

Collisions with Wildlife

Sad to say that these collisions do occur and depending on what that wild creature is they have been deadly to the driver and costly to repair the vehicle.

For over 20 years I have had the opportunity to participate as a voice on numerous Fleet Collision Review Committees. Not all drivers will agree that a wildlife collision maybe preventable. When asked why they feel that it is non preventable the person will often respond by saying an animal is unpredictable, will run out in front of a large commercial vehicle and often times stand there in the middle of the road. My response back is have you ever had another driver pull out in front of you, cut you off, run a red light or just stop in the middle of the road for no apparent reason? That to is unpredictable!

As spring approaches the bear, deer and moose will head out of the bush looking for food and getting on into late spring to escape the bugs. One spot that they head to is the side of the road to get the water runoff and the salt that was on the roads over the winter.

To prevent a wildlife collision a driver must do what is reasonable to prevent the collision and that means, driving at the posted speed limit or less if the conditions warrant. Scanning the shoulders of the roads for wildlife and, use extra caution in posted wildlife areas.

Transportation Safety & Compliance Solutions has a meeting for the new Collision Review Committee. This meeting format can also be delivered to any group of drivers using sample collisions that the drivers study and learn about preventable and non preventable collisions.

Please call for more information or to book a meeting.

*Do you need to
develop a Fleet
Safety
Program?*

*TS&CS can help
Call*

519 748 4420

*Think about a
drivers meeting
before the
summer months
are upon us. I
would be happy to
come and talk to
your drivers about
road safety.*

*Check out our website
www.transportationsafetycs.ca
for past issues on the
Safety Lane as well as
many other interesting
articles.*

If you have an industry article to
share please forward it to
mike@transportationsafetycs.ca

Do you run your drivers abstracts?

A good question and one your fleet insurance company hopefully has already discussed with you. What information does an abstract give you? This will depend on what abstract you are running?

There is a regular abstract that gives information that is not related specifically to the Commercial Motor Vehicle. An example would be if the person had a speeding violation in the family car or more than one violation in the family car. Another example of a violation is "using handheld device or seat belt violation" There are still professional drivers out there that refuse to wear a seat belt or talk on the cell phone when driving. I could dedicate a complete newsletter to that along.

From time to time I will get the driver that will tell me that it is none of my business what happens in their personal vehicle. Well maybe that is true but something I was told a number of years ago and it is one of those things that has stuck with me ever since. If they have no respect in the way they operate their own vehicle what respect will they have when they are driving your vehicle (billboard) all across the country. At the same time as an owner or as the regulation refer to you as the operator you have a responsibility to ensure that the people operating your vehicles are competent drivers. Both you and your insurance company will want to know if your drivers are categorized as a "High Risk Driver"

Should I be running a driver's Commercial Motor Vehicle Operators (C.V.O.R.) abstract? Yes this abstract will tell you what a driver is doing in a commercial vehicle. These are items that are not shown on a regular abstract. An example of that could be did the driver have an overweight ticket, placed out of service for a mechanical defect or an Hours of Service violation.

Regardless of what abstract you are running you will get some basic but important information.

1. Is or does the driver hold a valid licence?
2. Is the licence the proper class for the vehicle they are operating?
3. When does the driver licence expire?
4. When does the driver medical expire?
5. For anyone that has an Ontario licence driver going into the US you do not want that driver to have a "**W**" condition which is a medical condition that prohibits the driver from entering the US in a commercial vehicle.

Another important piece of information shown on a drivers CVOR abstract is if they are driving for another CVOR operator. Each violation will show a Carrier CVOR number with it. If that CVOR number is not yours there is one of two explanations.

1. MTO made a mistake and got the wrong number on the violation
2. Your driver is working for another carrier.

It is important that if you driver is operating equipment or working for another CVOR holder that the hours worked are reported to both carriers. The hours worked at both carriers go against the drivers hours worked. An example is the driver works a full 12 hour shift for another carrier and then comes in and does a run for you in a commercial vehicle. When they show up at your workplace they already have 12 hours against the hours permitted to work.

An MTO officer has most of this information available to review in a cruiser, at a truck inspection station or at your office when doing a Facility Audit.

Finally insurance companies recommend to run an abstract every 3 months and to alternate between a CVOR abstract and a regular abstract. I have seen larger fleets run a few abstracts every month this spreads out the costs and the work load a little more.

Do you have a Fleet Safety Program?

Too often I find that when I am speaking with a customer or a potential customer I ask the question do you have a fleet safety program and most often the answer will be yes or well kind of sorta. First off you want it to be in writing.

I suggest setting goals, benchmarking from previous years. A bench mark I like to use is to get your Vehicle Collision Rate (V.C.R.) now before getting to this point you must have some clear definitions:

- Defensive Driver,
- Collision,
- Preventable Collision,
- At Fault Collision
- Finally a corrective action policy

There are four other key parts to a fleet safety program which are:

1. Vehicle Maintenance
2. Driver Training
3. Road Safety Program
4. Safety Culture

Vehicle Maintenance: This is an important aspect as we all know repairs are expensive and more costly on the road. Have a written policy in place. Schedule maintenance, today there are many computer programs out there that will ensure that vehicles get inspected and maintained when required. Often times these programs will tie into other programs that will collect data such as mileage to ensure the schedule is kept. Your dispatch staff and drivers must all be aware of the vehicle maintenance policy. Your shop staff and dispatch staff must know when to schedule down time. This requires communication and cooperation. There is obviously more to this but you have to get started with the fundamentals first.

Driver Training Program: First off you must hire the right people for the job. That requires to have a hiring criteria and policy. If you are hiring directly out of a truck driving school hats off to you. However keep in mind that the fundamentals of the schools are to give their students the tools to obtain an A or DZ licence. The stellar students will pickup up more. In saying all this as a fleet operator you have to give more training to the rookie. Yes it should all be written down in a policy and a program.

Part of the training for a new hire rookie or experienced requires an orientation program. The objective of the orientation program is to really get to know more about the new employee and at the same time help them to get to know the company, the people, the policies, culture and job expectations. Not all trucking companies are the same! That is a good thing!

Ongoing driver training. There are many ways to go with this, Annual safety meetings, quarterly safety meetings or monthly meetings.

You may be able to afford a simulator or to rent one or for the hands on drivers send them to skid school. If this is not in the budget think about in cab driver evaluations. These should be set up on a schedule on an equal frequency. Most fleets look at a three year cycle. Another in cab driver training is post collision. This is an important Due Diligence for your insurance company and enforcement agencies such as DOT and MTO.

Road Safety Program: First off is there a company written overall policy statement and is it posted? Is it reviewed annually?

Are there organizational goals set and are all employees aware of the goals?

If you have nothing in place I would suggest starting with an Action Plan. Set some projects. Assign ownership and set timelines. What might some of the goals be?

- Driver orientation
- Hand held devices
- Substance abuse
- Smoking in the work place
- Collision policy and corrective actions (TRAINING) Collision Reporting
- Vehicle inspections, reporting defects and repairing defects
- Hours of Service

Once all these are in place this can be used as your company policy/employee hand book.

Safety Culture: As a fleet operator your responsibilities never end.

Implementing policies and procedures is not where it all stops. I hate to use the word enforce and maybe that is for those 20% of the employees that like to give you 80% of your problems. So for the 80% of your drivers satisfy yourself in knowing that they are taking the training and using it on a daily basis.

Safety starts at the top down and if the senior management does not comply do not expect others to follow. As the owner, director, V.P. Manager Supervisor you are not exempt from policies and rules, If Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is required lead by example.

Ability is what you're capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it." --Lou Holtz