



## Tips for Driver Orientation - Light Commercial Vehicles

Light commercial vehicles generally do not require a commercial driver's license to operate, but this does not mean that every new hire will be prepared to safely operate such a vehicle. In fact, many of the preventable accidents experienced by commercial organizations today can be attributed to driver inexperience.

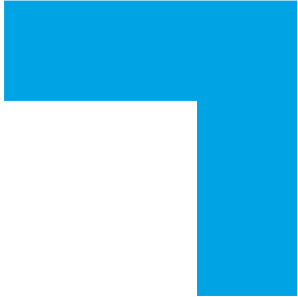
A good fleet risk management program should include written policies/procedures, new hire behind-the-wheel evaluations, and follow up. The first six months of employment is essential to not only identify the new employee's abilities as a driver, but also as an opportunity to provide defensive driving instructions and to reinforce company policies/procedures in a real-world setting.

Questions	Yes	No
Do job descriptions include driving as a requirement of applicable positions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do job applications include driving as a requirement of applicable positions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there set minimum experience requirements to become an authorized driver?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is a candidate's prior driving experience and comfort level operating a light commercial vehicle addressed during pre-employment interviews?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do employees receive vehicle specific instructions as part of their new hire orientation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are drivers given instructions on vehicle clearance limitations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are drivers trained on the various distractions that they may encounter while on roadway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a behind-the-wheel evaluation and instructional program or process that a new hire was complete before they are allowed to drive independently?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a qualified person conducting and recording the behind-the-wheel evaluations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is driving an element included in an employee's annual performance review?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Tips

Clearly define driving responsibilities in every applicable job description and application. This should help to eliminate job applicants that may be inexperienced or timid drivers.

Consider requiring a minimum of three years of prior driving experience. Drivers with less than three years of personal driving experience will most likely not have encountered many roadside hazards/conditions, which may limit their ability to effectively and safely operate a light commercial vehicle.



Review driving responsibilities with candidates during pre-employment interviews to ensure that they are properly fit for the position.

Instruct new drivers on methods for handling a light commercial vehicle. Highlight the differences between a light commercial vehicle and a private passenger vehicle when braking, backing, turning, etc. Light commercial vehicles handle very differently than private passenger vehicles. They require long braking distances, accelerate slowly, and have larger blind spots to the rear and sides of the vehicle.

Instruct drivers on the clearance height limitations of the light commercial vehicles. Consider posting clearance limits within each of the vehicles. The height limitation should be posted in the driver's immediate forward facing view. Light commercial vehicles are commonly involved in collisions related to a driver being unaware of the clearance limitation when approaching overpasses, drive-thru canopies, and parking garages.

Prepare drivers to anticipate, recognize, and respond to onboard distractions. First, identify the type of distractions that your drivers may experience on the roadway (e.g. use of personal electronic devices, passenger outbursts, cargo shifts). Next, instruct drivers on how to safely respond to and/or avoid each potential distraction.

Perform behind-the-wheel evaluations with all new drivers. The findings of these evaluations should be recorded in a standardized format to help ensure consistency and to prevent oversights. During the evaluation, make use of this time with a new hire to discuss the importance of defensive driving and also to enforce company policies/procedures.

Develop employees as behind-the-wheel evaluators. Senior employees and/or management should be trained on how to evaluate an individual's driving performance. The training should also cover methods for properly reporting their findings. Many organizations make use of peer reviews to measure a new employee's driving performance. Peer reviews can be ineffective, as a peer is less motivated and/or unlikely to report on negative behaviors.

Incorporate driving as an element into your annual employee performance reviews. Although driving may be a secondary duty, good performance in this area is critical to the safety of your employees, passengers, and property. This can be as simple as a positive review for not experiencing a motor vehicle accident or violation during the year or as involved as annual behind-the-wheel evaluation. The key here is to identify to employees that performance on the roadway is important and plays a role in continued success within the organization.

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