



White paper

Creating a safety culture:

Moving from policies to habits



Today, it's commonplace for companies to check the motor vehicle records (MVRs) of their drivers once a year. That's considered due diligence.

But what if one driver gets a moving violation or a citation for driving under the influence three weeks after the report was pulled? It could take months for that potentially costly issue to come to light. Likewise, a driver safety policy issued annually is typically worth about as much as the paper it's written on.

There is great potential in setting high standards and creating positive driving behaviors, but this must be a continual process informed by concrete policies, shared motivation to improve, useful data, and quality leadership.

Fortunately, several important practices can help companies create a better safety culture – saving money, reducing risk and legal vulnerability, and keeping employees and communities safe.

Here's how.

Motivation to be safer

We all hear the warnings: Slow down. Put away the phone while driving. Notify the manager of tickets or violations.

But at what point does our behavior really change?

Engaging employees in safety means not only creating awareness of what to do, but also why it's important to them. **Safety discussions must go beyond numbers, accident reports, and checklists – what's really at stake are the lives of individuals.**

When employees start to think in terms of well-being – or even loss of life – they pay closer attention. Companies that can convey care, compassion, and a desire for everyone to get home at night will have better response than those that solely deliver a message of restrictions or punishment for missing the mark.



The economic impact of crashes¹

\$242B

The economic cost of motor vehicle crashes that occurred in 2010 totaled \$242 billion, which is equivalent to approximately \$784 for every person living in the U.S. and 1.6% of the U.S. GDP.

\$1.4M

The lifetime economic cost to society for each fatality is \$1.4 million. More than 90% of this amount is attributable to lost workplace and household productivity and legal costs.

\$1M

Each critically injured survivor (Maximum Abbreviated Injury Scale 5) costs an average of \$1 million. Medical costs and lost productivity accounted for 82% of the cost for this most serious level of non-fatal injury.

\$57.6B

Lost workplace productivity costs totaled \$57.6 billion, which is 24% of the total costs. Lost household productivity totaled \$19.7 billion, or 8% of the total economic costs.

¹The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2010 (Revised May 2015), NHTSA

80%

of automotive fleets say
driver safety is priority #1

BUT...

70%

don't monitor drivers

59%

don't have a safety program

The leadership's responsibility

Safety initiatives require buy-in and commitment from all levels of the organization, starting with senior leadership.

Creating a safety culture requires leadership to model the behaviors that all employees should adopt. Thoughtful engagement of direct supervisors is particularly important. A sales manager who reprimands an employee for missing a call while driving, for example, sends a confusing – and uncaring – message. A field service manager who assigns a territory that's too big to cover while going the speed limit does the same thing.

As for buy-in from the drivers themselves, that likely begins with honest and open discussions about current policies, as well as what they believe should or shouldn't be included in updates and revisions. When employees have the chance to give input – when they feel heard – they will likely become more invested in the team's success.

“Psychologists have indicated that because we tend to internalize the views and beliefs of significant others (e.g., line managers, colleagues, work groups), attitudes are socially constructed... This indicates that the best way to change safety attitudes is for managers and work colleagues to specify the reasons for behaving in a safe way, while simultaneously teaching, coaching, and reinforcing particular sets of safe behaviors.”

–DR. DOMINIC COOPER, “IMPROVING SAFETY CULTURE: A PRACTICAL GUIDE”

Addressing legal complexity

Driver safety policies don't just apply to those whose primary responsibility is driving, or those who drive vehicles owned or leased by the company.

Employee-owned or rented vehicles that are used for work-related journeys also must be part of the equation. To decrease liability (in addition to improving safety), policies should clearly state this fact and affirm that the same safe behavior is expected of every driver in the organization – on and off the job. That behavior might include non-distracted driving,

for example, or even properly maintaining a personal vehicle used for company business to ensure safety and a positive reflection of the organization.

Everyone must understand that employers can be held responsible for anything that happens while employees are conducting company business.

It's wise to share this information with employees, ensure reimbursed drivers have adequate insurance, administer signed driver agreements, provide uniform driver training – and, of course, ensure that all drivers' behavior and records are continuously monitored.

Under the legal doctrine of *Respondeat Superior* – which translates to “let the master answer” – drivers can subject their employer to serious and costly repercussions for their individual behavior.

Introducing a new policy that's out of step with the way things are typically handled can create suspicion and mistrust.

Transforming the culture

Moving from a safety policy to a safety culture requires guidelines that are aligned with the organizational brand, mission statement, principles, and values.

When this happens, the policy not only “makes sense;” it also is easily normalized and internally reinforced. A company with a strong environmental stance, for example, might relate stewardship of resources to reduced use of fuel. Driving the speed limit can be part of both safety and environmental initiatives. Or, an organization that publicly rewards employees for years of service might also reward workers for years without a driving incident.

Similarly, safety policies must be presented and enforced in a manner congruent with other initiatives. Is your organization largely top-down, in which directives are designed at the highest levels and simply passed through the ranks?

Or is it bottom-up, where employees are given the chance to have a significant say? Likely it's somewhere in between.

The policy's balance of rewards and punishments will also depend on the culture. Employees in a high-energy, competitive environment, for example, may thrive on contests between regions vying for the safest driving records. Employees in a top-down culture, on the other hand, may respond best to regular tips and reminders from highly respected senior leaders. Clear communication can keep drivers from feeling micromanaged or worrying about their privacy and personal information.



Consistency is key

Picture this: You're in the midst of a trial related to a crash involving one of your employees. As a company, you believe you won't be held liable because a safety policy, technically, was in place.

The question is, has that policy been followed? Companies are responsible for proactive intervention and detailed documentation. When it comes to legal action, it's essential to remember that if you can't document that you took action (or had a specific reason for not taking action), your defense might not hold up in court.

As a manager, this is your duty. **Regardless of the policy in place, simply saying that you didn't know about poor driving behavior will no longer cut it – not when people's lives and companies' well-being are at stake.** With the data readily available today, the courts are sure to ask how you didn't know. Driver monitoring is the key to limiting this risk exposure.

Outside the court of law, it's also important for employees to understand that policies will be followed and actions have consequences – for employees at all levels. If someone in senior management breaks the rules and suffers no aftereffect, what's the motivation for others to keep things in line?

27%

of auto fatalities are speeding-related.³

94%

of crashes are the result of human behavior.²

²National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. "Traffic Safety Facts," Feb. 2015.

³National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. "Quick Facts 2015," 2015.



Making data your best ally

Naturally, the creation of a safety culture has a lot to do with capturing the hearts and minds of employees, helping them understand not only the “what” but also the “why.”

Beyond emotion, the strategic use of data and facts can help seal the deal. This paper has already covered the importance of documentation and accurate data in terms of a court case. But numbers can tell compelling stories on their own.

Consider, for example, if you knew that a significant percentage of your crashes had occurred while drivers were distracted or speeding. Here, the data can point to a quantifiable solution. A targeted effort – perhaps additional training and/or a shift in policy – could lead to changes in behavior, fewer crashes, and decreased costs.

The right data can help employers accurately reward those who are doing well, too, and securely keep up with disciplinary actions toward those who are missing the mark. Clean, concise, relevant numbers help ensure drivers are measured fairly against the policy, and that new employees are screened pre-hire.

This valuable data can be available on an ongoing basis through continuous driver monitoring. A strategic partner can help provide a holistic approach to driver risk management through more frequent collection and monitoring of MVR data and a compliance strategy tied to Department of Transportation guidelines for CDL drivers. The right data and analytics will encourage greater accountability, highlight dangerous behaviors such as speeding, reduce risk, and help companies keep employees safe.

“The number of drivers involved in a crash while using a cell phone has continued to edge up, showing that technology continues to be a safety flashpoint.”

–CHRIS WOLSKI, “FLEET SAFETY SHOWS IMPROVEMENTS,” AUTOMOTIVE FLEET, 2016

The value of a driver monitoring partner

SambaSafety helps you bring your safety culture to life by providing continuous visibility into employees' driving behavior – on and off the job – and eliminating the gaps that come from pulling MVRs on a yearly or biyearly basis.

Our platform allows you to quickly identify employees who pose the highest risk to their organization and take appropriate action.

Unlike monitoring solutions that focus on vehicles, SambaSafety gives valuable insight into each driver. Each employee's driving profile starts with a three- to seven-year record, which gives you the ability to spot trends and possible penchant for risky behavior. Furthermore, MVR data from all 50 states is standardized and violations are normalized to allow easy comparison and policy enforcement.

In other words, SambaSafety allows you to focus on leading and creating a culture, not wading through old data looking for insights. Informed decisions demonstrate to employees and insurance companies that risks are mitigated responsibly and effectively.



10 questions to ask of your safety policy

- Was the policy established with input from key stakeholders?
- Has it been clearly communicated to all employees?
- Does it tie in to company goals and mission?
- Do employees receive regular reminders and updates about safety policies?
- Is it aspirational and values-based rather than simply disciplinary?
- Is there complete buy-in from top management?
- Is the policy uniformly enforced?
- Is there a fair, diverse, professional board for incident review?
- Is data properly used to increase compliance?
- Is it time for an update?



The bottom line...

Motivation to be safer

If safety policies are just “installed” by management, they might never be adopted. But when real safety tactics are combined with shared investment and consistency, adherence and results can dramatically improve.

The leadership’s responsibility

Creating a safety culture requires leadership to model the behaviors that all employees should adopt.

Addressing legal complexity

Everyone must understand that employers can be held responsible for anything that happens while employees are conducting company business.

Transforming the culture

Moving from a safety policy to a safety culture requires that any guidelines are clearly aligned with the organizational brand, mission statement, principles, and values.

Consistency is key

Regardless of the policy in place, simply saying that you didn’t know about poor driving behavior will no longer cut it – not when people’s lives and companies’ well-being are at stake.

Making data your best ally

Clean, concise, relevant numbers help ensure drivers are measured fairly against the policy, and that new employees are screened pre-hire.

The value of a partner

Today, the best driver safety policies incorporate the practices discussed herein, as well as continuous driver monitoring from SambaSafety.



How SambaSafety helps create a safety culture

Through an array of driver monitoring and management solutions, SambaSafety gives companies the insights they need to refocus the conversation about safety and reduce risk. Our platform collects and analyzes data on employees' driving habits – on and off the job. Armed with this information, companies can identify high-risk drivers and consistently enforce driver safety policies in the short term, and steer important company conversations about safety in the long term.

Learn how you can mitigate risk with a continuous and comprehensive view of your driving workforce – and create a safety culture that will benefit both your company and community.

Visit [SambaSafety.com/CreatingSafetyCulture](https://www.sambasafety.com/CreatingSafetyCulture).