



HOW TO DEVELOP A **HIGH-IMPACT** DRIVER TRAINING PROGRAM

Not having an impactful driver training program can be costly for motor carriers. A lack of customized training aimed at your operation's and drivers' specific needs can lead to accidents and incidents. These accidents and incidents can result in fatalities, injuries, vehicle damage, lost freight, downtime, or litigation. They can also result in poor CSA scores, prompting an investigation or audit that could shut down a motor carrier's operation.

Additionally, prior driver crash involvement continues to be an indicator of future crash involvement. In fact, **drivers involved in a crash in 2013 were 74% more likely to be in a crash in 2014***.

Key components of a meaningful driver training program include:

- Customization based on driver and carrier needs
- Multiple learning methods
- Experienced and knowledgeable instructors who are able to coach drivers.

Inexperienced driver training

Inexperienced driver training should always be provided to a new employee being onboarded by a motor carrier. This individual could be fresh out of driving school or have several years of driving experience at another carrier.

Why should all drivers, including those with years of experience, be put through "inexperienced" driver training? Because it lays down the company's expectations, processes, and procedures before the driver hits the road. This type of training can help in undoing improper or bad driving technique or resolve misunderstood compliance issues. New driver training topics should include:

- Orientation (being a professional driver, driver qualification, company policies/procedures)
- Hours of service, including ELD operation
- Familiarization, inspection, and operation of the vehicles
- Defensive driving (speed/space management, adverse driving, etc.)
- Additional equipment operation instruction (forklifts, etc.)
- Driver wellness (fatigue prevention, safe lifting practices)
- Other topics deemed important to the carrier's operation.



*ATRI "Predicting Truck Crash Involvement: 2018 Update"



How to Develop a **HIGH-IMPACT DRIVER TRAINING PROGRAM** (CONT.)

Follow-up instruction

Training is not a one-and-done proposition — especially for new drivers. A great deal of information is put in front of the new driver during the first week on the job. Continued communication is key.

A monitoring and mentoring program that follows the driver for the first six to 12 months is a way to reinforce what was taught and to build on the initial training that was provided.

Experienced driver training

Experienced driver training should be provided for drivers who have been with the organization and operating vehicles for at least one year.

Motor carriers need to keep their drivers current on company policies and the regulations, and provide timely updates to any changes. The training program for experienced drivers should also:

- Address issues that continue to “crop up” on a regular basis
- Be based on accident/incident reports, roadside inspection reports, dash camera data, insurance claims, and driver questions
- Provide follow-up instruction and coaching as needed.





How to Develop a **HIGH-IMPACT DRIVER TRAINING PROGRAM** (CONT.)

Methods of instruction and selecting instructors

An effective driver training program uses several methods of instruction, including:

- Online
- Closed-course range
- Classroom
- Over-the road.

This “blended” approach allows an instructor to provide meaningful and memorable instruction that will be retained by drivers.



When it comes to the individual presenting the training, knowledge and experience must be a top consideration. The instructor should be able to coach drivers, meaning he or she should be able to explain, demonstrate, and correct as necessary. **Ideally, the instructor was also a driver at some point.**

Customizing a training program to meet your operation’s needs

Not all motor carriers have the same needs when it comes to driver training. Each program should be customized to address the issues most important to the motor carrier.

This means:

- Assessing the operation
- Selecting and implementing meaningful training topics based on your market, needs, routes, driver demographics, cargo, customer requirements, etc.
- Selecting effective and efficient instructors
- Securing materials and facilities
- Keeping the safety message front and center after training with ongoing communication.





How to Develop a **HIGH-IMPACT DRIVER TRAINING PROGRAM** (CONT.)

Selecting a training partner

To provide a complete in-house program, a motor carrier needs dedicated personnel and facilities. Depending on your operation, it may be easier and more cost effective to work with an outside training partner.

When selecting an outside training partner, a motor carrier should consider:

- The topics that must be addressed
- The training partner’s ability to customize and scale for the motor carrier’s specific needs
- The type(s) of learning experiences provided by the training partner (online, classroom, range, road)
- The knowledge and experience of the training provider’s trainers
- Facilities used
- Overall reputation of the organization providing the training.

By following these recommendations for implementing an effective driver training program, motor carriers can mitigate the risk of accidents and incidents while improving driver performance and professionalism.

Reduce Accidents with Proven CMV Driver Training

The **J. J. Keller® Safe & Smart Driver Training Program** teaches CMV drivers, CDL Class A drivers and **yard jockeys** how to:

- Operate a CMV skillfully and safely
- Understand the CMV regulations that apply to them
- Stay alert and drive defensively on the road
- Provide professional customer service

Developed by our training experts and delivered by veteran instructors, this program can be configured to meet the needs of your company, your cargo and your vehicles. Training can occur at your location(s) or anywhere nationwide!

Each program uses a combination of in-depth online courses with in-person classroom, range, and road experiences.



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