



**CRUM & FORSTER®**

A FAIRFAX COMPANY

**DRIVER TRAINING**



### Top Tips for Driver Trainings

- Conduct Thorough New Hire Orientation Training
- Implement Recurring Trainings & Refreshers
- Stay Engaged and Treat Your Drivers as Professionals
- Document Everything

# Training: It's Not Just For Rookies

The job of driving a commercial motor vehicle requires more skills than most people would ever dream of. Not only do the drivers have to know how to drive an 80,000 pound metal giant, but they also have to know how to trip-plan, safely navigate congested roadways, complete paperwork, and keep up with an ever changing web of regulations. These tasks obviously take some training and practice to master. New drivers receive a variety of training from sources like truck driving schools and driver finishing programs at carriers, and they usually receive some ongoing training as well to keep them up to speed. But after a driver gets a couple of years of experience, many companies assume that there is not much else that they can teach them, and the training tends to be reduced or even stopped all together.



## Why conduct training?

Training serves several purposes. The obvious one is that the trainee may not have the necessary skills or knowledge of a particular subject, or they may need to be trained/retrained on how to perform a specific task. Many people believe that this is the only reason for training, which may be why training is not being conducted with experienced drivers (as mentioned above). A more subtle, and possibly more important, purpose for training (if done properly) is that it sends a positive message to trainees: Safety is a reflection of the culture of the company.

Drivers will adopt the culture of the company, and they will focus on the things the company stresses as important. This is why training is not just for rookies. Experienced drivers may have the technical skills, but the message that the company values the driver's safety and the wellbeing of those sharing the roads still needs to be reinforced on a regular basis.

Training done improperly will also send a message, but it will not be a positive one. Training should be interactive and have a purpose. The trainer should be positive and engaged with the driver so that the driver understands that the training is not just being conducted to check it off of a list and say it was completed. Sitting a driver down and requiring them to watch a video while you leave the room is not a proper way to conduct the training. It immediately sends the message that you have no interest in whether or not the driver paid attention, understood the video, or understood why they had to watch it. Contrast this with staying in the room with the driver, stopping the video at several key spots, discussing what just happened, and relating it to the hazards that they encounter in their daily job duties. Combine this with the message that you understand that the driver is an experienced professional, but you want to keep safety at the forefront of their minds and for them to return home safely after every trip.

See the difference in what message would be sent?

Always remember that safety videos and handouts are good training tools, but they are not a comprehensive training program. We understand that everyone is not a professional trainer or public speaker, and you don't have to be. The best results are always going to be obtained from spending time with the driver and interacting with them by engaging them in discussion. Simple questions to start the conversation could be:

- What did you see there?
- How would you prevent this from happening to you?
- Do you encounter this while you are driving?

These are all good discussion points to get the ball rolling and are usually sufficient to get/keep the driver engaged. If you are conducting training on a specific type of accident that the company has experienced, try sharing any data and information you have available. This allows drivers, so they can relate to the experience and further understand why it is important.

## Types & timing of training

Training for drivers can come at a variety of different times. The first (and probably the best) opportunity is during orientation. This may be the only chance that you get to spend this much time with a driver while they are working for you. A good orientation program sets the right tone and lets the driver know what is expected of them and what the company culture is. Again, think about the message that your orientation program sends to the driver. Is the training all administration and operations-based, or does it focus more on safety? Does it show that you care more about moving freight, or about everyone making it home safely?

There is also value in recurring training. This training is conducted on a proactive basis before any accident or incident has occurred. It is meant to reinforce the culture and keep the focus on safety front and center. Examples may include trainings on "seasonal items", such as winter



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driving, or discussion on driving operations once schools get back in session. Or reoccurring trainings could be based on particular types of accidents, or hazards that are inherent to your operations.

Then there is retraining or refresher training. This training is necessary after an incident has already occurred. The focus here should be on realizing what contributed to the incident and how to prevent it from being repeated. It also sends the message that accidents are not acceptable and should include what steps will be taken if it happens again.

### If you did not document it then it did not happen

Any time that you conduct any form of training or corrective actions with a driver, always be sure to document it. It can be as simple as a sign in sheet for the meeting or a training certificate. Some companies keep a training log in each driver's individual file. The same goes for corrective actions. Even verbal warnings should be documented. If nothing else, it creates a record (that both the company and the driver should get a copy of) which outlines; event details; what actions were taken; and what actions will be taken if future events occur. This way everyone is on the same page going forward. In addition to internal record-keeping, documenting your efforts is important for insurance company reviews and potential court proceedings as well.

### Conclusion

We understand that most small companies do not have huge safety training budgets and cannot afford to buy a large library of videos and written materials. All Crum & Forster clients have free access to our Training on Demand services that are provided through JJ Keller. All you have to do is contact your C&F Risk Engineering Consultant to begin the process of setting up an account to access the trainings.

To view the available titles, go to [www.jjkellertraining.com](http://www.jjkellertraining.com). These training programs provide excellent tools to get you started, and will also allow you to make room in your budget for other company-related necessities.

We encourage you to take advantage of the training services that we offer to our clients. We also encourage you to work with your C&F Risk Engineering Consultant to implement these resources into your safety program to enhance the message you are sending your drivers.

Drivers do listen to the messages sent to them by the company, so send them a positive one by conducting proper safety training. It's not just for rookies.



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