

The Importance of Reviewing Fleet Driver Motor Vehicle Records on a Regular Basis

THE STATS

To help put into perspective the seriousness of the need to monitor fleet driver violations and accidents, consider the following:

- One in 10 drivers has three or more violations.
- The average driver is involved in one accident every 12 years and receives one moving violation every three years.
- Accident repeaters who have two or more accidents or other violations in a three-year period account for 50 percent of all violations. More importantly, these drivers have an accident frequency rate that is at least 2.5 times higher than a driver with a clear record.

THE PROBLEM

If yours is one of the many businesses these days that maintain some form of commercial auto or truck fleet, you already know that such fleets can bolster sales and customer service efforts. What you may not know is that, unless you carefully monitor driver violations and accidents, commercial fleet vehicle operations can expose your company to serious property and liability losses. Some losses can be severe enough to threaten the financial stability of your company.

THE SOLUTION

Establishing a process for the regular review of fleet driver motor vehicle records (MVRs) is the most critical strategy you can employ to help protect your company from losses related to poor driving records.

MVRs provide valuable information. As an employer, you can use the MVR to verify that current and prospective employees have a valid drivers license. It can also provide information on an individual's involvement in accidents, convictions for traffic violations and violations of certain other laws. This type of information is vital to employers because a history of accidents and moving traffic violations may indicate driving habits that could, potentially, expose your company to financial loss and legal liability.

Developing an MVR policy. If your company maintains an auto or truck fleet, you should develop a written company policy that clearly defines what constitutes the minimum acceptable MVR for those in your company who are allowed to drive company vehicles. Such a policy should require review of each driver's MVR at

the time of hire and annually thereafter. Only individuals with acceptable MVRs should be allowed to drive vehicles for company business.

An acceptable MVR should have no major violations and less than three moving violations over the most recent three years. Major violation examples include DWI, DUI, OUI, OWI, refusing a substance test, driving with an open container (alcohol), reckless driving, hit and run, fleeing a police officer, racing/speed contest, driving while license is revoked or suspended, manslaughter or any felony. Moving violation examples include speeding, improper lane change, failure to yield, failure to obey a traffic signal/sign, careless driving, having a license suspended or accidents.

Establishing MVR review procedures. It is important to develop and implement procedures to effectively obtain, review and document MVRs for all prospective drivers. The same should be done annually for all existing drivers.

Gathering information. MVRs can be obtained from the driver, from the Department of Motor Vehicles in the state in which the driver is licensed, or through a service company. Due to the sensitive nature of information contained in an MVR, and to ensure compliance with respect to driver privacy rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, MVR review procedures may best be handled by your company's human resources personnel.

Documenting results. The MVR reviewer should document whether drivers meet the acceptable MVR driver eligibility requirements for your company.

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Inside This Issue

Help your company improve safety and reduce losses by establishing procedures for regular review of fleet driver motor vehicle records.

Details inside...

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Addressing adverse MVRs. It is extremely important that your company establish, and adhere to, a policy defining how the company will respond if and when an existing driver develops an unacceptable MVR. The response can range from requiring that the driver participate in remedial driver training, suspension from driving duties or termination. Regardless of what your company's policy is, it is critical that the policy be applied consistently.

Conducting self-audits. To ensure that MVR procedures are being followed by department managers, fleet administrators and MVR reviewers, your company should also implement a self-

audit process. This can be an annual process by which you simply compile a company driver list (which is also needed for your insurance renewal) and compare it with your driver files to ensure that those individuals on the list have an acceptable MVR.

SAFETY IS A PRIORITY

Making safety a priority is vital to protecting any company that maintains a fleet of commercial vehicles. Establishing fleet driver MVR review procedures can benefit your company in many ways, including a reduction in accidents and commercial auto insurance claims, qualifying for more favorable insurance rates and improving overall company safety.