



**Alabama Trucking Association  
Workers Compensation Fund**

**alliance**

An OSHA Cooperative Program

*A Newsletter For Our Members Where Safety Is Our Primary Concern!*

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**DEFENSIVE DRIVING AND BEHAVIOR-BASED SAFETY**

If you receive our Fund emails, you would already know that truck accidents are up and 80% of accidents involving a heavy-duty vehicle are the four-wheelers' fault, which is why a solid defensive driving program is needed for all new drivers to learn good behaviors. The Bureau of Labor Statistics recently published their 2016 figures revealing that there were 1,388 fatal injuries in transportation and material-moving occupations in 2016, a 7% increase over the 1,301 fatalities in 2015. Those numbers are too high because one is too many. All accidents are preventable. It starts with human behavior.



You take on enormous risk if you limit the amount of new hire training you provide because you only hire experienced drivers. We learn proper behaviors (good habits) through education and practice. Safe and responsible driving skills are learned the same way. We have said it many times before: It is driver behavior, not technology, that dictates driver safety.



Drivers who practice bad behaviors on the road will inevitably get in or cause an accident. In fact, the Heinrich theory states for each 300 unsafe behaviors, there are 29 close calls, and 1 major accident. It's Russian roulette with your vehicles. Companies have an ethical responsibility to teach the proper behaviors. The only acceptable goal is ZERO accidents, and your program should be restless at working towards that goal.

Most companies have the same basic and boring training materials during new-hire orientation and even on-going safety training: watching boring "training" videos, accident procedures, load securement, CSA...the usual suspects. These are check the box videos. They are not behavior-based programs designed to prevent accidents. Invest in a driver training program that gets this and focuses on teaching drivers the correct behaviors on the road.

The National Safety Council (NSC) offers online defensive driving modules and courses that can help teach your employees and drivers how to drive safely and responsibly. Click <http://www.nsc.org/learn/Safety-Training/Pages/defensive-driving-driver-safety-training.aspx> for more information. If you need assistance or have questions regarding your free NSC membership, give your Loss Control Consultant a call today!



## *Tarping – one of the most dangerous (and loathed) tasks of a flatbed trucker – no matter the weather*



Tarping is hard work — from heavy tarps to uneven loads, not to mention wind, rain, or ice. How does one safely manage this necessary evil?

The best advice is to stay off the load entirely if possible. If you have to get on the trailer, use the safety tips below to help keep you drivers safe.

### Employers

Make sure your shippers know:

- Your drivers have the **right** to refuse any “weather protect” load unless the shipper lifts the tarp with a forklift.
- Your driver is **required** to refuse loads high enough that a ladder must be used to shoulder the tarp onto the load.
- Provide ladders and require drivers to use them to climb on loads. Again, they should



never carry a tarp up a ladder. Although heavier, wooden ladders are more durable than aluminum ladders.



### Drivers

- If you are in freezing weather, ask to put your tarps inside a warm building while you are being loaded. This will allow the tarp to defrost a little and make it easier to handle.
- Never stand on the load or the tarp. Crawl on the load or tarp instead.
- Park on the leeward side of a large building or van trailer to block the wind before trying to tarp.
- On loads requiring two tarps, always unroll and completely secure the rear tarp before unrolling the front tarp.
- Secure all four corners first. If it's windy, attach rolled up straps to the grommets with bungees before dropping the sides to keep them flush with the cargo.
- Test for voids under the tarp before committing your weight, even when crawling.