Vehicle Fleet Safety Meeting Kit

WHAT ARE FLEET VEHICLES?

Fleet vehicles are groups of motor vehicles owned or leased by a business, government agency or other organization rather than by an individual or family. Typical examples are vehicles operated by car rental companies, taxicab companies, public utilities, public bus companies, and police departments.

VEHICLE FLEET ISSUES

On average, a single work-related motor vehicle crash can cost an employer at least $16,500. If injuries are involved, that figure can quadruple. If there’s a fatality, you could be looking at costs exceeding half a million dollars. If your employees drive as part of their job, your commitment to workplace safety extends to the vehicles they drive.

To minimize the high costs indicated above, and—more importantly—to ensure your employees are safe at all times, **a proper maintenance program for company vehicles and a safe driving program are two critical components.**

EMPLOYEE´S ROLE

Employees play a pivotal role in the success of proper maintenance program for company vehicle.

Workers are the ones who drive fleet vehicles and serve as the eyes and ears to any problems you might not be aware of. Just like rental car companies do, you can have a check-off sheet that workers use when taking out and returning a vehicle. They can report any damage that occurs and if the vehicle is making a strange sound or running rough. Employees should also be up front

about any accidents or near misses that occur while using a company vehicle.

BEST EMPLOYEE PRACTICES TO STAY SAFE ON THE ROAD

Clearly state expectations and qualifications for using a company vehicle. Make sure employees know the repercussions for misuse. Employees represent the company when they travel on business.

Expectations of use should include the following:

- Follow all applicable traffic laws, including those relating to speed and distracted driving.
- Know what to do when they are involved in an accident, regardless of who is at fault.
- How to contact roadside assistance if necessary.
- Make sure the car is off, locked, and keys removed when leaving a vehicle unattended.

MORE HELP FOR EMPLOYEES

- Procedures for inspecting a vehicle and how to report any trouble should be discussed and demonstrated.
- Meetings conducted in the fleet parking area can show employees how to conduct the inspection that must take place **when** taking a car out and **bringing** the car back.
- All employees should be aware that random inspections may occur, so employees do not ignore examining a vehicle before and after use.

WAYS TO GET EMPLOYEES TO CARE FOR VEHICLES – TIPS

The company vehicle is often the first thing that a customer will see which is why fleet vehicles should be kept spotless. Although business owners can’t be certain that their employees will use their vehicles appropriately and keep them well maintained both

inside and out. By hiring a fleet manager, you will have someone working each day to ensure that your fleet vehicles are being well maintained.

Create Expectations –Employer should be clear about expectations from the very beginning. If your employees will be operating company vehicles, be sure to include relevant policies that explain the driver's responsibilities. These include… proper vehicle care (inside and out), cleanliness, and maintenance needs. Different fleet vehicles might have different expectations which can depend on the role it serves and what services the company provides. For instance, vehicles used for sales should be well maintained and be aesthetically pleasing, whereas service vehicles should be focused on maintenance and mechanical condition. Ultimately, companies hope that their fleet vehicles will look good but also are reliable, so their employees are able to get the job done. Some companies require their employees to sign a vehicle use agreement that provides a list of detailed responsibilities that the driver is expected to follow when driving the fleet vehicle. Some of these include plate/registration renewal, oil changes and preventative maintenance, and keeping an up-to-date insurance card available. If changes are made to the fleet policy, provide vehicle operators with an updated copy. Routine checklists can be used to help remind drivers what is expected and to keep you informed on the vehicle's condition.

Periodic Check-ins at Least Every 3 Months – Fleet drivers should submit photos of their fleet vehicle to their managers to ensure that the vehicle is being cared for on the interior and exterior.

Incentive Employees to Care for Your Vehicle – Some businesses offer an employee buy-out when they upgrade fleet vehicles. This allows the employee to purchase the vehicle they have been driving at a deeply discounted price. You might also conduct on-going vehicle quality checks. If drivers express interest in the quality of the car, they are more likely to care about keeping it in perfect condition.

COMMUNICATE REGULARLY AND CONSISTENTLY TO DRIVERS

An employer must communicate with drivers to ensure they understand expectations and their responsibilities. Providing them with newsletters, training, and checklists helps motivate them to maintain their vehicle. Publicly commending a job well done is just another great way to encourage your drivers to value your assets. Drivers want to know that you value them and their safety. If they know you will take care of them, they will take care of you and your assets. Invest in their safety. If they don’t feel appreciated, they might not give your company and fleet vehicles more than they have to. Fleet managers should communicate directly with drivers and get out in the field to understand their perspective. Talk to your employees face-to-face and ask them how you can help them get the job done.

EMPOWER EMPLOYEES

Empower employees by generating a driving safety program. Topics such as tailgating, following traffic laws, use of seat belts, and winter driving tips can be addressed through a monthly newsletter, regular meeting, or special website page.

FINAL WORD

Communication a consistent and regular basis with employees is imperative. Since you’re not usually with them on the road, you don’t know what might be happening with a vehicle, but they do. What you don’t know not only can hurt your bottom line, but also literally can hurt employees.