Auto Accident Procedures Safety Meeting Kit

WHAT’S AT STAKE

DEFENSIVE DRIVING / PREPARATION

The best way to prevent auto accidents is to drive defensively. This means you should avoid distractions, stay alert, look down the road, avoid following too close, and anticipate other drivers’ actions. Although you can do everything right, you still may find yourself involved in an accident at one point in your life. Therefore, it is vital to be prepared for how you should react, what you should do and not do following an accident.

WHAT’ S THE DANGER

DRIVING FATIGUE

Driving while fatigued is a significant road safety concern. Specific findings vary, however studies in Canada and several other countries show that driver fatigue is a contributing factor in 15-30% of all vehicle crashes.

DISTRACTED DRIVING

Attitudes towards the risk represented by distracted driving, and the use of electronic devices such as cellphones, are the leading causes of distraction-related crashes and near misses. Employers are responsible for preventing the use of cellphones and other electronic devices while their workers are driving on the job.

RISK

Distractions create situations and hazards that can be prevented. When combined with a constantly-changing road environment, performing other tasks while driving can result in errors that can have tragic results.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

In very practical terms, road safety is a shared responsibility.

It’s tough to write a policy or procedure to address every possible event a driver may encounter. Your employer is relying on you to conscientiously apply your training, driving skills and good judgement.

Procedures After an Accident Occurs

- If the accident occurs at a busy location such as a freeway or intersection, move your vehicle to a safe location, if possible, to avoid causing secondary accidents. If moving is not possible, use your hazard lights to alert oncoming traffic of the hazard.
- Place your vehicle in park, and take a moment to relax. Be aware of your surroundings and be sure no electrical wires are on your vehicle or other hazardous conditions exist prior to exiting your vehicle.
- If you have road flares or traffic triangles, consider using them to alert oncoming traffic.
- Check on others involved. Be sure that other vehicle occupants and pedestrians in the area are not injured. Dial 911 immediately if someone is injured and request an ambulance.
- Call the police to the scene and notify your employer. Even with minor accidents, having an officer come to the scene to create a police report and properly document information will assist later when dealing with insurance companies.
- Avoid admitting fault and apologizing to others at the accident scene. Allow the police to objectively judge events that took place and determine fault of the accident.
- Gather as much information as you can. Important items to document include:
- Driver and passenger full names
- Insurance information
- Makes, models, and license plate numbers of all vehicles involved

- Contact information for any eyewitnesses
- Document the scene by taking photos and videos of not only the vehicles, but the entire scene. Include documentation of road signs, traffic lights, and the complete external environment around where the accident took place.
- Remove or properly secure loose items in your vehicle to prevent the possibility of them flying around during impact.
- Keep your cell phone charged and readily available to dial 911 and to take photos of the scene.
- Consider keeping a first aid kit and emergency seat belt cutter/window breaker tool in your vehicle.
- Maintain paper, pens, or pencils in your vehicle to document other vehicle and witness information.

FINAL WORD

Following an accident, drivers, and passengers may experience an adrenaline rush that could disguise injuries and alter your ability to think straight. Therefore, being prepared and understanding pre and post-accident procedures is important. You should refer to the company-specific procedures should you have any questions prior to being involved in an accident.