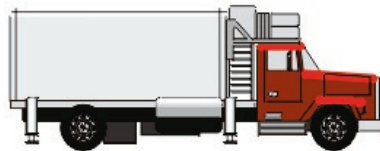
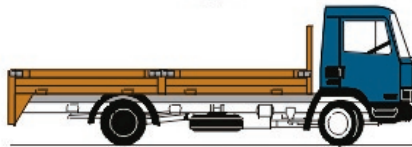




**Texas Department
of Insurance**



Fleet Motor Vehicle Safety Program

Provided by

Division of Workers'
Compensation

HS04-035A(7-04)

Fleet Motor Vehicle Safety Program

The act of driving or riding in a motor vehicle, in and of itself, places workers at increased risk of suffering serious injury or death. In an effort to reduce the potential for vehicle accidents, all motor vehicles shall be kept in good operating condition and shall be equipped with appropriate safety equipment. Drivers and passengers must obey all traffic laws when operating or riding in a vehicle.

Drivers shall practice the following safety tips to promote good driving:

- Stay alert at the wheel. Do not drive more than three hours at one time during the day or two hours at one time during the night without a break.
- Avoid driving more than 8 hours within one 24-hour period.
- Avoid distractions (radio, cell phone, eating, etc.) giving driving full attention.
- Always drive defensively, scanning the road ahead as well as objects to the side and rear of the vehicle.
- Know, understand and respect local and state driving regulations and laws.
- Keep vehicle in safe operating condition.
- Avoid driving when sleepy, ill, upset, or angry.

The following safety equipment is required on all Texas automobiles, vans, and trucks and must be maintained in good operating condition at all times:

- adequate rear view mirrors,
- safety belts,
- windshield wipers,
- horn,
- correctly adjusted headlights,
- brakes with adequate stopping power,
- emergency brakes,
- turn/directional signals,
- tires with adequate tread,
- brake lights,
- taillights,
- license plate light, and
- approved exhaust/muffler system.

Maintenance and upkeep of required safety equipment shall be given a high priority for attention. The appropriate supervisor shall take prompt action to correct deficiencies noted. If such corrections cannot be accomplished in a timely fashion, the vehicle in question is to be taken out of service until repairs can be made.

Special attention should be given to the following items:

- Brakes: Check to see that the pedal stays well above the floor when stepped on. If the vehicle pulls to one side when you use the brakes, or there scraping or squealing noises, the brakes may need to be repaired.
- Lights: Check for burned-out bulbs and clean the light lenses often. Dirty headlights can cut your night vision by one half. Burned-out signal lights or brake lights do not allow other drivers to know what the vehicle is doing.
- Windows and Windshields: Keep the glass clean, inside and out, to reduce glare and improve vision. Windshields should be intact. Cracked windshields should be replaced.

A liability insurance identification card must be kept in the glove compartment or other easily accessible location in the vehicle.

Use of Safety Belts

One of the most important safety devices in any vehicle is the passenger restraint or seat belt. Under Texas law, the use of safety belts is required in all passenger automobiles and lightweight trucks operated on the roads and highways in the State of Texas.

Backing of Vehicles

Backing of vehicles should be avoided, whenever possible. Routes of travel should be planned and easy exit parking spaces selected to avoid backing.

If backing a vehicle is necessary, the following steps should be followed to avoid accident:

- All drivers shall use a spotter to help them when backing. The driver and spotter should use hand signals instead of verbal commands. The driver shall keep the spotter in view to ensure that the vehicle does not strike him.
- If there is no spotter available, the driver shall get out and walk around the vehicle prior to backing to check for children and pedestrians, overhead wires, soft or muddy areas, potholes, tire hazards, unoccupied vehicles, and other dangers.
 - The driver shall back slowly using rearview mirrors frequently.
 - If backing vision is obscured, the driver shall stop the vehicle every few feet and get out and walk around the vehicle to check the backing route.

Safety Guidelines for Hauling Loads

Loads subject to tipping or shifting shall be securely fastened to the vehicle. Vehicles shall not be loaded beyond their capacity, whether it is for transporting passengers, goods, or equipment.

All tools, equipment, and cargo, when transported along with passengers, shall be loaded, placed or secured in such a manner that they will pose no hazard, in any way, to passengers.

Whenever a load extends four feet or more beyond the rear bed or body of a vehicle there shall be displayed:

- At night, or when visibility is reduced to less than 1,000 feet, sufficient red reflectors to make the load clearly visible to traffic approaching from any direction.
- During the daytime, red flags, not less than twelve (12) inches square, must be placed on the overhanging load to mark its length and width at each place where a red lamp is required on this load at night.

In Case of an Accident

If a driver is involved in an accident while driving, they shall:

- Stop the vehicle.
- Check if anyone is hurt, if so get help.
- Contact the appropriate law enforcement agency and request immediate assistance.
- Obtain insurance, driver, and vehicle information from all drivers involved in the accident.
- Notify the appropriate supervisor of the details of the accident as soon as possible.

Maintaining company vehicles is an important part of preventing accidents. There shall be a scheduled maintenance program in place for each motor vehicle. Regular maintenance shall be done at specific mileage intervals. Any deficiency or problem with a vehicle should be reported and corrected immediately. Records shall be maintained that document all maintenance and repair done on each individual vehicle. In the event of an accident, the maintenance records can be used in court to prove that the vehicle was properly maintained.

Remember to practice safety. Don't learn it by accident.

This safety program was produced with information from the Florida State Motor Vehicle Safety Program, the Department of Public Safety, and the Texas Workers' Compensation Commission.

Review Questions:

1. What is the maximum amount of time a driver should drive in one 24-hour period of time?
2. Vehicle maintenance does not need to be a priority? True or False.
3. Dirty headlights can cut night vision by ?
4. What information should be obtained in case of emergency?

Answers

1. 8 hours
2. False should be given high priority.
3. One half
4. Obtain insurance, driver, and vehicle information from all drivers involved in the accident.