



Risk Management Considerations for Fleet Management

Protect your entity by implementing policies and procedures that will help to protect your drivers, your fleet investment in vehicles/equipment and public safety. Your fleet should be managed in a way that promotes safety and reduces loss. When you reduce collisions and related downtime, you operate at a maximum efficiency.

Today's Legal Environment

Commercial vehicle owners have a legal responsibility to their drivers. These responsibilities are laid out in provincial legislation and case law. Many provinces also have enacted legislation relating to the liability for spills or substances or products in transit. Clean-up cost and fines in these situations can be extremely high.

What Influences Court Decisions?

In order to avoid potential liability for an accident, it is important that:

- Every vehicle is properly maintained
- The vehicle operator is well trained and well rested
- Comprehensive records are kept

Your records will be used in a court proceeding as evidence.

Risk Management Considerations:

1. Write a formal Safety Policy and distribute it to everyone who operates or maintains the fleet. Acknowledgement of the receipt and understanding of this policy should be obtained. This policy should include formal accident notification, investigation and emergency procedures.
2. Maintain the following documentation: driver records with copies of accident and occurrence reports, copy of current driver's license, annual driver abstract, completed annual driving record and date of last medical physical examination.
3. Consider joining a Safety Association to keep up to date on legislation changes and other changes in the industry.
4. Create a written hiring policy with all job specifications and acceptable point limits to comply with the rules under the Commercial Vehicle Operator's Registration (CVOR).
5. Institute a written maintenance program that includes mandatory documentation of pre-trip inspections. It should also include routine scheduled service intervals and corresponding work orders for work done relating to defects found. This is needed to comply with the rules under the Commercial Vehicle Operator's Registration (CVOR).

6. Create a written accident procedures manual containing procedures for a driver to follow in the event of an accident. It should also include procedures for management to follow for investigating accidents and disciplinary actions to be taken to comply with Commercial Vehicle Operator's Registration (CVOR). A copy of all accidents is to be kept in the employee's personal file along with any disciplinary action taken.
7. Consider writing a contingency plan for various situations that may arise. This is a valuable tool when the dispatcher is on vacation, sick or management is not available. This ensures that any substitutes can refer to the manual for information on proper procedures.
8. It is strongly recommended that supplies (oil, washer fluid, tissue boxes, garbage pails etc.) are not stored by the driver unless they are secured in such a fashion as not to be able to move in the event of a sudden movement. These items may distract the driver or become lodged under foot pedals impeding safe operation of the vehicle. Personal items should not be present as these can also distract the driver.
9. Create a written hiring policy. This should include an application with questions regarding previous violations for the past six years as well as reference checks. The driver's files need to contain a copy of application, driver's license, MVR and a copy of road test evaluation. Acceptable point limits for hiring and point limits for dismissal should be stated.