start building or strengthening your fleet safety program.

1. Establish driver orientation training

New drivers face the highest risk in their first weeks on the job. A strong driver orientation program sets expectations early and gives drivers the knowledge and skills to succeed from day one. Effective orientation covers two areas:

Knowledge-based training:

- ☐ Deliver structured classroom or e-learning modules covering company policies, regulations such as hours-of-service (HOS) requirements and pre-trip inspections, as well as key safety topics including distracted driving, defensive driving, company safety policies and electronic logging device (ELD) training.
- ☐ Make training competency-based with graded assessments at the end of each module to confirm understanding, not just completion. For U.S. operations, competency exams should include English Language Proficiency (ELP).
- ☐ Document completed modules in each driver's qualification file.

Behind-the-wheel training:

- ☐ Assign qualified trainers to lead all sessions. Structure time so new hires observe first, then take the wheel under supervision.
- ☐ Release drivers only after the trainer confirms competency and all required content is complete.
- ☐ Use observation forms to document each session consistently across trainers and terminals.
- ☐ Monitor if drivers are completing all physical aspects of the job, including pre-trip inspections, landing gear manipulation, climbing in and out of trailers and cabs, and more.

2. Reinforce skills with recurrent training

A consistent driver safety training schedule keeps drivers sharp, reduces complacency and enables fleets to stay ahead of regulatory and technology changes. Recurrent training is also a meaningful signal to drivers that development does not stop at orientation.

- ☐ Schedule formal documented and recurrent training for all drivers.
- ☐ Maintain a consistent training cadence enterprise-wide, even when content varies by division or operational responsibility.
- ☐ Use a variety of formats including safety meetings, learning management system (LMS) modules, toolbox talks and interactive sessions to sustain engagement.
- ☐ Apply competency-based evaluations to measure knowledge, not just attendance.
- ☐ Run focused trainings on high-risk topics such as driver fatigue, distracted driving and intersection safety.

3. Respond to incidents with remedial training

A remedial process focused on coaching instead of discipline helps correct unsafe behaviour, rebuilds confidence and creates documentation that demonstrates organizational due diligence.

- ☐ Initiate remedial driver safety training following any collision, near-miss, moving violation or unsafe driving behaviour, not just at-fault incidents.
- ☐ Use telematics data and dashcam footage to highlight examples of unsafe behaviours such as speeding, harsh braking or following distance, as well as to reinforce examples of good driving habits and decision making.
- ☐ Document all remedial training, including topics covered, format used and driver acknowledgment.
- ☐ Schedule a follow-up evaluation to confirm improvement and recognize progress when it occurs.

4. Connect technology to coaching

Telematics, ELDs and automatic event recorders (AERs) give fleet managers real-time visibility into driver behaviour. Fleets that pair this data with a formal coaching process turn individual alerts into a driver safety training engine that improves continuously.

- ☐ Establish a documented process for reviewing telematics and camera alerts regularly, not just after accidents.
- ☐ Use provider scorecards and workflow tools to identify high-risk driving behaviours, document coaching and reinforce positive habits. Consider linking results to a safety [incentive program](#) that recognizes consistent improvement.
- ☐ Act on alerts promptly: Unreviewed data that goes uncoached increases liability exposure and signals to drivers that the program lacks follow-through.
- ☐ Use alert patterns to build individualized coaching plans based on what each driver needs.
- ☐ Connect technology insights to both recurrent and remedial training so program content reflects real behaviour across the fleet.

5. Build for consistency and the long term

Consistent documentation and enterprise-wide structure strengthen the impact of a driver safety training program, as well as demonstrate due diligence and support more favourable outcomes at renewal. Use this guide as your starting point, then adapt as your operations and team evolve.

- ☐ Set enterprise-wide documentation standards before launch, covering all [four training components](#).
- ☐ Ensure training schedules, evaluation forms, coaching records and driver acknowledgments are consistently filed and accessible across all locations.
- ☐ Apply a consistent structure across terminals, branches and divisions, with flexibility in content to reflect each group's routes and responsibilities.
- ☐ Treat the program as a living system: Review and refine regularly so it remains operationally relevant and sustainable over time.

Your drivers deserve a program built to last

When orientation, recurrent, remedial and technology-driven training work together and documentation is consistent, fleets build a safety culture that retains drivers, supports compliance and strengthens their insurance profile.

Connect with a HUB transportation specialist to learn how we can design a training program that fits your operations. Visit hubinternational.ca.