



Driver Managers and Safety 2023

Our behavior-based Risk Management model focuses on “starting at the top” to build a culture of safety. The first step in the process is to gain the commitment of ownership and executive management to implement, publicize, and enforce recommended safety policies and procedures, as well as hold everyone accountable. After we gain commitment at the top... what’s next? The ultimate goal is to have everyone in the company on board and buying in to the idea that safety and situational awareness are required so each driver can return home safely. With this program in place, every employee becomes a safety professional. Who is the next “step” in that process? The Driver Manager/Dispatcher. Driver Managers have an essential role in the trucking and transportation industry through communicating with drivers, creating schedules, researching routes, and most importantly discussing and emphasizing safety practices. They also serve as a liaison between the drivers and executive management. So, how do we get them involved?

Solution

DRIVER MANAGER TRAINING 101 – We tossed around this idea during the 2022 RMAC meeting, but a new initiative that emerged from this year’s roundtable discussion is a program that will focus on Driver Managers/Dispatchers as the next line of defense in building the culture of safety. These individuals are in constant contact with our drivers and should be just as focused on building that culture of safety as the company executives. A few key components of this program include:

- Constant and consistent communication between Driver Managers/Dispatchers and drivers to discuss safety policies and procedures to reinforce the company’s safety culture.
- Routine updates between Driver Managers/Dispatchers and senior management regarding current issues surrounding accidents, incidents, and even individual drivers. Weekly or daily meetings to discuss the physical and



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mental environment of those under their charge can bring any potential safety concerns to light sooner to prevent accidents or injuries.

- Evaluation of Driver Manager/Dispatcher's previous experience in the industry and potential hands-on training so they can relate to (and build credibility with) drivers. This should include ride alongs or shadowing if they do not have previous driver experience.
- Driver Managers/Dispatchers should be included in safety meetings, safety trainings, and in the event of an accident, the "Post-Accident" call.
- Inclusion of Driver Managers/Dispatchers in any (if applicable) safety incentives to reward the reinforcement of positive behaviors and address the negative ones quickly.
- Work Comp 101 for Driver Managers/Dispatchers. The ATA Comp Fund Risk Management team will develop a short training program for Driver Managers/Dispatchers geared towards safety and workers compensation, and the effects of accidents/claims on the company's bottom line.
- ICARE Philosophy:
 - **INVEST** the time to get to know your employees.
 - **COMMIT** to safety through actions and words.
 - **ACT** to ensure follow-through on what is needed to succeed.
 - **REINFORCE** positive behaviors and address negative ones.
 - **EXPECT** your employees to **PRACTICE** safety.

COMING SOON TO A RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM NEAR YOU – We are in the early stages of developing this program over the course of the year and will be looking for feedback from our RMAC Committee members as well as our Fund Members and Insureds. **If you have any ideas or information to share or enhance this program, please contact Victor Whatley at VWhatley@ATACompFund.org.*